

Issue II  
April 2022



*Fol-de-Rol*

The newsletter of the  
Yale Glee Club  
Associates

# Letter from the Director

April 2022

Dear friends,

Warm spring greetings from the Hendrie Hall and the 161st Yale Glee Club!

Following a wonderful fall semester back singing in person and our first full concert in Woolsey Hall since the start of the pandemic in late November, our spring semester has been a time of continued reemergence and the return of many YGC traditions we hold dear.

In early March, we sang a joint concert with the Yale Camerata and Schola Cantorum conducted by my dear colleague André Thomas - our first live concert welcoming members of the general public to attend in person since February 2020. This month will see a [collaboration](#) with the full Yale Symphony Orchestra featuring the music of Johannes Brahms and Caroline Shaw as well as the world premiere of *Letter from Abigail* by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Julia Wolfe. We will also perform in a [joint benefit concert](#) on Apr. 9 for the people of Ukraine with the Yale Symphony and Yale Concert Band.

May will see the return of our commencement weekend traditions, including the Baccalaureate service and our annual Commencement Concert. And I am thrilled to announce that in late May we will embark on our first concert tour since the start of the pandemic, a week-long trip to California that will include collaborations with the Pasadena Chorale, Los Angeles Children's Chorus, Cal State Fullerton, Urban Voices Project, and Chanticleer.

Through it all, the students have been a true inspiration – resilient, steadfast, optimistic, and supportive of one another. And they are sounding better than ever.

I am also happy to share that we are now able to invite alumni back to campus for our first Singing Dinner since the start of the pandemic! [The event will be held in Commons on Saturday, May 7. Deadline for registration is April 15th.](#) Vaccines will be required and masks will be worn while we sing. We hope you can join us – it has been far too long since our students and alums were able to raise their voices together in joyful song. Plans for a reunion event next fall are underway.

I hope to see you soon!

Yours in song,

Jeff

# *The Song You Raised Will Ring*

On November 19, 2021, we performed almost our entire repertoire in Woolsey Hall. The concert, “The Song You Raised Will Ring,” lasted a solid two hours, and in it we premiered several pieces for the first time in a live setting, including “Paradise,” by Angélica Negrón (originally commissioned two years ago for our 2020 Spring Tour), “Though the Great Waters Sleep,” by Isaac Lovdahl, “A Heart in Port,” by Shruthi Rajasekar (originally written for the wedding of Erika Lynn-Green ‘18 and Daniel Packard ‘18!), “Now We Can Begin,” by Arianne Abela, and “Meditation,” by Joel Thompson. We sang several other classic pieces as well, such as “Regina caeli laetare,” by Vicente Lusitano, “Tchaka,” by Sydney Guillaume (a recording of which you can find [here](#) from the Glee Club a few years ago!), and “Angel Band,” arranged by Shawn Kirchner.

In the fall semester, we spent a fair amount of time in rehearsal discussing the pieces we were singing in the context of the choral world and historically. To share some of the knowledge we gained and discoveries we made, we decided to give spoken program notes for every song. Below are some of the program notes. Please enjoy!



# The Song You Raised Will Ring

## **“Ave Maria,” composed by Nathaniel Dett**

The next piece we will sing this evening is Nathaniel Dett’s Ave Maria. The first time I sang this piece was on a warm, humid evening in June with a small group of Glee Clubbers who were in New Haven over the summer. It was the first piece I sang after a yearlong break from singing choral music in-person, and I remember reading through the piece and savoring every moment of its striking harmonies; the sopranos would soar to impossibly high notes while the lower parts maintained a rich, magnificent sound. Dett’s Ave Maria is special to me not only because of its timeless beauty but also because it reminds me of the sense of togetherness that comes from making music with friends. I hope you all enjoy hearing it as much as we enjoy performing it!

*Written by Maya Khurana ‘24*

## **“Meditation,” composed by Joel Thompson**

Meditation, composed by Joel Thompson and with text from Jacqueline Woodson’s novel “Brown Girl Dreaming,” struck me with its subtlety and nuance the first time we sang it. I love how the structure of the music mirrors the words; it is clear how intentionally Joel crafted each line with overlapping melodies, repeated phrases, and silences to create a song that feels new and surprising each time we sing it. We were incredibly lucky to have Joel come and speak to us about the process of composing Meditation, and I think you too can get a sense of his gentle, deep wisdom from this simple and surprising song — just listen, listen.

*Written by Emily Lau ‘24*

# The Song You Raised Will Ring

“**Though the Great Waters Sleep,**” composed by Isaac Lovdahl (listen [here!](#))

Our next piece—conducted by our assistant conductor, Nate WidELITZ—was the winner of the Glee Club’s Emerging Composers competition this year. This piece is a setting of a poem by Emily Dickinson:

*Though the  
great Waters  
sleep,  
That they are  
still the Deep,  
We cannot  
doubt,  
No vacillating  
God  
Ignited this  
Abode  
To put it  
out –*



When I hear the line “we cannot doubt” smack in the middle of a Dickinson poem, I’m pretty sure I’m supposed to doubt it. The poem—and the piece—juxtapose doubt and assurance.

We start in the familiar key of C major, but the watery voice of the piano leads the choir into unusual harmonies, through many “vacillations” in tempo. Even as we enter the classic chord progression of a hymn, unexpected suspensions create new beauty.

By the end, we’ve moved to a new key—E major. The altos descend from the root of the chord to the fifth—into “the Deep,” you could say. It’s a bit strange; but it’s good. Dancing with doubt, rather than a bad thing, brings us to a new place of deeper assurance, richer beauty.

*Written by Raquel Sequeira ‘21.5*

# Guest Conductor Visit



Markus Utz



Ernst Buscagne

On March 7, we were lucky to have two special guests, Ernst and Markus, come to our rehearsal! Ernst Buscagne and Markus Utz are professors of choral conducting at the Zurich University of the Arts. As part of a conductor exchange program, they visited Hendrie Hall to help us learn “Nänie,” by Johannes Brahms, which we will be performing in our upcoming joint concert with Camarata and the Symphony Orchestra on April 24th, “Music in Common Time.” Ernst led us through a rigorous warm-up, involving meditation-style breathing, squats, and arpeggios. Markus patiently walked us through the pronunciation for the entire 19 page piece, demonstrating how to make the bright vowels as if the sound was coming through our eyes, and indicating when we should sing legato, with soft t’s, and shadow vowels. We took a small break from the Brahms piece to learn a couple of Swiss and German folk songs, “La sera sper il lag” and “Aber gäll, du hettsch mi gern,” which Ernst taught us with great enthusiasm and animation. We are so grateful to both of them for helping us better pronounce this musical language, and we hope to see them again soon!



# Anti-Racism Working Group



During the summer of 2020, the YGC Class of 2021 established a set of goals for us to work toward to combat structural racism in our society, the choral music world, and the Glee Club. Some broader goals that they recommended include community outreach to increase New Haven access to our concerts, greater engagement with New Haven schools and music programs, active and intentional recruitment practices to increase diversity within Glee, and careful repertoire selection followed by appropriate and significant engagement with pieces by composers of color.

They were incredibly thoughtful and intentional with the agenda they created, and we are so grateful for the work they put in, which has spurred us on to take action. We formed an Anti-Racist Working Group, and following the advice of YGC Class of '21, we have focused on:

- 1) having thoughtful and intentional small-group conversations about our repertoire;
- 2) engaging with the composers of our pieces whenever possible, especially in cases when understanding the composer's background/culture is vital to our ability to perform it properly;
- 3) sharing the knowledge of our composers and our thoughts on the pieces we perform through spoken program notes;
- 4) working on our pronunciation for pieces with native speakers;
- 5) giving back to the New Haven community through benefit concerts; and
- 6) reaching out to cultural houses at Yale to increase diversity in the recruitment process.

Due to COVID, we have unfortunately not been able to work on concert advertising in the broader New Haven community, but hopefully as the community health situation improves, we will be able to invite a diverse audience to attend our concerts.

Obviously, we still have so much work to do, but it feels good to be making a difference in the Glee Club. Already, difficult discussions are becoming more normal and natural, our understanding of the pieces has grown, and audience engagement has increased, so we are so excited to our mission for a more anti-racist future under Jeff's active leadership, engagement, and support.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, or would like to know how you can get involved, email Emily (a working group member and alumni coordinator) at [e.lau@yale.edu](mailto:e.lau@yale.edu). We would love to hear from you!

# Officer Profiles

**Aria Falcone**  
*President*



**SM '22 | she/her**

I have loved serving as YGC President this past year. It has been incredible to get to raise our voices together during in-person rehearsals. From new member meals and weekly pre-gee dinners, to documentary screenings in Hendrie and pizza parties on Cross Campus, it has been wonderful to work with this year's officer corps and my incredible partner-in-crime Sarah to help YGC bond and spend quality time together. YGC is such a healing and joyful space full of kindness and love, and serving as this year's President has been truly a dream come true!

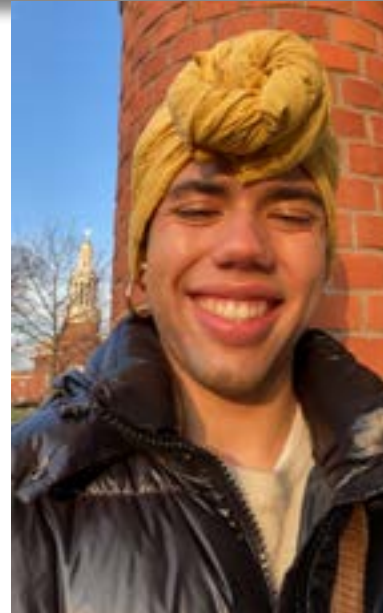
**Sarah Grube**  
*Manager*



**SM '22 | she/her**

I love being able to work with everyone in the Glee club in a variety of capacities! Through managing attendance and logistics I feel like I both get to help the ensemble perform at its best as well as support my fellow Glee Clubbers as they balance everything that is going on in their busy lives.

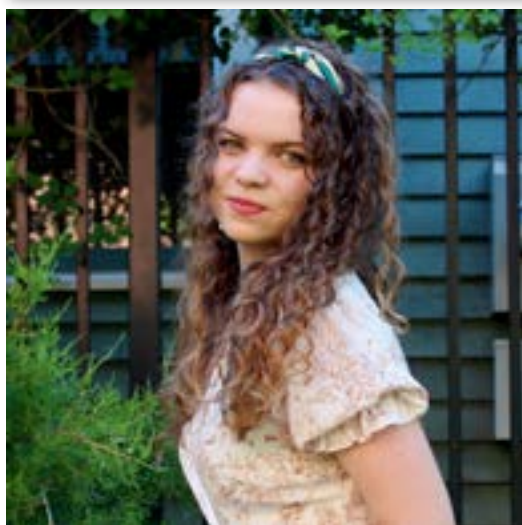
**Alex Whittington**  
*Student Conductor*



**PC '22 | they/any**

I have loved getting to collaborate with the Glee Club in new ways as both a singer and a conductor!

**Laura Clapp**  
*Student Conductor*



**PC '22 | she/her**

Working with the YGC Chamber Singers this year has been so rewarding! I'm grateful to be able to work with such a talented group of singers.

**Julianna Lai**  
*Summer Tour Manager*



**SM '22 | she/her**

We first signed on to be tour managers in February 2020, so we're thrilled that we've finally been cleared for travel! We're looking forward to a sunny week in California of inspiring collaborations, beaches, and good eats.

**Jonathan Jalbert**  
*Summer Tour Manager*



**TC '23 | he/him**

I enjoy preserving the institutional memory of YGC Tour. There are so many traditions to be excited about on tour, and I look forward to continuing to plan and manifest those traditions.



# Officer Profiles

**Max Moen**  
*Winter Tour Manager*



**TD '23 | he/him**

Obviously this year we aren't able to do a Winter Tour as planned, but we're looking forward to leading activities for the Glee Club that fall within the public health guidance. Ultimately, I hope through these activities to recreate the sense of community that develops when we go on tour!

**Hannah Morrison**  
*Archivist & Winter Tour Manager*



**SY '23 | she/her**

As a Winter Tour Manager I am SO excited to be organizing YGC's first "ultra domestic" winter tour in New Haven and New York. Although we can't perform and travel as we normally would on tour, I am so happy we still have the opportunity to gather and spend quality time together before the spring semester. That's what it's all about! As an Archivist, I love the feeling of having a hand in the Glee Club's institutional memory and our lovely sheet music collection. Makes my archival heart happy! Elisabeth and Max are the best partners I could ask for.

**Elisabeth Moore**  
*Archivist*



**SY '23.5 | she/her**

I had a great time getting everyone's music together, and it's always fun to do some sleuthing when music goes missing!

**Emily Lau**  
*Alumni Coordinator*



**MY '24 | she/her**

In pairing students and alumni up for the Mentorship Program, I got to know both my peers and past Glee Club members, which was very fun. I love working on the Fol-de-Rols because it brings back all the good memories of what we've done in Glee so far in the semester, and makes me hopeful about all the wonderful music to come!

**Sam Ahn**  
*Alumni Coordinator*



**BK '24 | he/him**

Really proud to help connect our amazing alumni community to our students through our mentorship program!

**Jack Softcheck**  
*Community Engagement Officer*



**MC '22 | he/him**

Despite the challenges of the virtual format, I'm happy that we've been able to collaborate with Hear Your Song this year. I am excited to resume work with the Boys & Girls club when in-person activities begin again!

# Officer Profiles

**Annli Nakayama**  
*Publicity Chair*



**PC '22 | she/her**

Having been publicity chair during last year's entirely remote programming, getting to promote our return to in-person concerts has been wonderful! I'm especially looking forward to our next concert with the YSO -- with the expanded capacity in Woolsey, it should be this year's biggest concert yet!

**Maya Khurana**  
*Publicity Chair*



**BF '24 | she/her**

It has been so much fun to work with Annli this year and spread the word about the Glee Club's projects -- from Project 14 to Hand in Hand III to our fall concert, The Song You Raised Will Ring. I am looking forward to sharing more of the Glee Club's work with our community in the spring!

**Kevin Li**  
*Stage Manager*



**MY '23 | he/him**

Although Covid has limited what a typical year of stage managing would look like, I am proud to have assisted Glee in a very tangible way. I most enjoyed coordinating the several stage performances we did have.

**Robby Hill**  
*Social Chair*



**JE '24 | he/him**

I was really proud of getting to do social programming during retreat, even if it was only for one day. Getting the chance to travel to Norfolk on a beautiful day allowed everyone to experience what makes Glee so special.

**Maya Ingram**  
*Social Chair*



**MC '23 | she/her**

I've had so much fun planning events this semester with the lovely Robby Hill and hopefully next semester we'll be planning a YGC formal!! Exciting!!

**Shreya Pathak**  
*Wardrobe Chair*



**MC '23 | she/her**

I've loved my role as wardrobe manager this year and it has been rewarding to help my peers find outfits that they feel confident and prepared in for concerts!

# Officer Profiles



Hanah Leventhal  
Web Manager



SM '23 | she/her

I really appreciate being able to participate in YGC in different ways. I feel so much closer to the group, getting to contribute more than just my voice.

# Alumni Mentorship Update

*Thank you* to all who signed up for the 2021-2022 YGC Alumni Mentorship Program!

For those unfamiliar with the program, Glee alumni and current students fill out an interest survey, and we pair people up based on interests, job history, majors, and experience. Mentors and students are then free to determine a relationship that works for them, whether that is meeting once a year, once a semester, or even once a month.

We have already matched mentors and students, and hopefully many pairs have had a chance to connect by now. 42 current YGC students participated in the Program this year and 58 alumni sign up to be mentors.

If you didn't get a chance to participate, never fear – this is a program we do every year, so be sure to fill out the survey next year! We also have a list of Glee alumni for our current seniors, to help with the post-Yale life, so if you would like to be added to that list (and didn't fill out the survey), please reach out to us at [e.lau@yale.edu](mailto:e.lau@yale.edu) and [sam.ahn@yale.edu](mailto:sam.ahn@yale.edu). Also reach out to us if you have any other comments, questions, or feedback – we love to hear from you!

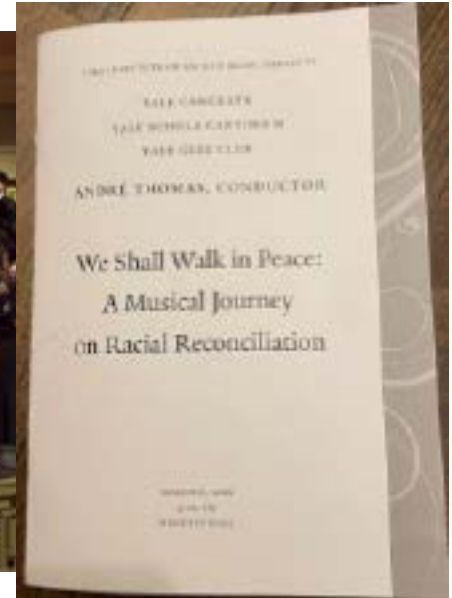
# *“We Shall Walk in Peace A Musical Journey on Racial Reconciliation”*

Our spring semester opened with a bang. On March 6, we performed in a joint concert with the Yale Camerata and Yale Schola Cantorum, conducted by Dr. André Thomas, entitled “We Shall Walk in Peace: A Musical Journey on Racial Reconciliation.” Dr. Thomas is currently the conductor of the Yale Camerata and the president of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), and has received numerous musical achievement awards in his illustrious teaching and conducting career.

We were so grateful to have him as a guest conductor – he has an incredibly dynamic energy and we learned so much from working with him and from reading parts of his book, *Way Over in Beulah Lan’*, about the importance of spirituals and traditional African American music in the American choral world.



# *“We Shall Walk in Peace A Musical Journey on Racial Reconciliation”*



The concert began with “Alleluia,” by Randall Thompson, a familiar piece to us, though rendered more powerfully by the added voices of Camerata and Schola. We also sang “Signs of the Judgment,” arranged by Mark Butler and with a lovely solo by Chloe Benzan-Duval (MY ‘24); “The Blind Man,” arranged by William Grant Still, with Nicole Lam (ES ‘25) on piano and Alex Whittington (PC ‘22) opening the piece with a powerful tenor line; and “Would You Harbor Me,” by Ysaÿe Barnwell. Jules Manresa (JE ‘22) also performed a solo piece, “Dream Variation,” by Margaret Bonds. At the end of the concert, we were joined again by Camerata and Schola to sing “We Shall Walk through the Valley in Peace,” arranged by Moses Hogan.

The concert also featured some non-singing elements, including a poetry-reading, piece-specific program notes, and a moment to honor the lives of several Black women who have been killed by police violence. With our first audience of over 500 people since COVID hit two years ago, this was certainly not a concert any of us will forget. Dr. Thomas conducted all of us through an experience both musically powerful and emotionally impactful, and we are so grateful to have been a part of it.

# Save the Date: Singing Dinner

One of our cherished spring traditions is our annual Singing Dinner – a chance to reconnect with old friends, welcome the graduating seniors into the YGCA, and most of all, to sing some old favorites together.

We will hold [this year's Singing Dinner at Commons on Saturday, May 7](#). Information about the event will be sent to all alumni via email soon and will also be shared on the YGCA Facebook page. There will be singing, there will be friendship, and there will be a chance to congratulate our wonderful and historic YGC Class of 2022.

## Upcoming Concerts



We have two major upcoming concerts this spring. Due to the unfolding crisis in Ukraine, Jeff, Thomas Duffy (conductor of the Yale Concert Band), and William Boughton (conductor of the Yale Symphony Orchestra) have decided to hold **a joint fundraiser concert for Ukrainian families on April 9**. With all three of the major Yale undergraduate musical ensembles, we hope to raise awareness, action, and engagement across campus about the devastating effects that the war is having, and we also hope to raise money to support the Ukrainian people. We really hope you will be able to come and help us raise our voices. [Reserve tickets here](#) or [watch the livestream here](#).

Our next concert will also be **a joint concert on April 24, with the Yale Symphony Orchestra and Yale Schola Cantorum, entitled “Music in Common Time.”** We will be premiering Julia Wolfe’s new piece *Letter for Abigail*, with text taken from Abigail Adams’s famous letter to her husband in which she urged him to “consider the ladies,” conducted by Maggie Brooks. We will also perform Caroline Shaw’s piece, *Music in Common Time*, which the Glee Club recorded a few years ago (and which can be found on Spotify [here!](#)), and *Nänie*, by Johannes Brahms, conducted by Jeff, as well as “Mass: A Celebration of Love and Joy,” composed and conducted by Dr. André Thomas. There is limited capacity in Woolsey, so make sure to reserve tickets ASAP at [this link!](#)

Stay tuned for more information about the Ukraine benefit concert, as well as our annual Commencement concert! We are also making hopeful plans for a domestic summer tour in southern California from May 24 to June 1. More info to follow on that as well!

# *Note from the Alumni Coordinators*

*Hi everyone!*

We hope you've enjoyed this edition of the Fol-de-Rol. It was so meaningful for us to recap some of what we've been working on this year for you all. Keep an eye out for our commencement edition, which will celebrate our graduating seniors!

And as always, please contact us at [e.lau@yale.edu](mailto:e.lau@yale.edu) and [sam.ahn@yale.edu](mailto:sam.ahn@yale.edu) with any photos, memories, or other content for us to include in future editions of the Fol-de-Rol. All comments and suggestions about the newsletter and other alumni activities are always welcome as well!



Much love,

*Sam + Emily*

*Thank you for reading!*