

The Radcliffe Choral Society

MAY 2011 NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM THE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT, JENNY WOLAHAN

Dear RCS alumnae and friends,

It has been quite a year! As you know, RCSF has undergone many administrative and structural changes this year, making it an exciting time to be president. The highlights for me, however, have been the many occasions I have had to interact with the current singers, and particularly the chances alumnae and students have had to sing together. While many of us never sang together as undergraduates, there seems to be a common bond that snaps into place whenever a group of RCSers gathers to sing. This was certainly felt at the History Tea in February, where (after hearing quite a few hilarious stories from as far back as the 1960s) we sang through a selection of Radcliffe songs. It was even more palpable at Youville House in April, when a group of alumnae, along with several dozen current singers, performed a short afternoon concert for the facility's residents. It was such a privilege to be onstage with RCS again, even in such a casual setting. The upcoming Reunion Sing on May 24 will provide another occasion for RCSers past and present to sing together, and I hope many of you will be able to join us.

Among the Foundation board members, the energy and dedication I have found as we continue the process of reorganizing has been staggering. Officers and members of committees have been enthusiastic about connecting with students and alumnae to begin to accomplish those projects we have set ourselves. Our Student Affairs committee has gotten involved with student advising to a much greater degree than before, and it has been wonderful to see connections forming between students and alumnae who are doing substantive work together on tour and budgetary planning. They have been helped by our Finance committee, which, under the leadership of new Treasurer Julie Yao Cooper, has also begun work on middle- and long-term financial planning for the Foundation. And among many other activities, the Foundation had the unique opportunity this winter to work with Jennifer Wollan '84 to film footage of Andrew Clark talking about his plans for the choral program at Harvard. We'll be working with Jen to edit the *(continued on page 2)*



From Left: Ann Marie Lindquist ('84), Katharine Reardon ('67), Joyce Curll ('65)

LETTER FROM THE RCS PRESIDENT, MOLLY O'LAUGHLIN

Dear Alumnae of the Radcliffe Choral Society,

As the academic year winds to a close, so does my time as RCS President – and I could not be prouder of the way this year has gone. We hit the ground running in the beginning of the year with our wonderful new Director of Choral Activities, Andrew Clark, as well as our beloved Associate Conductor Kevin Leong and Assistant Conductor Beth Willer. Following our very successful audition cycle, we took our annual retreat to Hingham, MA where we had our first chance to sing with and get to know each other and the Glee Club. Our fall concert with the Collegium and holiday concert with the Glee Club were both beautiful; as our accompanist John Sullivan pointed out, they featured “octatonic music, twelve-tone music, music in wacky rhythms, music in three languages (Latin, English and Pilgrim), extremely difficult Renaissance polyphony, a series of ridiculous Alto II parts any one of which is probably too low for most of the tenors in Glee Club, false relations, endless strings of consecutive seventh chords, and vocal lines written with no regard to the nature of the human voice or ear.” And we sounded magnificent!

The spring semester was equally rewarding. In early March, RCS joined once more with the Glee *(continued on page 2)*

(Letter from the Foundation President continued) video and send it out to all of you in the coming months.

As we turn our minds to planning for next year and beyond, we will continue to build on the abundant energy and enthusiasm I have seen in so many of the you who have stepped forward this year. I am so grateful for all those who have supported the work of the Foundation thus far. We are constantly appreciative of new ideas and of feedback, so if you have suggestions for Foundation activities or a desire to be involved, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. I look forward to our second full year as a Foundation, and I am eager to continue working with all of you!

All the best,

Jenny Wolahan '07



From Left: Kelly Holt ('12), Maile Black ('87), Laura Maltby ('72), Linh Pham (G4), Anastasia Walhovd ('13)

YOUVILLE SING: ALUMNAE AND STUDENTS PERFORM FOR RESIDENTS AT ASSISTED LIVING HOME

On April 3, RCS alumnae and current members gathered at Youville House Assisted Living Residence in Cambridge, MA, to perform for the residents. This marks the second year that the RCS Foundation has organized this event. This year, participants were fortunate to be joined by Beth Willer, RCS Assistant Conductor; John Sullivan, RCS Accompanist; and the RCS 'Cliffe Notes. After rehearsing together, the whole group performed Tomas Luis de Victoria's *Duo Seraphim Clamabant*, Alice Parker's *Hark I Hear the Harps Eternal*, and Pablo Casals' *Nigra Sum* with piano accompaniment. The 'Cliffe Notes also performed three numbers, including their standard, Manhattan Transfer's *Java Jive*. The concert finished with the Radcliffe Alma Mater and Fight Song, which brought many cheers from the audience, several of whom were Radcliffe alumnae themselves! Following the concert, performers had the opportunity to meet and chat with audience members. RCSF looks forward to holding this popular event again next year!

(Letter from the President of RCS continued) Club to perform a Junior Parents Weekend concert in Memorial Church. Coming a few short days after the passing of Memorial Church's Reverend Peter Gomes, the program (which featured our individual repertoire and a joint performance of Ross Lee Finney's *Pilgrim Psalms*) was both gorgeous on its own and a moving tribute to the memory of Rev. Gomes. A week later, RCS left for our much-anticipated tour to Southern California, where we performed in San José, Santa Barbara, and the L.A./Pasadena area. We really bonded on tour, as friends and as a choir, and we were delighted to see many alums of RCS and Harvard at our post-concert receptions and as our gracious hosts. After tour, we returned to Memorial Church to record Finney's *Pilgrim Psalms* with the Glee Club, a really satisfying experience. This recording, which will also include Collegium's rendition of Finney's *Spherical Madrigals*, will be available next year.

We rounded out the year with our Arts First performances of John Adams's *On the Transmigration of Souls* and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, combining with the Glee Club, the Collegium, and the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra and featuring the Boston Children's Chorus and vocal soloists. Both musically and emotionally, these performances were one of the most powerful experiences of my life, as well as the lives of many others with whom I have spoken. It was a truly inspiring way to bring the year to a close.

This week, we will elect new officers to lead RCS through the 2011-2012 academic year. It will be a bittersweet moment for me as I pass on my presidential duties; I have been so fortunate to lead a group of women as dedicated and talented as this one, and I will miss it dearly, but I know I leave it in the best of hands. Many thanks to you, our incredible alumnae, for making our endeavors possible through your generous support – I look forward to joining your ranks at the end of this year.

Yours,

Molly O'Laughlin '11

LETTER FROM THE CONDUCTOR, ANDREW CLARK

Greetings from Paine Hall!

By the time you read this, the 2010-2011 RCS season will have come to a close, completing a rewarding, frenetic, and vibrant year of music-making. On more than one occasion, I have pinched myself during this, my first year at Harvard; for me, it has been an embarrassment of riches, none greater than the opportunity to serve as the conductor of this storied ensemble of nearly 50 dynamic, talented, and extraordinary young women. Here are some of the highlights of this past year:

CONCERTS

In the fall, RCS shared the stage with the Collegium Musicum, performing works from Tudor England and American Music of the last century to an enthusiastic Sanders Theatre audience. In December, Associate Conductor Kevin Leong conducted RCS in our "Christmas in Cambridge" concert with the Glee Club at First Church. The choir sang compellingly and benefited from two new performance editions of works by Schubert and Eccard prepared by Dr. Leong.

Acclaimed Iranian-American composer Reza Vali joined us for our Parents' Weekend concert at Memorial Church in March. RCS presented the world premiere of Professor Vali's *Four Persian Folk Songs* that included a giant battery of percussion instruments, including crystal glasses and exploding paper bags played by our chorus members! We even had our very first "Skype-rehearsal" leading up to this performance with the composer giving us instructions from his living room in Pittsburgh.

Our season concluded with a memorable Arts First collaboration among all three Holden choruses, the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, and the Boston Children's Chorus. Our two performances featured the Boston premiere of John Adams' (A.B. '69, A.M. '72) Pulitzer Prize-winning work, *On the Transmigration of Souls*, a stirring response to the events of September 11, 2001, paired with Beethoven's monumental *Symphony No. 9*. Mr. Adams, one of the most eminent composers in the world today, joined us for a rehearsal and the performance. We look forward to future collaborations with the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra under the leadership of my colleague, Professor Federico Cortese.

RECORDING

For the first time in many years, RCS ventured into the recording studio, joining the Glee Club in a recording of Ross Lee Finney's *Pilgrim Psalms*, a seminal and neglected treasure for men's, women's, and mixed choruses. The choirs recorded the forty-minute cantata at Memorial Church, featuring organist Christian Lane and the newly installed Skinner Organ. Next year, the Collegium will record two short pieces to complete the all-Finney choral disc, documenting fantastic choral music by this important 20th century American composer in an album we hope to distribute around the globe, appearing in major music libraries and on your iPod!

MASTERCLASSES

It is a goal of mine to frequently expose all of our choral students to the finest choral conductors in the world. In the early and mid-20th century, RCS collaborated regularly with the Boston Symphony, performing with renowned conductors and vocalists. Today, we have the opportunity through our tours and the Office of the Arts "Learning from Performers" program to bring distinguished guest artists to work with our choruses.

This year, three prominent choral conductors shared their insights and talents with the Radcliffe Choral Society. During our phenomenal spring tour to California, Nathan Kreitzer, conductor of the professional ensemble Quire of Voyces, coached RCS in Renaissance works; and Grant Gershon, Music Director of the LA Master Chorale, led a workshop on Britten's *Missa Brevis*. In April, RCS was visited by Venezuelan conductor Maria Guinand, one of the most celebrated conductors in the world. The choir benefited greatly from these experiences.

I am enormously proud of our students, particularly for the character, patience, and poise they have shown during this year of transition. Thankfully, I have the distinct privilege of working with a remarkable and dedicated artistic staff; Assistant Conductor Beth Willer and pianist John Sullivan provided an inestimable amount of time, talent, and energy to our choir. We are lucky to work with professional artists of their caliber. The student leadership also contributed a great deal to make this year's leadership transition smooth and productive. President Molly O'Laughlin and Managers Molly Storer and Amy Lifland and the members of our executive committee offer the kind of leadership most professional non-profit organizations would envy.

We're off to a great start, if I may be so bold! I am particularly looking forward to an exciting 2011-2012 year, including our tour to Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria. Thank you for your support of the Choral Society! I am looking forward to many more adventures ahead.

Yours,

Andy



Andy on tour, assisting RCS in pranking the Glee Club (see tour recap, p.4, for details!)

RCS ALUMNAE REUNION SING

Please join us during reunion weekend in May for an RCS group sing sponsored by the Radcliffe Choral Society Foundation. This event will take place 4-6 PM on Thursday, May 26 in Paine Music Hall, directly following the Commencement ceremonies. We will be singing favorite RCS repertoire from across the decades, conducted by Director of Choral Activities Andy Clark. All RCS alumnae are invited (not just class reunion years). Friends and family are welcome too; there will be seating for them to watch and listen. Many of you have already sent in your repertoire suggestions. If you have songs to suggest, or wish to RSVP to this event, please contact Marianne Cook at 508-333-8986 or cookmarianne@gmail.com.

RCS 2011 SPRING TOUR TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The RCS spring tour to Southern California was a smashing success! The tour began in San Diego, where we met some wonderful hosts and had a successful first concert. 'Cliffe Notes sang at the St. Patrick's Day Parade celebration in Balboa Park and spent an afternoon at the San Diego Zoo. Next in Santa Barbara, we sang at the Old Santa Barbara Mission and performed for a packed audience at the First United Methodist Church. We spent a day exploring beautiful Santa Barbara, soaking up some of the plentiful and much-needed California sunshine, and took a boat ride around the harbor at sunset. Meanwhile, we sent text messages to the Glee Club and pranked them into believing that Andy fell off the boat!

In Los Angeles, our last and busiest stop, we performed with the Chamber Singers of the Los Angeles Children's Chorus at their home church, Pasadena Presbyterian Church. We were immensely impressed by their skill and repertoire, and enjoyed combining with them to sing Michael Haydn's *Dixit Dominus* and Benjamin Britten's *Old Abram Brown*. After this concert, the Harvard Club of Southern California and the RCS Foundation co-hosted a reception for all of the singers, families, and hosts, where we were able to connect with alums and mingle with the Chamber Singers.

Our final concert was with Bel Canto, the excellent women's chorus of Harvard-Westlake High School. This concert was especially exciting because we were able to sing Benjamin Britten's *Missa Brevis* with a fantastic organ after having a masterclass on the piece from Grant Gershon, the renowned conductor of the Los Angeles Master Chorale.

This tour would not have been possible without the help of our generous and welcoming hosts - thank you! We would also especially like to thank Jenn Hoang ('00) and Laura Reardon ('08) for helping to plan the rewarding joint reception with RCS alumnae and members of the Harvard Club of Southern California. Overall, tour was a wonderful week of singing, collaboration, sunshine, camaraderie and friendship, and connecting with hosts and alums. Time to start looking forward to next year's tour!



From Left: Michaela Tracy ('13), Molly O'Laughlin ('11), Sarah Leubke ('13), Katie Banks ('12)

LOOKING FORWARD: RCS INTERNATIONAL TOUR 2012

The itinerary for Summer 2012 tour to Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey, "Sailing to Byzantium," is coming together very well, with concerts planned in the cities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Sofia, Plodiv, Varna, and Istanbul. In Bulgaria RCS is planning to collaborate with the Philip Koutev National Folklore Ensemble and journey to the small town of Gabrovo for a concert and hosting experience with the Aprilov National High School. In Greece and Turkey RCS will be performing with university choruses, namely the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki and Bahcesehir University in Istanbul. As concerts are finalized, tour managers will turn their attention to finding hosts and solidifying additional opportunities for musical outreach and community service.

RCS is considering corporate sponsorship as a new approach to offsetting our costs. Alumnae with experience in this area, or with suggestions for hosting and musical and community service outreach, are invited to email Olivia Pei and Katherine Reifler at tour2012@radcliffechoralsociety.org. Thank you for all the support that members of our alumnae community have contributed so far!

Donate to the Radcliffe Choral Society!

The Radcliffe Choral Society is proud to not only be one of the nation's oldest and most respected women's choruses, but also an entirely student-run 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We are able to finance our efforts to celebrate women's choral music and leadership while providing meaningful experiences for our members through concert revenue, merchandise sales, fundraising, and the support of our alumnae board, the Radcliffe Choral Society Foundation.

We hope that you might consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Radcliffe Choral Society in support of our endeavors.

For information on how to donate or to donate online, please visit our website at <http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~rcs/donate.html>.

Please send checks to:

Radcliffe Choral Society
Attn Financial Manager
Holden Chapel, Harvard Yard
Cambridge, MA 02138

Thank you for supporting the Radcliffe Choral Society!