

Issue 1
Winter 2024



Fol-de-Rol

The newsletter of the
Yale Glee Club Associates

Letter from the Director



Warmest greetings from Hendrie Hall!

The 163rd Yale Glee Club is already nearing the end of our fall semester and it has been a joyful and eventful one so far. Thanks to the recruiting efforts of our officers, we had a very successful round of auditions and welcomed thirty-one fantastic new singers into the YGC family at our Tap Night on Sep. 4.

Our gradual reemergence from pandemic protocols over the past three years continues. We are now singing unmasked in all of our rehearsals as well as our performances and all other restrictions related to audiences, guest ensembles, joint concerts, and travel have been lifted. It feels like a long journey from March of 2020 when we abruptly cancelled our tour of Puerto Rico on the morning we were scheduled to depart, through the 160th season when nearly all of our activity was virtual and our 161st season when we were singing together but to mostly empty concert halls. I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the students, colleagues, and alums who have worked tirelessly to sustain our community and keep our traditions strong through this most extraordinary time.

Our concert season began just two weeks after auditions with a performance of Gustav Mahler's Symphony #3 with the Yale Philharmonia and continued with our annual Family Weekend concert with the always stellar Yale Concert Band and Yale Symphony Orchestra. We traveled to Princeton for our joint concert with the Princeton Glee Club for the first time since 2019 and welcomed the Harvard Glee Club and Radcliffe Choral Society to Woolsey Hall on Nov. 17, the night before Yale's triumph over Harvard at the Yale Bowl.

As always, we've been fortunate to premiere several new choral works this fall, including the winning composition in our annual Emerging Composers Competition, Chilean composer Isamel Huerta's *Ten piedad de nosotros*, and a new work we commissioned by Shruthi Rajasekar inspired by the melodies and rhythms of Bollywood film music, *Lingua Tonga*, accompanied by dancers from Yale's excellent dance ensembles Rangeela and Kalaa. For the premiere of *Hark, the Bark of Dear Old Dan* by John Raskopf '27, the winner of this year's Fenno Heath Award, we were joined on stage by none other than Handsome Dan himself! Stay tuned for more news soon about an exciting new music venture we are about to launch, NextWorks.

We have much to look forward to next semester. Our tour will take us to Montreal and New York City in January and to the Pacific Northwest and Alaska (a first for the Yale Glee Club!) in March. In February, we'll perform orchestral works by two composers active in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Marianna Martines and José Maurício Nunes Garcia, and in April we'll join forces with the Yale Camerata and Yale Symphony for performances in New Haven and in New York of one of the towering masterworks of the 20th century, Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, as timely today as when it was first performed.

We also look forward to our annual Singing Dinner on Saturday, Apr. 13, which following last year's unforgettable reunion weekend in New Haven will be held at the Yale Club of NYC. I very much hope to see you there, or at one of our upcoming concerts! Until then, I'm sending you all my wishes for a restful holiday season.

Yours in song,

Jeff

YGC's Right-Hand Man

Get to know Andrew Liu, YGC 23-24's Assistant Conductor



Andrew Liu (he/him) is in his second year pursuing a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting at Yale University, where he also serves as Assistant Conductor of the Yale Glee Club, studying under Professors Jeffrey Douma and David Hill. He earned a BA in Music at the University of Oxford, UK, graduating with first-class honours. While at Oxford, he was organ scholar at Hertford College, serving as conductor and accompanist for Hertford College Chapel Choir. Currently, he is also Organist and Director of Music at St Peter's Episcopal Church in Milford, CT.

On top of being a conductor, Andrew is also an organist, flautist and composer. As an organist, he was a prize-winning recipient of the Associateship Diploma of the Royal College of Organists in 2018, and has performed worldwide. As a flautist, he has won numerous international prizes, including the 10th Singapore International Flute Competition 2019 (1st Prize, Senior Category) and Berkshire Young Musician of the Year 2016 (Winner, Under 15). As a composer, his works have been performed by Kreutzer Quartet and the CHROMA Ensemble (UK), and he has been commissioned by the Hong Kong Legends Chamber Orchestra in various projects.

Fol-de-Rol: Tell us about your musical journey and what brought you to Yale!

Andrew! My musical journey started at a very young age and I also sang in church and school choirs until my voice broke, including the renowned Eton College Chapel Choir. In terms of conducting, my journey started when I got to regularly conduct the Chapel Choir at my college during my undergraduate years as an Organ Scholar. I enjoyed it so much, so in the last year of my undergraduate studies, I decided that I would try for a Master's degree in this field.

And why Yale? Yale's choral conducting programme is unique in that it is a joined programme by the Yale School of Music and the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. Given that most of my conducting experience has been in church music and that is what I hope to do in the future, I was particularly attracted by the programme offered at Yale.

Fol-de-Rol: How are you involved in music at Yale besides the Glee Club?

Andrew: Last year, I sang in many different choirs on campus, including Battell Chapel Choir, Marquand Chapel Choir and Yale Camerata. This year, as I took up the role of Assistant Conductor of the Glee Club and of Organist and Director of Music at St Peter's Episcopal Church (Milford), I am involved in fewer choirs and only sing on campus in Repertory and Recital Choruses (and Glee Club of course!). Other than choir, I am also taking secondary lessons in organ and voice with Prof. James O'Donnell and Kate Maroney respectively.

At the same time, I am also working on a new initiative at the Tsai CITY (Tsai Centre for Innovative Thinking at Yale), which will be an open and global platform dedicated to sacred choral music by young composers. Stay tuned!

Fol-de-Rol: What have you learned from working with the Glee Club this year so far?

Andrew: Working with the Yale Glee Club has been a particularly fun, rewarding and transformative for me. First of all, it's my first time working with and conducting such a large choir. The choirs I have previously worked with have mostly been 40 singers or fewer. More importantly, though, Glee's repertoire choice is so varied that it has truly broadened my horizons, and given me exposure to and experience in a lot of repertoire that I would otherwise have not known.

Fol-de-Rol: As the conductor of the YGC Chamber Singers, what are your goals for the ensemble and how did you assemble the repertoire for the year?

Andrew: With Chamber Singers, our goal each year is to perform an end-of-year concert as well as perform some shorter pieces in various full-group concerts and on tour. This shapes the kind of repertoire that we work on with the Chamber Singers, mostly shorter standalone pieces. For our end-of-year concert, we are hoping to perform a programme based on an overarching theme of 'Hopes, Memories and Time', where we will be hopefully performing at least one larger work (or excerpts from a larger work) as well as the rest of the repertoire we have learned throughout the year.

Fol-de-Rol: What are you most looking forward to with YGC and the Chamber Singers?

Andrew: I am really looking forward to tours! I've been on a few choir tours before with other choirs, and they've always been great fun. Touring with Glee Club will be so much fun I'm sure. We're also collaborating with different choirs nationally and internationally on tour, which will be a wonderful opportunity to get to know more singers and conductors too!

New Member Profiles



Abigail Taylor

Year: 2025
Home: Massachusetts
Favorite rep piece so far: "If I Were a Swan", Kevin Puts
Favorite thing about Glee: "I enjoy the great music and people!"

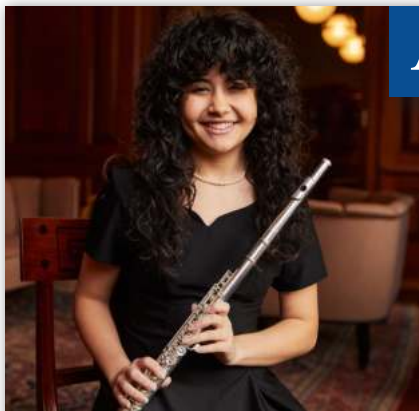
Alistair Lam

Year: 2027
Home: Hong Kong
Favorite rep piece so far: "Have Ye Not Known?" and "Ye Shall Have a Song", Randall Thompson
Favorite thing about Glee: "We really enjoy each other's company as humans as much as musicians!"



Alliese Bonner

Year: 2027
Home: Mt. Juliet, Tennessee
Favorite rep piece so far: "War Requiem", Benjamin Britten
Favorite thing about Glee: "I love making meaningful connections with peers that share the same passion for music I have."



Andrew Boanoh

Year: 2027
Home: New Jersey
Favorite rep piece so far: "Ye Shall Have a Song", Randall Thompson
Favorite thing about Glee: "Bus rides to and from concerts!"



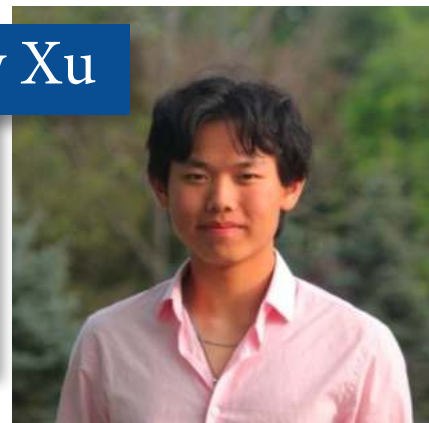
Andrew Xu

Year: 2027

Home: Cheshire, CT

Favorite rep piece so far: "If I Were A Swan", Kevin Puts

Favorite thing about Glee: "How amazing everyone sounds"



Angélique Wheeler

Year: 2026

Home: Chappaqua, New York

Favorite rep piece so far: "Lingua Tonga", S. Rajasekar

Favorite thing about Glee: "When a piece comes together and flows smoothly with all of the parts working together!"



Ben Weiss

Year: 2027

Home: London, UK

Favorite rep piece so far: "Ten Piedad de Nosotros",
Ismael Huerta Marin

Favorite thing about Glee: "The opportunity to sing in a
large chorus with all my friends!"



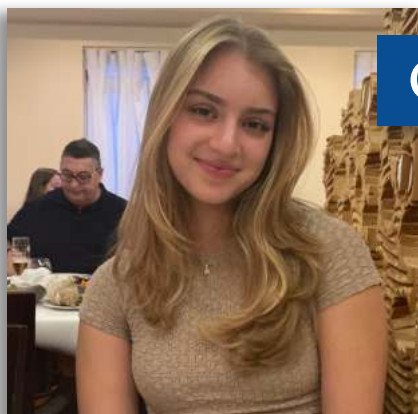
Catharine Esteves

Year: 2027

Home: Newark, New Jersey

Favorite rep piece so far: "The Increasing Light", Arr. J. Douma

Favorite thing about Glee: "I love getting to share my love for
music with other people."



Catharine Lee

Year: 2027

Home: New York, New York

Favorite rep piece so far: "Have Ye Not Known", Randall
Thompson

Favorite thing about Glee: "I am so grateful that I get to
share my love of music with the most inspirational and
talented group of singers!"



Catalina Ossman

Year: 2027

Home: Greenville, South Carolina

Favorite rep piece so far: "The Increasing Light", Arr. J. Douma

Favorite thing about Glee: "The community- singing together is a beautiful thing!"



Chibuike Madu



Year: 2027

Home: Houston, Texas

Favorite rep piece so far: "Go Down in The Valley", Andre Thomas

Favorite thing about Glee: "I love being able to learn new and complex pieces."

Elizabeth Wolfram



Year: 2027

Home: Concord, Massachusetts

Favorite rep piece so far: "Slava v vishnikh Bogu", Rachmaninoff

Favorite thing about Glee: "I absolutely love the people in Glee Club and having that time of the week designated to singing with my friends is really what keeps me happy during busy times."

Gbemiga Salu



Year: 2027

Home: Lagos, Nigeria

Favorite rep piece so far: "Lingua Tonga", Shruthi Rajasekar

Favorite thing about Glee: "The people I get to sing with."

Jack Dozier

Year: 2027

Home: Charlottesville, VA

Favorite rep piece so far: "The Increasing Light", Arr. Jeff Douma and the Yale Football Medley."

Favorite thing about Glee: "I have enjoyed the strong community of the Yale Glee Club and the opportunity it has given me to meet so many other Yalies from different residential colleges."



Jiayang Jin

Year: 2027

Home: NYC and Jiaying, China

Favorite rep piece so far: "Ye Shall Have A Song" R Thompson

Favorite thing about Glee: "There's nothing quite like spiritedly trotting down the aisle of Woolsey at Jeff's signal, reaching the top level of the risers before everyone else (#basssupremacy), and taking everything in."



John Raskopf



Year: 2027

Home: Darien, Connecticut

Favorite rep piece so far: "Have Ye Not Known" and "Ye Shall Have a Song", Randall Thompson

Favorite thing about Glee: "I love how extensive and diverse our repertoire is.."

Lukas Koutsoukos

Year: 2027

Home: Wilton, Connecticut

Favorite rep piece so far: "Ten Piedad de Nosotros", Ismael Huerta Marin

Favorite thing about Glee: "I love singing in amazing venues with new friends!"



Marko Gajic



Year: 2027

Home: Cedarburg, WI

Favorite rep piece so far: "Psalm 86" (A Prayer of David), Udi Perlman

Favorite thing about Glee: "I love getting to meet so many new people!"

Matthew Chen

Year: 2027

Home: San Francisco, CA

Favorite rep piece so far: "Lao Rahal Soti", Samih Choukeir arr. Shireen Abu-Khader

Favorite thing about Glee: "Being able to perform with entire group and demonstrate all the work we've done."



Natalie Bassini

Year: 2027

Home: New York, New York

Favorite rep piece so far: "Ten Piedad de Nosotros", Ismael Huerta Marin

Favorite thing about Glee: "I love being part of such a talented and tightly-knit ensemble."



Omeno Abutu

Year: 2027

Home: Atlanta, Georgia, but originally from Jos, Nigeria

Favorite rep piece so far: "Ye Shall Have a Song", Randall Thompson

Favorite thing about Glee: "I deeply enjoy the sound that we are able to make together and the process of refining that sound."



Rose Kosciuszek

Year: 2027

Home: New Hampshire

Favorite rep piece so far: "Lao Rahal Soti", Samih Choukeir arr. Shireen Abu-Khader.

Favorite thing about Glee: "I love the full and rich sound that our ensemble has!"



Stellan Min

Year: 2027

Home: Seattle, Washington

Favorite rep piece so far: "'Have Ye Not Known?'" Randall Thompson

Favorite thing about Glee: "The strong sense of glamly within the group."



Stephen Morris

Year: 2027

Home: New York, New York

Favorite rep piece so far: "Go Down 'n the Valley and Pray", André Thomas

Favorite thing about Glee: "I love performing with such talented singers, conductors, and composers."



Tamara Bafi

Year: 2027

Home: London, UK and Paris, France

Favorite rep piece so far: "The Football Medley" arr. Fenno Heath

Favorite thing about Glee: "Spending time with my best friends making music together :)"



Thisbe Wu

Year: 2026

Home: New York, New York

Favorite rep piece so far: "Lingua Tonga", S. Rajasekar

Favorite thing about Glee: "Singing in the middle of dense harmonies!"



Vincent Tan

Year: 2025

Home: Brooklyn, New York

Favorite rep piece so far: "Slava v vishnikh Bogu" (Mvt. 7) from All-Night Vigil, Sergei Rachmaninoff

Favorite thing about Glee: "I've really been enjoying the effort people in Glee make to get to know each other!"



Ziqi Cui

Year: 2027

Home: Beijing, China

Favorite rep piece so far: "Lingua Tonga", Shruthi Rajasekar

Favorite thing about Glee: "The assembly"



*Welcome new members of the
163rd Yale Glee Club!*

Hark the Bark of Dear Old Dan!

Get to know the winner of this year's Fenno Heath Award!



John Raskopf is a freshman at Yale as well as a singer, composer, and music director who has collaborated with organizations such as the Dallas Brass, the World Youth Honors Choir, the NAFME All-National Mixed Choir, and Orchestra Lumos. He has studied under Janna Baty, Kathryn Amyotte, Jennifer Jolley, Amanda Harberg, and others. Outside of the Glee Club, he is a proud member of the Yale Spizzwinks(?), the Yale Concert Band, and several chamber choirs. John's winning piece is titled "Hark the Bark of Dear Old Dan!"

Fol-de-Rol: Why did you choose to submit a composition for this year's Fenno Heath competition, and how did you come up with the idea for it?

I found out about the competition when Jeff mentioned it during a Glee rehearsal. I had already written a fight song in a similar style for my local high school, so I decided to try my hand at writing one for Yale! I knew it had to be about Handsome Dan, who for some reason isn't mentioned in any of our other fight songs. I came up with the titular lyric in the hours that followed the YCG rehearsal; after that, everything else fell neatly into place, due in no small part to my roommates, on whom I tested the song's catchiness as it evolved.

Fol-de-Rol: You mentioned another piece you wrote. How long have you been composing?

I started composing in the summer after ninth grade and have been at it ever since! I credit much of what I know to my time at Interlochen Arts Camp '21 and '22, which introduced me to so many people whom I'm honored to know. In terms of the piece I mentioned, it's called Rolling Waves and became my high school's official fight song when I graduated.

Fol-de-Rol: Your piece might be published in the next edition of the Yale Glee Club's songbook, Songs of Yale. What do you want future singers to take away from it?

I tried to write something that was catchy, witty, and—most importantly—fun to sing! I hope that if it's included, future singers have as much fun performing it as I did writing it.

Ten Piedad de Nosotros

Get to know the winner of this year's Emerging Composer's Competition!



From Villa Alemana, Chile, Ismael Huerta's first steps in music were at school, with Andes folk music. As he wasn't born on a family of musicians, he never thought of the possibility of dedicating his life to music. That is why, after finishing high school he started studies of engineering in Universidad de Valparaiso. Four years later, and after the death of his father, he decided, against all odds, to dedicate 100% to his passion, music. Eager to learn, he decided to study musical composition in Universidad de Chile, beginning his studies in the year 2017.

Nowadays, he is attending his seventh year of studying with teacher Pablo Délano, as master composer. Till now, he has won 8 awards, Chilean and foreign, and his dream for his future is to be able to study film music or composition abroad.

Fol-de-Rol: What is the story behind this composition?

I wrote this work at a time when I felt very distressed as a result of many factors such as the Pandemic, wars, conflicts and all the problems that we are facing as a generation, in a way that was the main motivation for composing this work.

Fol-de-Rol: How did you write this composition?

I wrote this work thinking about 3 things, 1- the phrase "have mercy on us and listen to our prayer." All music merges with that phrase. 2- that music itself was a prayer expressed in music, for the same reason. The overall sound of the work sincerely expresses who I am and also the work itself goes through different emotional changes, but always with the hope that everything will improve, that is, creating my own prayer. 3- give space for reflection and prayer. It is also worth noting that I composed this work with my voice. That is to say, he sang every part, in addition to helping me on the piano.

Fol-de-Rol: What do you hope the Glee Club (or the other choirs that sing your work) learn or understand after performing this work?

4- I hope it is a moment of reflection, it is for the same reason that within the work there is a moment to vent or pray a prayer freely, I think that in these times where we are bombarded with so many distractions and difficulties in our lives, in addition Given the global context we are going through, I believe that moments of reflection and prayer are needed.

Lingua Tonga

Get to know the composer of one of our World Premier pieces!



Named by The Guardian as a composer "who will enrich your life", Shruthi Rajasekar is an Indian-American musician exploring identity, community, and joy. A 2023 Jerome Hill Artist Fellow, Shruthi draws from her unique dual background in the Carnatic (South Indian classical) and Western classical traditions to create intersectional music. She was awarded the Global Women in Music Award from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights & Donne in Musica Adkins Chiti Foundation. Shruthi has been an artist-in-residence at Tusen Takk Foundation, Britten Pears Arts, and the Anderson Center. As a soprano and Carnatic vocalist, Shruthi has performed and recorded in numerous traditional and experimental settings. She was a Marshall Scholar in the UK, where she pursued postgraduate studies in composition and ethnomusicology. A graduate of Princeton University, Shruthi lives in Minnesota and serves on the board of new music chamber ensemble Zeitgeist.

Fol-de-Rol: What was your inspiration for Lingua Tonga? How did you write it?

Shruthi: The main inspiration for Lingua Tonga was music from the Hindi film industry, which, like many children of the South Asian diaspora, I grew up listening to. Hindi-Urdu isn't my mother tongue, so I often didn't know or understand the lyrics of this music, but that didn't stop me from absolutely loving it. I began the process of composing this piece analytically — studying and incorporating common motifs, contours, and functions of this music across decades of the industry. About halfway through the writing process, I attended the Hindu wedding of a close friend that was, in essence, a week of music and dance to celebrate love and life. There were choreographed group numbers at the Sangeet, an outdoor Baraat with more than an hour of gamboling, and enthusiastic dance-offs at the reception. That cultural and communal synergy of song and movement stayed with me as I returned to Lingua Tonga. I found myself physically moving as I composed; I even ended up filming videos instead of using manuscript paper or audio voice memos to capture the material as it developed. Gesture was therefore central to the piece, and when I sent Jeff the score, I asked if there was any possibility of collaborating with South Asian dancers on campus to bring Lingua Tonga to life in all of its dimensions. I'm so grateful to Jeff, Yale Kalaa & Rangeela, and the members of YGC who did the crucial role of facilitating; they took this small idea of mine and turned it into something magical. Choir and Indian dance is a unique combination— it requires both sets of performers to be sensitive and adjust to each other in real time, while simultaneously communicating the driving energy of this piece to the audience, and everyone on stage at the premiere did a phenomenal job of this.

Weddings are evidently the inspiration for me when it comes to the Yale Glee Club! As some members of the current choir remember, I had the great honor of writing a choir + organ piece called "A Heart in Port" for the wedding of YGC members Erika Lynn-Green '18 and Daniel Packard '18, which the Glee Club then gave the concert premiere of in fall 2021. I met Erika and Daniel while we were all pursuing postgraduate degrees in the UK, but prior to that, we had actually sung in four years of football concerts together (when I was a member of the Princeton University Glee Club). So I've had the great fortune of listening to and admiring the Yale Glee Club for several years now, and I approached this new work well aware of the beauty, skill, and versatility that YGC singers bring to their performances!

A note from the Alumni Coordinator

Hi Glee Club Alumni!

My name is Ayush Iyer and I'm a sophomore in Branford and a Tenor 1 in the Glee Club! I'm from Lancaster, Pennsylvania and majoring in Molecular Biophysics & Biochemistry and Economics.

I have had such an incredible experience as part of the Glee Club and am so grateful for the music, friends, and travel opportunities it has given me. Putting together this fol-de-rol has also been a pleasure and I hope you've enjoyed learning about our new members and some of our new piece features!

I will soon be sending out some information shortly about the YGC Alumni Mentorship Program so be on the lookout for that! It has been so valuable for glee clubbers to receive mentorship from Glee alumni based on personal, career, and other interests. We hope it's been equally valuable for you.

If you have any other questions or concerns about alumni involvement with YGC or any questions about the newsletter, please reach out at ayush.iyer@yale.edu. Thank you!



Glee tour last Spring in Kenya!

Yours in song,

Ayush Iyer