



# Singing City



## REPORT OF GIVING 2024-25

Singing City is a socially conscious vocal movement that educates, motivates, and empowers communities by bringing people together to lift the human spirit through the artistry of choral music.

Dear Friends,

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead

My grandfather, the Rev. A. Herbert Haslam, was, by all accounts, a forward-thinking individual. In 1946, he made the decision to leave his ministry in Toledo, Ohio, and return to Philadelphia with a clear purpose:

*“A Baptist minister who for eight years has championed the cause of interracial harmony in Toledo, decided yesterday to take a unique step in fostering the Brotherhood of Man. Dr. A. Herbert Haslam resigned his position at Ashland Avenue Baptist Church to become the first administrator and minister of a new congregation in Philadelphia—Fellowship Church. His parishioners will be Jews and Christians of all races.”* Elsie M’Kay, The Blade, Toledo, Ohio, Monday, December 30, 1946

Admitting the venture has no precedent in the United States and perhaps the world, he said it was an outgrowth of the belief that “religious people have a heavy responsibility toward creating a community where prejudices and discrimination give way to opportunity and equal rights for all.” This was the foundation upon which the Fellowship House Choir was born. Later renamed Singing City, the choir would go on to champion the vision of a world grounded in justice, non-violence, and racial and religious harmony. This remains an ambitious, important task—and one that we must continue to fight for.

The work we do here at Singing City is both artistically driven and socially imperative. I often think about the creative process and what compels people to engage in acts of creation. There’s the image of the solitary writer or painter, creating in peace and quiet, bringing inspiration to life. But then there’s the collective—community nurtured through the act of artmaking. That’s who we are at Singing City. We are a community of individuals, each of us contributing our love of choral music, our talents, time, energy, and passion to create something greater than ourselves.

We are here to craft something beautiful, but also meaningful—to lift one another up, whether as singers or audience members. We are fortunate to have an artistic director who continually inspires and challenges us with his vision of choral music as a catalyst for social change.

Every organization goes through moments of self-reflection, questioning its core values and their relevance in an ever-changing world. As we face the daily challenges—learning new music, meeting our financial obligations, and building community through song—we must ensure that we never lose sight of the bigger picture. My work at Singing City has been incredibly gratifying, in spite of those challenges. I’ve had the privilege of working alongside incredible people, including Jeff Brillhart and Rollo Dilworth, who have been invaluable partners in this journey.

As I retire from my role as Singing City’s Executive Director, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our choir and board members who volunteer countless hours, lending their expertise to guide the organization and helping to ensure that Singing City’s mission remains alive and well, now and into the future. Rehearsal nights are sacred. It has been my privilege to do my best to support Singing City and its commitment to a more just and joyful society.

I am deeply grateful to every one of you for providing me with that opportunity and for the trust you have bestowed in us and our work. I look forward to continuing as a choir member and volunteer and hope to see you in the coming seasons.

Singing City welcomes Michael J. Bolton as our new Executive Director. You will be hearing from him about all that is coming up in 2025-26 and beyond. Please welcome him to the Singing City family!

Lauren Hallquist-Anderson,  
Executive Director



Photo, l. to r., Singing City Artistic & Music Director Rollo Dilworth, Executive Director Lauren Anderson, now retired, and new Executive Director Michael J. Bolton.

Cover photo: Singing City traveled to Minneapolis in May 2025 for a collaborative concert that featured a performance of Rollo Dilworth’s *Weather*. Photo by Lou R. R. Zurn.

# Annual Friends Drive



Contributions to Singing City's **Annual Friends Drive** are of crucial importance because they are used to support the operating budget of the Choir. We are grateful to all those who make it possible for us to bring live choral music to audiences in the Greater Philadelphia area, to commission new works, and create choral music education and performance opportunities for youth. **Thank you!**

*Photos: Top: The choir gathered at the Friends Meeting on the campus of Swarthmore College in September 2024 for a full day of singing and socializing. Photo by Lauren Anderson. Bottom: Rollo Dilworth speaks to the audience at SC's fall concert in October 2024. Photo by Brendan Krause.*

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Susan Gould  
Sally P. Hartman

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Laila Nada Isaacson‡  
Katrina Looby  
Cynthia Mauleon  
Paul Petrella  
Wendy Pfeffer  
Bob Phillips & Anna  
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♦ Gift in memory of Sonya Garfinkle  
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*Every effort has been made to assure the accuracy of this list. Please contact us with any omissions or errors. Thank you.*

## Foundation, Business and Government Support

Grants from foundations, businesses, and state and local governments touch every aspect of the mission of Singing City. Grants from these sources provide critical funding for all aspects of our programming.

Archie W. and Grace Berry Foundation  
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Mid Penn Bank  
The Philadelphia Cultural Fund  
The Presser Foundation  
TD Charitable Foundation  
Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial



Singing City's holiday concert—*A Season of Song*—took place at historic Tindley Temple in Philadelphia on December 15, 2024. Kim Barroso, SC's collaborative pianist sits at the organ console. Featured works included Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Poulenc's *Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël* as well as compositions by Raymond Wise, Elaine Hagenberg, Adolphous Hailstork, and many others. In customary fashion, the audience was invited to sing, too. *Photo by Allie Ippolito.*

## Teen Voices of the City Ensemble (T-VOCE)



Singing City is committed to providing choral music education to youth in Philadelphia. T-VOCE is a free, non-auditioned choral music program open to teens aged 13-19. T-VOCE builds community with youth from all cultural and economic backgrounds through a unique program of music education and choral performance that seeks to realize each teen's potential, while creating a model of artistic excellence and diversity that enriches the community.

Led by director Dr. Whitney Covalle, the students come from across the city and rehearse each Saturday from 10-12 at Friends Center in downtown Philadelphia. The program is made available at no cost to students or their families. They perform on their own or in conjunction with Singing City's

adult choir and in collaboration with other arts ensembles. Students learn repertoire from all styles and periods and absorb musical concepts, skills, and theory by singing, listening, and analysis. Guest clinicians, including composers, conductors, and professional singers, enhance the educational program. Students receive private voice lessons and mentoring from ArtSmart in addition to weekly group rehearsals.

For the second time, T-VOCE hosted an all-day workshop for Philadelphia teens in March 2025. Clinicians included Suzzette Ortiz, Norma Jean Hughes, Rollo Dilworth, and Whitney Covalle. "Love City Sings" is an inclusive, participatory high school festival where singers from across the city come together to make music. Unlike typical high school choral festivals where singers prepare music in advance, participants form a "UNITY CHOIR" that day and learn music in the aural-oral tradition together in real time from a variety of clinicians. This year's workshop was open to all singers in grades 7-12 from the School District of Philadelphia, with an emphasis on supporting emerging vocal music programs. 200 students from 8 different schools in Philadelphia participated.

*In 2024-25, T-VOCE was a collaboration of Singing City, Opera Philadelphia, and ArtSmart. Beginning with the 2025-26 season, T-VOCE will be under the direction of Singing City, with mentoring from ArtSmart.*

**Photo: T-VOCE director Whitney Covalle speaking to the audience at their winter concert in December 2024 at the Race Street Meeting House. *Photo by Brendan Krause.***

## Teen Voices of the City Ensemble (T-VOCE)



Photos, clockwise from top left: Singing City staff and choir members lend their support to Love City Sings!, an all-day workshop for Philly teens hosted by T-VOCE; composer and conductor Suzzette Ortiz teaching the students a new work in the oral/aural tradition; T-VOCE performing on March 16 at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church as part of Singing City's winter concert—*Building Community Through Song*—featuring youth choirs from across the region. Top photos by Lauren Anderson; bottom photo by Pete Checchia.

# Silent and Live Auction

April 5, 2025, at Arch Street Friends Meeting House

We wish to express our sincere thanks to all who donated items (*listed below*) for our fundraiser on April 5 and to those who attended. Committee members included Deb Clarke, Susan Domingos, Bonnie Motel, and Lauren Anderson. Singing City choir and board member Brian Auerbach served as auctioneer. The auction raised over \$10,000. *Photos by Peter Anderson.*

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Ethan Cohen  
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Rollo Dilworth  
Susan Domingos  
Suzanne DuPlantis  
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Singing City's Concert Sponsors, Season Subscribers, and Program Advertisers make it possible to bring ambitious and innovative choral programming that is part of the vital and varied artistic landscape in Philadelphia. We are grateful to the following individuals and businesses who help ensure that we can continue to create thought-provoking, meaningful and beautiful choral music experiences for everyone to enjoy. Visit our website to learn more: [www.singingcity.org](http://www.singingcity.org).

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On Thursday, October 10, 2024, Singing City and several hundred singers from the Greater Philadelphia area were part of a performance of Craig Hella Johnson's *Considering Matthew Shepard*. At the dress rehearsal we had an opportunity to hear from Matthew's parents (top photo). On October 27 the choir presented *Democracy in Song* at the Race Street Meeting House in Philadelphia. Rollo is seen here conducting the choir as part of a spirited and moving afternoon of music. *Photos by Lauren Anderson and Brendan Karuse.*

## Legacy Giving - A Gift for the Future



In 1948, Elaine Brown founded Singing City with a bold vision: that people of all backgrounds could come together through music to build understanding and community. She launched one of the first integrated choirs in the nation—right here in Philadelphia. For more than 75 years, Singing City has carried that legacy forward, uniting voices and hearts through performance, education, and outreach.

Planned gifts—of any size—help us expand access, commission new works, and inspire the next generation of artists and audiences. You don't need great wealth to leave a meaningful legacy.

Please contact Executive Director Michael J. Bolton at 267-519-5321 or by e-mail at [mike@singingcity.org](mailto:mike@singingcity.org).

### Legacy Fund Donors

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Mary Ann Sullivan  
Jean S. Weiss  
John H. Wood\*

*\*deceased*



## Singing City 2024-25

### Staff

Rollo A. Dilworth, Artistic & Music Director  
Lauren H. Anderson, Executive Director  
Liv Forney, Choir & Office Manager and  
T-VOCE Coordinator  
Whitney Covalle, Director, Teen Voices of the  
City Ensemble (T-VOCE)  
B. Lauren Thomas-Moyett, Associate Conductor  
Alexander Nguyễn, Associate Conductor  
Kim Barroso, Collaborative Pianist  
Julian Nguyen, T-VOCE Accompanist

### Board of Directors

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Susan Domingos, Treasurer  
Geneva Butz, Secretary  
Brian Auerbach  
Peter J. Boyer  
Deb Clarke  
Andrea Custis  
Michelle Dutton  
Gil Feinberg  
Tim Flaherty  
Allen Krantz  
Bonnie Motel  
Ken Schoenholz  
Karen Scholnick



The March Winter Concert features youth choirs from Philadelphia together with Singing City. This year we were joined by T-VOCE (Teen Voices of the City Ensemble), directed by Whitney Covalle, and Northeast High School Choir, directed by Patricia Betcher. All groups joined in singing a new work by Philadelphia composer Suzzette Ortiz - *Yukayeke*. (The word “Yukayeke” means “community” in the language of the indigenous Caribbean Taino people.) The concert was held at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church. *Photo by Pete Checchia.*



Singing City's May 4, 2025 concert—*Remembrance & Resilience Through Song*, at The Church of the Holy Trinity, Rittenhouse Square. Singing City was joined by Nashirah, The Jewish Chorale of Philadelphia, for performances of Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* and Rollo Dilworth's *Weather*, as well as other works. Nashirah director Julia Zavadsky conducts the Bernstein with the combined choirs.

*Photo by Pete Checchia.*



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