



HUNTINGTON MEN'S CHORUS

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HUNTINGTON MEN'S CHORUS - HISTORIAN NARRATIVE

As historian of the Huntington Men's Chorus, I would like to share my thoughts as to how the Chorus has made a lasting contribution to the cultural quality of life in our Huntington community, and why it is worthy of recognition at our upcoming 75th Anniversary Concert on May 4th at the St. Francis of Assisi RC Church in Greenlawn. We feel that the Chorus has helped to instill a sense of pride and joy in the community, as well as an appreciation of how music enhances our everyday lives.

The Huntington Men's Chorus was founded in 1949 when a number of LIRR commuters who were also members of the University Glee Club of New York City and who often entertained fellow commuters with song decided that Huntington should have its own men's chorus. James C. Doty, a music teacher in the Huntington school system, was hired as its first conductor, and David Hudson Smith, also a local educator as well as an accomplished concert pianist, agreed to serve as accompanist. The Chorus was fortunate to have Mr. Smith and his musical talent for the next 37 years.

Early concert performances were well received, and after performing a full-fledged concert on December 16, 1951 at the Robert L. Simpson High School, the Chorus formalized a schedule for the concerts each year, a Spring Concert, at local schools, which are first Saturdays of the year, and a Fall Concert, at local schools, which are first Saturdays of the year, respectively.





The only instance in which a concert had to be cancelled resulted from COVID closing requirements, when the Chorus was well underway rehearsing for the Spring 2020 Concert. Refusing to be further silenced during the pandemic, the Chorus produced the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Concerts virtually; these two concerts can be seen on YouTube (go to our website at www.huntingtonmenschorus.org). We thereafter returned to our regular schedule of live performances at St. Francis, with our 75th Anniversary

concert set for this coming May 4th.

In addition to these annual concerts, the Chorus has for many years participated in the Huntington Arts Council's Summer Arts Festival in Heckscher Park, often as one of the lead-off performances of the summer season. The Chorus also performs at local houses of worship, as well as for other community organizations. In years past we have performed at the Industrial Home for the Blind in Cold Spring Harbor, an extremely uplifting experience for its residents. More recently, we have performed at Veterans Day celebrations at Town Hall in Huntington and 911 vigils in Cold Spring Harbor. We also performed at the Veterans Administration medical facility in Northport, and staged a special concert at Huntington Library in December 2023.



The concert programs are put together by a music committee, and cover a variety of musical genres, including popular songs, Broadway tunes, sea chanteys and classical numbers. The written concert programs, which are handed out to the audience, are designed to be musically educational in providing background information and excerpted lyrics for each number.

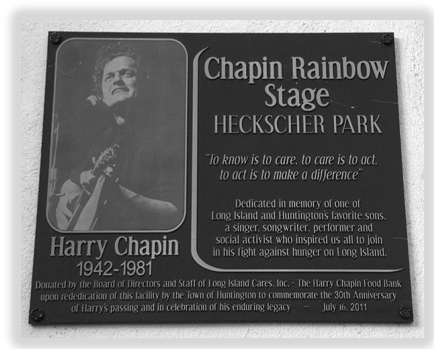
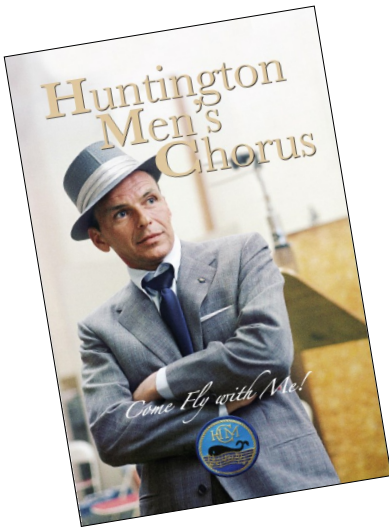
Our concerts often offer a specific theme which we feel will be well received by members of the local community. One example of such a theme was highlighted in the May 1995 concert which celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II. The concert opened as the audience watched each member march onto the stage in single file to the "Sound Off" chant made famous by Vaughn Monroe and his orchestra. The audience, with the Conduc-

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF D-DAY BY GENERAL EISENHOWER PRES. TRUMAN ANNOUNCES SURRENDER OF GERMANY ROBERT TROUT ANNOUNCES END OF WORLD WAR II

tor's encouragement, joined the Chorus in singing the *Star-Spangled Banner*. During our singing of the *Armed Forces Medley*, veterans in the audience were asked to stand for recognition when their branch of the military was mentioned. This exhilarating scene was enhanced by the American flag draped from the ceiling--- the same flag that overlooked the

Japanese surrender ceremony aboard the battleship Missouri. It was truly an emotionally moving experience for our local veterans in the audience. More recent themes have included odes to Huntington's own Harry Chapin and "ol blue eyes" Frank Sinatra, and our concerts have included songs composed by local icon Billy Joel.



ble Broadway performers and others who reside in the local communities. Significantly, from a community benefit perspective, we have in the past invited 5th and 6th grade choruses from several local elementary schools to participate on stage to their proud parents' performed with the School chorus.



mentary schools to with the Chorus, much delight. We have also Huntington High

The Chorus is uted to the Huntington other than our concert performance-respective openings of Walt Whit-High School, the Chorus utilized the certs to fund the purchase of electronic organs for the enhancement of both schools for the enhancement of Also worth noting, the Chorus has an established Scholarship Fund, which from time-to-time awards scholarship grants to graduating seniors at one of Huntington Township's high



proud to have contributed to the Huntington community in ways es. For example, shortly after the man High School and Huntington proceeds from several of its electronic organs for the auditoriums of their own musical performances.

schools who have demonstrated exceptional musical talent.

There can be no doubt that 75 years of success could not have been accomplished without the benefit of first-rate, professional conductors and accompanists. Our current conductor,



Henry (Hank) McDonagh III is a three-time Grammy nominated musician who also is a music teacher for the New York City Public Schools. Our accompanist, Ed Kozslowski, recently retired after 30 years as a music educator and choral director for the Farmingdale School District.



On a personal note, I would like to say that my father, Frank Lavery, was a singing member of the Chorus for 20 years beginning in the 1950's, and served as President of the Chorus, as did I some years later. I am proud that we were one of several "father and son" tandems to have been members of the Chorus.

I feel very comfortable that the Huntington Men's Chorus is well positioned to continue its beneficial services to the Huntington Community for another 75 years and beyond.

Thomas Lavery

Huntington Men's Chorus Historian



