



If you'd like to be interviewed for a chorus spotlight, please contact Marcy Boyle at marsiliab@msn.com or Luisa Lyons at luisa.lyons@gmail.com.

MASTERSVOICES CHORUS SPOTLIGHT

Discover the harmony of diversity with the MasterVoices Chorus, where passionate volunteers come together to celebrate their love for performing outstanding music.

Our chorus is a vibrant blend of individuals from various backgrounds, including the performing arts, education, medicine, law, and business. Each member brings a unique set of experiences, creating a rich tapestry of talent and passion. From high school students to seasoned singers with over 30 years of participation, our chorus embodies a shared commitment to the joy of musical expression.

As part of our commitment to sharing the stories behind the voices, we have undertaken an ongoing project to present spotlight interviews with our talented members. Every quarter, we take pride in featuring four spotlight interviews on the MasterVoices website, offering a glimpse into the lives and passions of these remarkable chorus members. Here, within this document, you'll find a compilation of all the current spotlights, with the promise of more to come.



Spotlights organized alphabetically by first name.

MEET

ANGELA MILNER

MEMBER SINCE 1998

SOPRANO

Music has always been a part of Angela's life. Her mother was an aspiring concert pianist, and Angela sang professionally with her mother's choir from the time she was eight years old. This early exposure to music earned her a full scholarship that led to a degree in education and music from Hofstra University. Angela recalls singing the Brahms Requiem in Verbier, Switzerland, as her "most memorable experience" with the chorus.

While raising two children, Angela taught nursery school and a course in Creativity at Suffolk Community College. Her late husband of fifty-five years, Carl, always encouraged Angela to explore her artistic side which she pursued for many years at her Brooklyn studio. Working in a medium known as encaustic painting (combining warm beeswax, varnish and pigment), Angela has had multiple exhibits of her work - including solo shows- and was favorably reviewed by the NY Times. In 2003, she collaborated with her singer/songwriter sister Laura Wetzler, and produced a concert and art exhibit at Merkin Hall entitled "Kabbalah Music: Songs of the Jewish Mystics." Her "Sephilot," created for that show, now hangs in the main foyer of Stephen Wise Synagogue in Manhattan.

"Exploring new things in life is important" Angela notes, stressing that "Music can get you through some very difficult moments in life." Angela treasures the friendships she has made in the chorus and shares her passion for music and art with her six grandchildren.



MEET

ARLENE BERROL

MEMBER SINCE 1998

ALTO

"I joined The Collegiate Chorale through the back door", says Arlene. "I sang with the Rhode Island Civic Chorale, which Bob Bass (former Music Director of The Collegiate Chorale) conducted for several years. Eventually he stopped coming to RI, so I joined to continue singing with Bob."

Originally from New York, Arlene's life has been "a tale of two cities". Various marriages and partnerships kept bringing her back to Providence. Arlene was a music major at Wellesley, planning to become a professional musician; instead, she earned a Master's degree in social work at Columbia and continues her private practice as a social worker and therapist. "I work with couples with anxiety and depression. I love the contribution I can make to people."

Arlene commutes from Rhode Island to attend rehearsals every Monday night. "I love being part of the MasterVoices group. With Bob I loved everything we did, singing at Carnegie Hall, with the best known opera singers. The trips to Israel singing with the Israel Philharmonic and Zubin Mehta, and with James Levine at Verbier were extraordinary experiences. I also love Ted Sperling and his enthusiasm. He is so gifted and always produces something creative."

"MasterVoices, being a therapist, my kids, and my grandchildren are my passions. I want to sing until I no longer can. It makes me feel so alive."



MEET

CAREY WHITE

MEMBER SINCE 2019

ALTO

At Manhattan School of Music, where she studied from first grade to college, Carey studied violin and voice. As a child, she was invited to sing as part of a children's chorus in the college's opera production. The children's chorus sang at many events, including singing the Chorus of Angels in Boito's *Mephistofele* at the Richard Tucker Gala with the Collegiate Chorale in 1988.

Carey's work has always involved teaching music and violin. In her twenties, she was the lead singer in a band called Funkey Monkeys which performed kids' shows, toured and made four albums. Today, Carey works as a violinist and artistic director of violin ensembles at the Thurnauer School of Music School in Tenafly, New Jersey and as a middle school music teacher at Solomon Schechter in Bergen County. "We play all kinds of classroom instruments and take musical field trips." Carey balances all this while raising four children, ages 6-14 and notes "My husband is very supportive".

With MasterVoices, Carey has especially enjoyed singing anything Sondheim, as well as *Carmen* with "the production's inventiveness, modernization and accessibility." It's no wonder her life is about music--there have been musicians in Carey's family for four generations. "Music is for me the gift that keeps on giving. My family gave me these opportunities so I want my students to have similar experiences."



MEET

CARLOS HIDALGO

MEMBER SINCE 2016

TENOR

Carlos joined MasterVoices thru the Side by Side program when he was a student at Life Sciences Secondary School. He went on to get his bachelor's degree from City College where he studied classical voice performance, and is currently finishing his master's degree in music education at Hunter College.

Becoming a high school vocal teacher is one of his goals, but Carlos also wants to continue performing. Not only does he perform with the Bronx Opera Company, he also writes his own music, is in a band, plays guitar, and sings mostly in the rock and indie alternative genres. He feels fortunate to have had the unique opportunity to perform in *Lady in the Dark* at two different venues: with MasterVoices at Carnegie Hall and with the Bronx Opera Company recently at Lehman College.

One of his best MasterVoices memories is performing in *27*, since it was his first time being on stage at New York City Center while singing with a large chorus with a full orchestra, magnificent soloists, costumes, and sets. He describes his MasterVoices experience as thrilling, eventful, eye-opening, and exciting.



MEET

DAVID CHAN

MEMBER SINCE 2023

BARITONE

Notwithstanding a busy career, David felt the need for another outlet for his energy and artistic interests. In 2022 he joined the Board of Directors of MasterVoices and very quickly realized that he also wanted to sing in the chorus. "I didn't care for Gilbert and Sullivan in my youth, but singing *Iolanthe* changed my point of view," says David.

David was raised in the UK and after graduating from Oxford earned his PhD in physics at MIT. But a career in science, industry or academia did not appeal to him. He now works for a hedge fund, "training computers to analyze market trends for investment management. The quantitative skills and problem-solving approach that is the heart of my scientific training is actually what is needed to predict market trends," notes David.

David enjoys MasterVoices' eclectic repertoire which allows him to indulge his passion for classical music and also explore both opera and theater. "Having to make Monday night rehearsals is a guilty escape for a few hours" from his busy family life with his wife and four children.

David feels that he and the other singer-members of the Board of Directors play an important role in integrating the many aspects of the MasterVoices community.



MEET

DEB POPPEL

MEMBER SINCE 2016

SOPRANO

Deb's passion for musical theater and her special niche as a lyricist may seem like an unlikely path for a Tufts math major with a thirty-year career as an actuary with John Hancock Life Insurance Company. But even while Deb was working in Boston she started Overture Productions, a not-for-profit theater group that mounted three musical theater productions with top Broadway talent.

After retirement, with her son and two grandchildren settled in Tennessee, Deb relocated to New York City and has continued to develop her craft as a lyricist, studying at Juilliard and with BMI Musical Theater Workshop. "Back in 2016 when I discovered there was a chorus in New York City that performed a mix of theater, opera, and classical repertoire, led by the legendary Ted Sperling, I thought I must have dreamt it up myself. What could be better? --Being invited to join! Singing with MasterVoices is one of the biggest joys of my musical life."

From her first season, which included *Babes in Toyland*, Deb has been fully engaged in a great many MasterVoices activities involving musical theater - so much so that if you look thru this MasterVoices website, you will find David Garrison performing a unique and very clever patter song video, as part of MasterVoices' 2023 fundraising efforts, with the notation, "Lyrics by Deb Poppel."



MEET

DEMITRIO ACOT

MEMBER SINCE 2005

TENOR

Demitrio Acot has done both solo and ensemble work as a singer spanning multiple genres including jazz, musical theatre, gospel and choral music. He has appeared in a jazz exchange program called Jazz In Out in La Rochelle, France, at NYC jazz venues such as Small's, and as a member of the Harlequin Theatre Company in Riverdale. He has also sung with the Christ Church Riverdale Choir for twenty-two years.

After being enthralled by MasterVoices' production of *Lady in the Dark*, Demitrio auditioned and joined the chorus for *Anyone Can Whistle* in 2022 where he had a small part in a scene with Tony award-winner Santino Fontana.

Demitrio, who has a BS in Marketing and Management from NYU, has worked in real estate, finance and construction. In 2018 he became a licensed real estate appraiser and has his own growing company, Right Choice Appraisal Service, a minority-owned business that is a registered fiduciary of the court. He is often called upon to provide unbiased real estate appraisals in legal matters such as estates, divorce, bankruptcies and guardianships. "I like getting to the truth," Demitrio says, "There will always be opinions and speculation; however, we do the research until the truth uncovers itself. Every appraisal is a puzzle."

A first-generation Filipino-American, Demitrio was brought up by a single mother from the Philippines "who raised three children and worked tirelessly to give us every chance to achieve the American dream." He is divorced, has two daughters, two granddaughters, and resides in the apartment where he was raised.

Demitrio says, "I'm a "business guy but I enjoy expressing my creative side through singing" and "It's a worthwhile thing to be part of bringing life to lesser-known and new works."



MEET

ED YIM

MEMBER SINCE 2017

TENOR

Ed got into orchestra management when he was 24 and has been in key leadership positions with the New York Philharmonic and Los Angeles Philharmonic, among others. He is now in public media at the top of WQXR, New York's classical music station, raising money, doing scheduling, strategizing and program development.

Ed always thought about joining The Collegiate Chorale, and finally joined MasterVoices in 2017. "I like the community of people, I like Ted, I like doing musical theatre, concert programs and new music which I'm committed to. MV was the group that encompassed a lot of things I was interested in."

"I'm a low 2nd tenor. I'm really a baritone who refuses to believe that I'm a baritone. I'm used to being an inner voice." He particularly loves singing the Handel *Dixit Dominus*. "That's my language. I know how to do that." Ed also notes: "In my job people are always asking me: What should I do? What about this? On Monday evenings, Ted and Julie tell me what I should do, and I just need to follow the instructions."

Although raised in Los Angeles and Boston, Ed is now a New Yorker through and through. He and his husband live in Hell's Kitchen. "We spend a lot of time at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and Broadway theatres and I can walk everywhere. We love taking long walks with our dog, Huck(leberry). MasterVoices is part of his passion for New York. "If you love culture, there's no place else to be."



MEET

EILEEN RICHTER

MEMBER SINCE 2015

ALTO

Eileen has worked as a residential real estate broker in Brooklyn for the past 25 years, but before that, she had a successful career performing all over the world as a jazz and cabaret singer. These days her sound has taken a more classical turn since she was drawn to MasterVoices for the production of *Dido and Aeneas*. She has also traveled to Verbier with the chorus. Eileen, and her husband Paul and daughter Hannah are also musicians. A longtime fan of Studio Ghibli's films which she enjoyed when Hannah was growing up, the Hisiashi concert at Radio City Music Hall was a special experience, but even more thrilling was singing alongside Hannah who also now sings with MasterVoices. When she is not singing, you can find Eileen in her kitchen creating special dishes from her harvest of vegetables from her garden in Brooklyn.

Eileen sums up her MasterVoices experience as "Joy & Satisfaction" derived from "hard work on-stage!"



MEET

ELISE SIMON GOODMAN

MEMBER SINCE 1964

SOPRANO

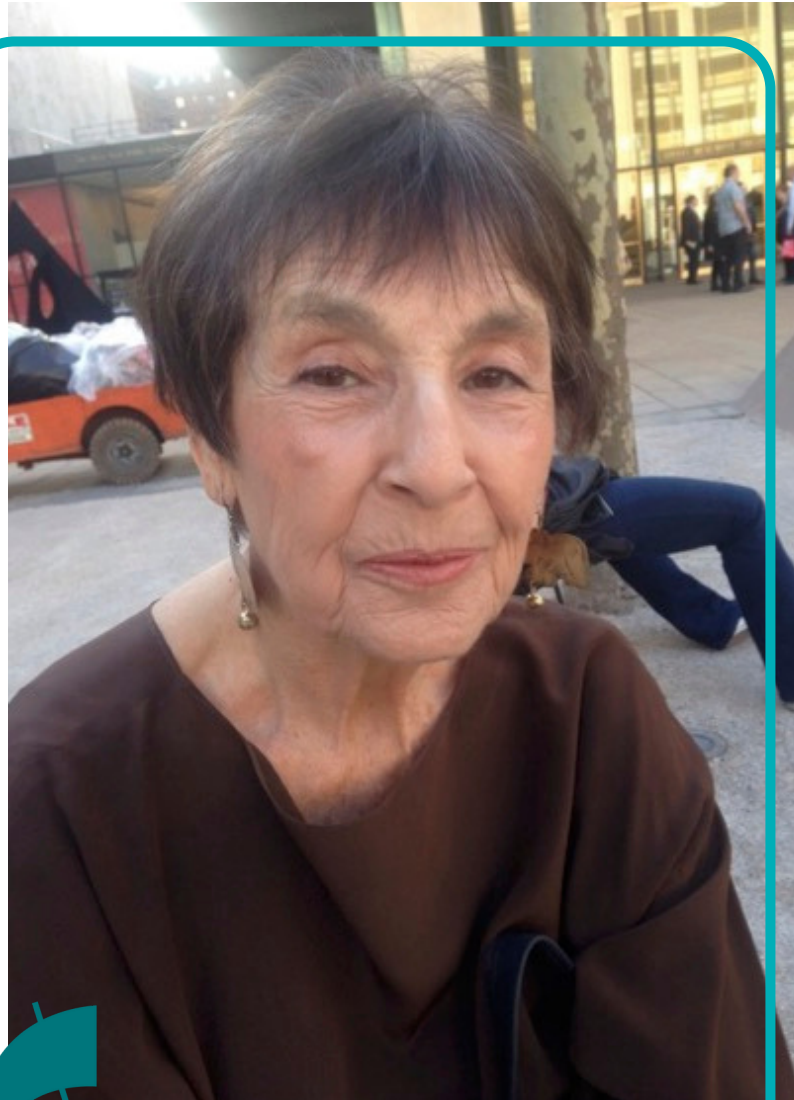
Elise is one of our longest-serving singing members, having joined The Collegiate Chorale with her late husband of 57 years, Arnold, in 1964. She has sung with us most of those years, and Arnold sang with us for over 25 years.

A lifelong New Yorker (born in the Bronx) and a graduate of Bronx Science, Elise studied English and philosophy at the University of Michigan. Elise has had three different careers, starting as an actress/singer. She studied with Ute Hagen, performed at the Provincetown Playhouse in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Trial by Jury* (soprano soloist), and did summer stock in Camden, Maine in 1955 doing *Gilbert & Sullivan* and *Shakespeare*.

Elise has spent most of her distinguished professional career in journalism and in publishing. She was one of the original teachers/producers of New York State's public broadcasting network when it was formed in the 1950's, was an associate producer of *Captain Kangaroo* and the Oscar-winning film *The Ten Year Lunch*, and worked in news documentaries at NBC. In her many years as a literary agent for Goodman Associates with her husband, their most recognized work was the 1984

book *What To Expect When You Are Expecting*, which still remains a best seller. "I have had many careers and loved them all. I was a very happy worker," says Elise.

When not singing or taking courses, Elise enjoys time with her children, Peter and Emily, and her six grandchildren ranging in age from three to twenty-four years old. Elise reflects that "Music is such a crucial part of my life. Singing, rehearsing, performing with MasterVoices, going to operas and concerts is central to that. I cannot imagine not having singing in my life."



MEET

EMY ZENER

MEMBER SINCE 2016
SOPRANO

Emy, a licensed clinical social worker, is no stranger to the stage. She began ballet and modern dance training at the age of three, spent six summers at the Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan, a place she still calls her “favorite physical place on earth,” and completed her high school years as a boarder at the Interlochen Arts Academy. Emy studied theatre and women’s studies at Wesleyan University and earned a Master’s degree in Social Work at New York University.

For the past 20 years, Emy has incorporated her acting training and love for visual arts and movement into her work as a therapist in community mental health, working with women and LGBTQ communities. Emy recently opened her own private practice where she continues to work with high achieving individuals with a significant mental health and substance use history.

Seeking another creative outlet, Emy discovered MasterVoices in 2016 and said “I want to do that!” Emy delights in the diverse mix of choral singing and musical theatre, and especially loved playing Fleta the Fairy in *Iolanthe*! Emy and her husband Max are the proud parents of Lucy, who will be attending Oberlin College in the fall.



MEET

HANNAH LIVANT

MEMBER SINCE 2020

ALTO

Singer/songwriter, classically trained pianist, and high seas adventurer Hannah Livant joined MasterVoices in 2020. Hannah feels joining the chorus during *Myths and Hymns* was “meant to be” as it was a “perfect combination” of her interests in mythology and the intersection of literature and music which she studied at Bard, where former Collegiate Choral music director James Bagwell had been her advisor! The song cycle was also a wonderful project to work on with fellow MasterVoices alto, Eileen Richter, who also happens to be her Mom. Post-lockdown, Hannah has loved singing with the chorus in person, particularly performing at Carnegie Hall for the first (and second) time. She is very excited for the upcoming *Lord of the Rings* concert.

By day, the multi-talented Hannah, who is a certified Able Bodied Seaman, can be found composing original music, singing sea shanties, and working at the South Street Seaport Museum as a sailing educator.



MEET

HELEN SHIN

MEMBER SINCE 1991

TENOR

A graduate of Harvard and University of California Berkeley Law School, Helen began her career in corporate law. She has since joined a firm that provides legal services to high net worth clients, negotiating their needs in managing family wealth.

Although Helen was singing in church choir and taking piano lessons when she was young, as a self-described "Star Trek nerd" in high school, she also explored the "world beyond." She attended the immersive program sponsored by Summer Science Program ("SSP"), a not-for-profit group that provides promising high school seniors with a seven-week program focusing on teamwork projects in astrophysics, molecular biology and genomics. Three decades later, Helen now serves on the Board of SSP which has expanded its program to serve over 200 students each year.

Helen is the Tenor Section Leader and has taken part in almost all of MasterVoices trips abroad. While she sang as an alto in the Harvard Radcliffe Collegium Musicum, she now relishes the "ringing, ping-pong, star of the world" moments that the tenors often enjoy. Helen's MasterVoices experience has been one of "fantastic fellowship and splendid singing."



MEET

JACKIE BERLIANT

MEMBER SINCE 2018

ALTO

Jackie is a woman of many talents. Originally from California's Bay Area, she began singing and playing piano at age five and continued her musical education through college at UC Davis where she was a music minor. She majored in - and currently works in -- graphic design, with dreams of working on production design for film and television. As comfortable in front of the camera as she is behind it, Jackie has worked as an extra in several films and television shows, including *In the Heights* and the recent remake of *West Side Story*.

Jackie has relished her experience with MasterVoices, performing exciting repertoire in iconic venues such as Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and Radio City Music Hall, as well as getting to perform in productions like *Anyone Can Whistle* where she was a member of the semichorus - one of her favorite musical experiences. She describes her time with MasterVoices as "A fun and educational journey" and stresses that "It's one thing to have studied music and performance history formally in college, but it's another thing to hear Ted share stories and anecdotes as someone who was there, giving me new ways to connect to the music."



MEET

JERRY RICHMAN

MEMBER SINCE 1970

BASS

53 years! Jerry (Gerald W.) Richman joined Collegiate Chorale in 1970 and even now, in 2023, he is usually the first person in the room waiting for rehearsal to start. Jerry was inspired to audition for Collegiate Chorale by his Bronx High School of Science choral conductor, Alice Lawner, herself a singer with the group. He recalls that his first performance was with Abraham Kaplan conducting the *Beethoven Mass in C Minor*.

Jerry is currently the Director of Finance with the CUNY NYC College of Technology and has been working in the CUNY system for over 39 years including positions at York College and the Bronx Community College. For the past 40 years, he has also served as Conductor for the "Balmy Zepher's" - a vocal chamber group in New York City.

Jerry's clear favorite concert with our chorus was Verdi's, *Nabucco*, conducted by Robert Bass. "I knew while I was singing it, it was the best choral performance I had ever sung in." He has traveled with MasterVoices on multiple trips to the Verbier Festival as well as two trips to Israel and the Salzberg Festival. Jerry says that he is "grateful for the life experience that Collegiate Chorale and MasterVoices has afforded me."



MEET
JOAN B. HARRIS

MEMBER SINCE 2004

SOPRANO

Joan grew up in Huntington, Long Island and moved to New York City in 1983 after receiving her B.A. in Psychology from the University of Rochester. Joan works for ABC News Radio, writing, interviewing, and editing the material for broadcast. She has also worked on podcasts including *Perspective* and *World News This Week*, and her responsibilities include being in charge of the newsroom.

Always involved in music, Joan has studied piano and sung in choruses of different types since elementary school. She was a mentor for Side-By-Side students for seven years, and describes it as a great experience. MasterVoices is becoming a family tradition - her daughter, Lindsay Rose, sang with Master Voices for a cycle, and her niece Ali Bernstein is also a singing member. Joan is Vice President of the Singers Council.

Joan's favorite musical memories include singing the Verdi *Requiem* with James Levine at Verbier, and the performance of *Carmen* when mezzo star Ginger Costa-Jackson grabbed Joan's hand and walked off-stage with her. Joan loves having the opportunity to sing in the smaller semi-choruses over the years.

Joan lives in Manhattan with her daughter and her husband of many years. Joan sums up her time with MasterVoices as "thrilling, fulfilling, collegial, and fun."



MEET

JOAN REISMAN-BRILL

MEMBER SINCE 1988

ALTO

Joan was looking for something to “feed her soul” and found it with The Collegiate Chorale. She will always remember her first concert - the Richard Tucker Awards at Lincoln Center, with Luciano Pavarotti and the young award winner, Renée Fleming.

While she moved from public relations to marketing, a condition of employment was always the ability to make rehearsals, daytime sitzprobes, and dress rehearsals. She did miss a few concerts when she got married, and then handling two children and running a household forced her to take a break from the chorus. Monty Python's “Life of Brian” brought her back.

Joan loves the variety MasterVoices offers: opera, Broadway, and the best of classical music. She is convinced that the quality of the group has been improving as new singers with incredible musical talent and experience join the chorus. She also affirms that she has improved as a result.

When she's not singing, you can find Joan gardening in Central Park and spotting fellow choristers Adèle Talty and Ellen Resnick as they jog by.



MEET

JONATHAN BASS

MEMBER SINCE 2023

BASS

Jonathan is “very sad ” - because his beloved Yankees did not perform up to their potential this past season. Otherwise, fresh from graduating from Skidmore College in 2022, he is very much enjoying his dream job: teaching fourth grade at his alma mater, The Collegiate School in Manhattan. Since his experience as a summer camp counselor as a teenager, Jonathan has embraced the role of educator and the significant influence teachers can have on their young students - and the gratification a teacher earns from the experience. “I enjoy developing a relationship with the kids and watching them grow and change even in the span of just one school year.”

Singing with MasterVoices is part of Jonathan’s DNA. The son of The Collegiate Chorale’s Music Director, the late Robert Bass, and MasterVoices Board Co-Chair Juliana Chen, Jonathan grew up surrounded by music. Jonathan recalls hearing some of the great stars of opera and Broadway rehearse with his father in the family’s apartment. “Although I can read music and sing, I knew that I was not at the level to have a professional career in music ”, he relates; but he has had the opportunity to be in the audience for very many of The Collegiate Chorale / MasterVoices performances over the years and has attended both Verbier and Israel trips where his father conducted. Last year Jonathan joined the chorus for his first concert, *Iolanthe*. “The Collegiate Chorale/MasterVoices was my father’s legacy and I am thrilled and proud to be a part of it.”



Jonathan’s favorite MasterVoices performance that he attended was the Lord of the Rings concert and he hopes to have a chance to participate in a like event in the future. The future also holds decisions about graduate work and moving into his own apartment with some friends.

MEET

JONATHAN DZIK

MEMBER SINCE 2000

BASS

Jonathan joined the chorus after attending the Collegiate Chorale's 1999 performance of Verdi's *Nabucco* and thinking "I want to join this group!" With a lifelong passion for opera inspired by an elementary school music teacher, and cultivated by his uncle, Jonathan was thrilled to be part of a group that sings great choral masterpieces.

As a member of the bass 2 section, Jonathan is well aware that the lowest voices don't often get the melody, but he loves being part of the foundation of the whole harmonic structure. His favorite performance with MasterVoices was singing *Mefistofele* at Carnegie Hall, with Placido Domingo in the audience!

Jonathan grew up in Chattanooga, Tennessee and attended high school in New York City, studying classical piano and flute. With the goal of following his father into optometry, Jonathan studied science at NYU in the Bronx but also took music electives every semester and played flute with the university orchestra. When it came time for graduate school, Jonathan knew that music was his true calling. He attained a Masters in Musicology at Queens College and a doctorate in Music Education from NYU at their current campus in Washington Square.



For twenty-six years Jonathan was a music teacher at Christopher Columbus High School in the Bronx and became skilled in making opera accessible to high school students. He created over one hundred study guides for the Metropolitan Opera, where, now in his retirement, he serves as a tour guide. Jonathan also teaches opera classes to other retired teachers with the United Federation of Teachers. Along with Susan, his wife of 51 years, Jonathan is the proud parent of 3 children and 12 grandchildren.

MEET
JUSTIN GALLAGHER

MEMBER SINCE 2023

TENOR

A native of Clarksville, Georgia, Justin moved to New York City in 2011 to attend AMDA College and Conservatory of Performing Arts and eventually realized that he wanted to be here full time. He found MasterVoices through a friend and it seemed to fit seamlessly with his performing aspirations.

Justin's first season with MasterVoices was in 2023, and he says, "What a way to make your tenor choral debut in New York City with three back-to-back sold-out shows of *The Frogs* at Lincoln Center!"

In 2023, Justin graduated summa cum laude from Lehman College with a BFA in Multimedia Performing Arts. He loved the adult program with "courses you can actually use". He started working front-of-the-house at *The Cher Show* then moved to *Wicked* before landing full-time at *The Lion King*. He has also worked backstage as a sub-child guardian for the Young Simba and Nala Cubs. Justin is currently writing his own show, based on choral music with a historical theme.

"MasterVoices is such a diverse group - I love it. Everyone has done so much and there is so much to learn about each and every person. And working with Ted Sperling - he's incredible." Justin is also a very happy dog-dad to his beautiful long-haired English cream dachshund, Willow.



MEET

KEN MOORE

MEMBER SINCE 2000

BASS

Ken Moore has carried a lifetime work in music and a love of musical instruments through his entire life and career. Raised on a tobacco farm in Southern Maryland, Ken ventured on to his B.S. in Music Ed from Concord College, then a Masters of Music in Ethnomusicology from Hunter College and further PHD studies with CUNY. He's always had a world vision of music - from his Master's field work with a pentecostal group of snake handlers in West Virginia to overseeing the complete revamping of the entire collection of musical instruments at the Metropolitan Museum of Arts.

Aside from a 1st NYC job as a Score Librarian with G. Schirmer's, Ken spent the remainder of his long-career with the Met, starting as a Night Watchman in 1970, then the Coordinator for Photography and finally a long and lauded stay with the Musical Instruments department as the "Frederick P. Rose Curator in Charge"...a position he has held for over 20 years. He was recently awarded the 'Anthony Baines Lifetime Award' at a ceremony in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Ken has traveled with MV for numerous trips to the Verbier Music Festival. His favorite performances have been *Dido and Aeneas* and the *Brahms Requiem*. He's mentored many Side-by-Side students - always amazed at their level of musicianship. He feels that MasterVoices is a 'joy and a collegial and disciplined community'.



MEET

KIT BASQUIN

MEMBER SINCE 2013

SOPRANO

A love of music and art have served as cornerstones in Kit's life.

Kit graduated from Gaucher College and recalls the thrill of singing Faure's "Requiem" with their chorus under the baton of Nadia Boulanger. Post-graduation, she met her future husband who was serving in the Peace Corps and they were wed in Ethiopia. Kit found herself a teaching position in the School of Visual Arts in Addis Ababa. Eventually moving back to the states, Kit received a master's degree in art history from Indiana University. This led to a position at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. Three children later (one an adopted Korean boy), Kit found herself curating in the Haggerty Art Museum at Marquette University in Wisconsin. When she heard of a short-term opening in Gaza, she jumped at the chance to teach art history. On the way, she stopped at Zurich to lecture at the James Joyce Society Conference.

Kit missed Manhattan and upon her return, she worked at the Doyle Auction House and eventually as an administrator in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's department of drawings and prints -at the same time earning a Ph.D. in Art history. Kit left the Met to write the book *Mary Ellen Bute: Pioneer Animator*. Her next project will be her memoir. Kit's filmmaker son Bill has had several his work shown at The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) which will soon premiere his full-length film: "From Inside of Here."



Kit, who also sings with St. Bartholomew's volunteer chorus and the choir of the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, still finds it hard to believe that she has had the opportunity to perform in Carnegie Hall and in Verbier, Switzerland.

MEET

LAUREN TUCKER

MEMBER SINCE 1994

ALTO

Born to musical and politically active parents in Washington, D.C. (her father was a member of President Jimmy Carter's Cabinet), Lauren's musical gifts were revealed at an early age. She first played the piano, then the violin where she was coached by cellist Rostropovich. When she was about to move to New York in 1993, Robert Shaw, the founder of the Collegiate Chorale urged her to join.

In fall 2022 Lauren was named President of the Singers Council. "I give a different perspective as a singer, and feel fully free to express my thoughts." Among Lauren's favorite MasterVoices experiences was the recent concert, *O How Good* at Central Synagogue. "It showed connections to different faiths and spirituality. The chorus' singing was powerful, the music was gorgeous, and there was a full congregation." She also loved doing the Berlioz Requiem and working with Zubin Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic.

Professionally, Lauren does clinical social work at a non-profit for children with learning disabilities. She is also a representative for NASA, explaining scientific missions to the public. "Working for NASA is very grounding, being able to see the planets, the different star systems - it's bigger than me."

Lauren has been a pioneer as one of the first African-Americans in chorus leadership. "People of color often don't have the support or training to learn about classical music." And Lauren is committed to increasing the racial diversity of the chorus.



MEET

LAURIE RIOS

MEMBER SINCE 1985

ALTO

Laurie started singing with The Collegiate Chorale as a tenor but she moved one year later to her rightful place in the Alto section and settled in for her (soon to be) thirty-ninth season with the chorus. Originally from Hagerstown, Md., Laurie earned a Journalism degree from Penn State and started her work life as a reporter in Westchester and then Mt. Kisco, NY. The lure of New York City meant a change of venue, an MBA in Marketing from Pace University; and, eventually, she "stumbled into teaching". She earned a Master's of TESOL from Hunter College and worked for twenty years in the ESL world - changing countless lives for the better. She says that her 15 years of teaching English to adult immigrants was 'the best job of all'.

After retiring in 2019, Laurie has returned to playing the violin which she had previously studied for many years. Married for thirty 30 years, Laurie and husband Joe are parents to Daniel who has sung with our Side-by-Side program, participated in two of the Chorus' overseas trips and is now in the bass section.

Laurie's favorite memory was the Mozart 'Ave Verum Corpus' at Carnegie Hall - with Marion Anderson in the audience and Bob Bass conducting this most exquisite concert. Laurie has traveled with the chorus for five Verbier seasons and two trips to Israel and the Salzburg Festival. She has called her experiences singing with MasterVoices as one of "connectivity - the hearts are all beating the same", and also of awe in the singing and feeling beautifully "out of space and time".



MEET

LUISA LYONS

MEMBER SINCE 2017

ALTO

"Joyful, heartwarming - the best thing I have ever done." is how Luisa describes her experience with MasterVoices and is a perfect reflection of Luisa's spirit and talent for music, the stage and our MasterVoices community. She grew up in Sydney, Australia, and has trained and worked around the world (Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and University of New South Wales) and has been acting since age twelve. Luisa loves the opportunity that MasterVoices provides to really dig in to amazing shows - most recently as a featured chorus member in *Carmen*. In addition to being an actor, musician and writer, she is the creator of "Filmed Live Musicals" a database of filmed stage musicals. She is proud to have mentored two Side-by-Side students and loves that her first mentee is now mentoring others in the program.

Luisa has lived in New York City since 2014 and is thriving post her stem-cell transplant for acute myeloid leukemia in 2014 and now has no less than five marathons conquered. Nothing stops her. Luisa says: "Happiness is singing in the choir."



MEET

MARSILIA BOYLE (MARCY)

MEMBER SINCE 1988

ALTO

Marcy came to serious music in her twenties when love of Pavarotti drew her to opera; and then while attending The Collegiate Chorale concerts when a friend sang, longed to be a part of making great choral music. Since joining The Collegiate Chorale in 1988, Marcy has found the experience to be a "thrilling, meaningful gift in my life." A highlight was traveling with the chorus to the Verbier Festival, and singing American spirituals at a church in the Czech countryside. Marcy has mentored three Side-by-Side students.

After completing her Master's In Public Administration degree at SUNY Albany, Marcy began her professional career in state and local government, and in the 1980's was Director of Real Estate for the MTA. She also served for over 25 years on her Brooklyn Community Board. She then moved into the private real estate sector as a senior executive with LeFrak, playing a key role in the development of the company's Newport project in Jersey City, New Jersey. Recently retired, Marcy serves on the Boards of New York City Audubon and Audubon New York, working to protect birds and the places they need to thrive.



MEET

MARIA LANE

MEMBER SINCE 2020
SOPRANO

Almost a decade after working as a college intern for Ted's sister, Elisabeth Sperling, Maria auditioned and joined MasterVoices remotely during the 2020 lockdown. She was thrilled to join the chorus in person to solidify "the powerful feeling of connectedness among this vibrant musical community." Maria describes her time with MasterVoices as "engaging, enriching, enlightening, inspiring, and inviting." A highlight so far was singing the role of June in *Anyone Can Whistle*.

Maria showed an affinity for musical theater early in life, embracing every opportunity to be on stage throughout childhood in northern New Jersey and in Florida with the Sarasota Youth Opera, often singing in professional productions including Verdi's *Attila* and Puccini's *Tosca*, and playing Bilbo Baggins in Dean Buddy's opera, *The Hobbit*. Maria was delighted to dust off her Elvish language skills again for the MasterVoices *Lord of the Rings* concert at Radio City Music Hall.

Maria has a BA in Music from Columbia University and a Masters in Voice Performance from the Longy School of Music of Bard College. Professionally, Maria has a passion for supporting female-founded startups, with creative and operational experience across the music, wellness and design industries.

In all stages of her life, musical storytelling has been a profound central tenet. Maria recorded her debut album *Crescendo* (available on Spotify and Apple Music) during her first pregnancy. The album features nine Broadway classics and jazz standards re-imagined as lullabies – "a love note" to her own children and to moms and babies everywhere. She now resides in Brooklyn with her husband Pierre, children Oscar and Alice, and whoodle Wazir.



MEET

MARIA MAZZARO

MEMBER SINCE 2023

SOPRANO

When Maria, a native New Yorker, saw MasterVoices' production of *Dido and Aeneas* in 2016, she didn't realize we were a volunteer chorus that she could join. But by 2023, she was in the chorus of *O How Good* as a first soprano.

Music is an important part of Maria's life and work. With a degree in Music (Fairfield University) and an MFA in Creative Writing (NYU), she is a freelance arts journalist who worked for Opera News for ten years and now works in global communications for Estee Lauder. She's kept her voice in tune over the years by taking private voice lessons and evening courses at Juilliard, and also performs professionally as a liturgical musician serving as cantor at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York and St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

Since joining MasterVoices, a cherished experience so far has been performing in Gilbert & Sullivan's *Iolanthe*. The show marked her Carnegie Hall debut; not only was setting foot on that stage "the most amazing thing ever," she found her classical lyric soprano voice was very well-suited to the repertoire. Overall, her experience singing with MasterVoices has been "challenging and rewarding, allowing me to sing works that are different from what I usually sing."

In addition to her musical pursuits, Maria is a volunteer tutor for Minds Matter, helping high school students improve their writing skills and assisting them as they prepare for college.



MEET

MELANIA MALDONADO

MEMBER SINCE 2024

ALTO

If Muriel Melania Maldonado added another “m” to her name, it would be “music” (but just call her Melania). “Music is part of my DNA” says Melania, who won her first vocal competition as a six-year old in first grade in her native country of Ecuador. She began formal training, singing in several choirs in Quito until age 13 when she enrolled in the Instituto Superior De Arte in Cuba, earning BA and MA degrees before returning to Ecuador where she opened a music school for vocal training.

In 2001 Melania moved to Manhattan in time to join a Latin American Music Festival and to perform as a soloist in Town Hall. Within a year she had her own school for vocal training: “MelaniaMusic” near Times Square. Students are a veritable United Nations, coming from China, Turkey, Japan, Columbia and Peru. Alumni sing opera, show tunes, and folk melodies, having had preparation for auditions at the school.

Melania also worked with the New York City Department of Education, arranging for the teaching of music theory, voice, piano, acting and dance. Melania joined MasterVoices after seeing *Grapes of Wrath*, which she called “amazing.”



MEET

MIRIAM LEVY (MIMI)

MEMBER SINCE 2005

ALTO

Mimi enjoys her recent professional retirement from her home overlooking the Hudson River near Kingston N.Y, after a trailblazing career in medicine. In 1989, Mimi founded Medical Imaging of Manhattan with a focus on Women's Imaging, in a practice that went beyond the traditional role of the radiologist to a person to person holistic approach to her patients, and also introduced double reading of images by a second physician. "These practices saved many lives", Mimi reflects - and it also earned her the 2020 Albert Einstein College of Medicine award for Distinguished Alumna in Clinical Practice.

Mimi raised three wonderful children and has five fabulous grandchildren. Never one to sit idle, she also sings with the Bard College Symphonic Chorus, studies at Bard, and enjoys salsa dancing and hiking.

Mimi recalls singing the *Verdi Requiem* in Israel under Ricardo Muti as one of the transformative experiences of her two decades with MasterVoices. She states: "Singing with MasterVoices feeds my soul".



MEET

NED FITCH

MEMBER SINCE 1990

BASS

“Energetic” and “enthusiastic” best describe Ned Fitch. Whether he’s training for any of the nine NYC marathons where he’s competed or whether he and husband Ahmet are playing with their golden doodle, Ned is on a high.

That same energy serves him well at Burlington stores where he is a human resource professional, focused on merchandising.

“Most of all, I love to sing,” says Ned - in the choir of Church of the Ascension on Fifth Ave and with The Collegiate Chorale/MV since 1990, minus ten years when he moved away.

Ned also enjoyed mentoring a Side-By-Side student, finding it rewarding to help a high schooler handle the challenges of singing with a 130-voice chorus.

Ned’s most memorable experience with MasterVoices is singing Paul McCartney’s *Liverpool Oratorio* in Carnegie Hall. He can still recall the wild appreciation of the audience as McCartney took his bow from a box seat amidst thunderous applause.



MEET

REINA MUÑIZ

MEMBER SINCE 2018

SOPRANO

Reina first learned about MasterVoices when she was given a ticket to see Babes in Toyland in 2017. After the show she “wished she could be part of a production like that”, and in 2018 her wish was granted when she was accepted into the Side-by-Side program during her senior year at Frank Sinatra School of the Arts. Reina was drawn to classical repertoire in high school where her focus was on vocal performance. She has continued on that path and is now in her fourth year at Brooklyn College Conservatory as a classical voice major (soprano). She continues to sing with MasterVoices as her college schedule permits, as she did when joining the chorus for our recent Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers performances at Radio City Music Hall.

Reina credits her time in the Side-by-Side program as an important part of her development as an artist, from her conversations with her mentor, soprano Shelly Nelson, and the time spent researching the many shows and performers mentioned by Ted Sperling in his anecdotes during rehearsal. But her favorite experience was performing in MasterVoices production Lady in the Dark -which she describes as “magical.” Speaking of magic and wishes, one of her dream roles is the Fairy Godmother in Massenet’s Cendrillon.



MEET

ROBERT REICHSTEIN

MEMBER SINCE 2005

BARITONE

Bob grew up in a musical family in Chicago where his father was a cantor. At Amherst College, he studied music, sang in choruses as well as a cappella groups, and performed in musicals. Bob received his M.D. from the Chicago Medical School, followed by a residency, chief residency, and fellowship in internal medicine and cardiology at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York. He had a stellar career of forty years with his solo private practice of cardiology in Manhattan, and retired in 2025. Bob is an adoring husband, father of three sons, and grandfather of three.

Going to Verbier with the chorus and singing the Verdi *Requiem* with James Levine was a very special time for Bob. His most memorable musical experience with MasterVoices was performing in the semi-chorus for *Lady in the Dark*, which included both acting and dancing. "It was exhilarating performing the same production three times and sensing the growth that developed over time," Bob recalls.

Bob is very appreciative of how much singing in the chorus has enriched his life, and as a way of giving back, joined the MasterVoices Board of Directors.



MEET

RON MEYERS

MEMBER SINCE 2006

BASS

Ron has been performing since high school: acting, playing the saxophone, tap dancing and singing in the chorus. His interest in the arts continued at college at Columbia University and during his time at Harvard Law School. After the bar exam, he attended Oxford to do theatre training and began to learn to train his voice. "I came to see the voice as the nexus of the body and the emotions. My voice had always been a very limited instrument, and this training inspired me to seek more training".

"When I auditioned for the Collegiate Chorale I had no expectations. I didn't imagine I'd get in to such a sophisticated performing group," Ron recalls. At the dress rehearsal at Carnegie Hall with his first concert, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, "I leapt out of my skin. Nothing beats being on stage at Carnegie Hall." Other particularly memorable experiences were at Verbier with Manfred Honeck "It was terribly exciting to work with him" and singing with Kelli O'Hara and Victoria Clark in *Dido and Aeneas*.

He is now able to combine his professional and artistic worlds with the MasterVoices

Planned Giving program which he initiated. As an estate lawyer working with clients on preparing wills and estate planning, he has seen how many organizations do legacy planning. "It's an opportunity that will benefit the organization and I'm in a position to do this. Everyone leaves something behind."

Ron reflects that "The chorus becomes part of your life so deeply. It's wonderful that the chorus can bring together a large number of people with varied musical backgrounds and trust that they'll get there, collectively."



MEET

SAMANTHA KAHN

MEMBER SINCE 2019

SOPRANO

From her student days at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA, where she majored in Business and Vocal Performance, Samantha has been equally comfortable in both worlds. Trained in classical voice, opera, and musical theatre, some of her select credits include the role of Floor in "Furniture the Musical" at Midtown International Theatre Festival, where she was nominated for Outstanding Leading Actress and The Vixen in "The Cunning Little Vixen" at Manhattan School of Music's Summer Voice Festival. She has also performed as the National Anthem Soloist for The Brooklyn Nets at the Barclays Center.

With her performing roots, she found the perfect melding of her interests with her current career. Samantha leads Global Recruitment Marketing and Social Media at Warner Bros. Discovery, home to brands like Max, HBO, CNN, Warner Bros., and DC Comics in which she has the exciting task of telling the stories of the behind-the-scenes talent that brings some of the world's most loved content to life. "When performing in Lord of The Rings with MasterVoices, I had this incredible full circle moment where I was going to work during the day for the company that created the movie, then heading over to Radio City at night to sing in the concert. It was surreal."

MasterVoices attracted Samantha's attention with its programming from opera to contemporary music and ability to be more of a true musical ensemble, which is why she was especially elated to flex her past professional career in the semi-chorus for Carmen. "When I decided to enter the corporate world full-time, I never thought I would have the opportunity to perform again with such a high caliber of artists and in some of the world's most esteemed venues. I like to think I've mastered the art of balancing my passions and MasterVoices has helped me do that." At the time of this interview, Samantha worked for WBD. Samantha is now Director of Employer Branding for Veterinary Emergency Group.



MEET

SHELLY NELSON

MEMBER SINCE 1993

SOPRANO

Shelly started as a voice major and graduated from the drama department at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and also studied with several voice teachers, especially crediting the coach from the Mannes School. She moved to New York to become an actor and performed on the regional theatre circuit traveling all over the United States for twenty years appearing in many stage plays and shows such as *Man of La Mancha* and *Sweeney Todd*.

Shelly has had a number of opportunities for solo singing and acting with MasterVoices, notably the role of Grandma Joad in the 2010 production of *The Grapes of Wrath* at Carnegie Hall, one of the first featured roles given to a chorus member. "I was on stage with Nathan Gunn, Jane Fonda and other cast members, a truly magical experience". She has also been in many of the small semi choruses in performances: *The White House Cantata*, *The Firebrand of Florence*, *Knickerbocker Holiday* and *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Participating at the Verbier Festival four times has also been a highlight, personally as well as musically.



Shelly and her husband, Paul, who recently retired as Senior Vice President for finance at Memorial Sloan Kettering, moved to Florida in 2020 where they spend part of the year (as well as in Ohio to see their grandchildren). But Shelly has kept active musically and recently was accepted by the Naples Philharmonic Chorus.

MasterVoices is still dear to her, and she arranges to come to New York to participate with MasterVoices whenever possible. That includes singing in *The Lord of the Rings* and the Hisaishi films. Her solo work continues, singing at weddings and funerals, in churches and synagogues. "I love singing and want to do it as much as possible before I have an old lady voice'. I stumbled upon MasterVoices all those years ago and have been a member for much of my adult life. It's given me so many opportunities, memories and friendships."

MEET

STEPHEN WEBER

MEMBER SINCE 2011

TENOR

Stephen has a Master's degree in literature and teaches college level English at Pace University High School, where he also directs plays, arranges international trips, and leads the knitting club. He's both an avid knitter and fiber artist, and you can see some of his wonderful creations on social media (@knitphen) or his podcast - The Mingled Yarncast - on YouTube. Stephen is the co-coordinator of the MasterVoices Side-By-Side program, a perfect match for someone with his experience and gifts. He has found mentoring students in the chorus to be "gratifying, humbling, beautiful, and fun".

A huge fan of Monty Python, singing *Not The Messiah* at Carnegie Hall with Eric Idle was Stephen's most fun memory of his MasterVoices performances. But traveling with the chorus to Verbier, Israel, and Salzburg provided Stephen with the musical experience that moved him the most - singing the Verdi *Requiem* in Israel in a concert that was dedicated to the Israeli tourists who had just been killed by terrorists.



MEET

SUSAN SHINE

MEMBER SINCE 1985

SOPRANO

Susan has been a keystone in The Collegiate Chorale / MasterVoices for over three decades in her roles as singer, Singers Council President and member of the Board of Directors. Yet this was an unlikely yet fateful journey.

Growing up in Pittsburgh, Susan learned piano and sang in her high school chorus. In her early career Susan held various positions with New Jersey State agencies and Rutgers University and sang in a community choir. But when she joined Collegiate Chorale in 1985, Robert Bass saw something special in Susan and thus began a partnership that implemented Mr. Bass's vision to grow the organization from a financially pressed singing member-run chorus trying to mount performances of choral classics to the organization that is MasterVoices today. Susan recalls that "Bob was a brilliant creative and visionary talent." Susan has also had a successful professional career as a not for profit fundraiser for arts organizations including Carnegie Hall and Caramoor and has applied those skills and experience on behalf of MasterVoices as a member of the Board of Directors.

Susan has participated in all but one of MasterVoices travel programs and especially remembers the thrill of performing numerous times in Verbier with conductor James Levine. Her vision for the future of MasterVoices is to continue its "creativity in programming that distinguishes it from other choral organizations in the City." Susan says that her time with MasterVoices has been "the most meaningful thing in my life."



MEET

THOMAS HOM

MEMBER SINCE 1980

TENOR

Tom joined the chorus in 1980 as a tenor, coinciding with the time that Robert Bass became conductor. He is a devoted husband, father of two, and grandfather of three. After graduating from Stuyvesant H.S., Brooklyn College, and obtaining a degree in dentistry from Fairleigh Dickinson University, Dr. Hom was in solo practice in Chinatown, serving the community for 44 years. Among his patients were members of the chorus. In addition to singing, he has been an enthusiast of racquetball, golf, culinary adventures, and world traveling.

Singing Paul McCartney's *Liverpool Oratorio* at Carnegie Hall was a standout experience for Tom, who got to meet the star himself. McCartney not only attended all rehearsals but was also extremely open and accessible to the chorus. Other special memories include the performance of *Elijah* with Bryn Terfel, as well as singing with the chorus for Pavarotti Plus with Luciano Pavarotti, as part of the Richard Tucker Foundation concerts that were broadcast on PBS.

Tom states the combined experience of expanding the musical repertoire from singing the choral classics to opera, and now to staged Broadway theater productions with Ted is the reason for his continued presence with MasterVoices. Where else can you find such immeasurable joy and meaning?

