



About Skylark

Skylark is a premier vocal ensemble of leading American vocal soloists, chamber musicians, and music educators. Skylark's dramatic performances have been described as "gripping" (The Times of London) and "awe-inspiring" (Boston Music Intelligencer). With "some of Boston's best singers" (Boston Globe), the voices of Skylark "can sway you softly into calm and then all but throw you across the room with sheer harmonic force" (Thought Catalog).

Skylark strives to set the standard for innovative and engaging programs that re-define the choral experience for audiences and singers alike. Artistic Director Matthew Guard's well-researched and creative programs have been described as "engrossing" (WQXR New York) and "original, stimulating, and beautiful" (BBC Radio 3). Skylark's most recent three recordings all reached the top 10 of Billboard's Traditional Classical Chart, earning praise for "imaginative" programming (Limelight Australia) and "singing of the highest standard for any area or any repertoire" (Classics Today).

Since its founding in 2011 in Atlanta and Boston, Skylark has branched out to perform its dynamic programs in museums, concert halls, and churches across the United States. Skylark made its international debut in March 2018 at St. John's Smith Square, London, as part of the UK choir Tenebrae's *Holy Week Festival*. The *Times of London* declared that Skylark was "the highlight" of a festival that included some of the UK's leading choirs, including The Tallis Scholars, Polyphony, Tenebrae, and the Gabrieli Consort.

In 2017, Skylark embarked on a historic tour with *Clear Voices in the Dark*, a compelling program featuring Francis Poulenc's notoriously difficult *Figure Humaine* paired with songs of the American Civil War. Skylark's performance at the French Institute Alliance-Française in New York was described as "fascinating.... impeccable diction and a seamlessly blended sound... Singing in a shimmering pianissimo that rises to a triumphant crescendo, the Skylark ensemble practically opens the heavens with the beauty of their sound..." (Stage Buddy NYC). The previous year, Skylark made its debut at Atlanta's celebrated Spivey Hall with a chamber performance of Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil*.

A not-for-profit entity, Skylark performs educational outreach programs with high school and college students across the United States during its concert tours. In addition to numerous outreach workshops in public schools across the country, Skylark has conducted residencies at premier colleges and elite secondary schools including Harvard, MIT, Wellesley College, Endicott College, Milton Academy, Woodward Academy, and Philips Exeter Academy.

About Matthew Guard, Artistic Director

Conductor, entrepreneur, and business strategist Matthew Guard is earning a reputation as one of the most innovative and thoughtful programmers in American choral music. Praised for his “catalyzing leadership” (Q2/WQXR) and “musically creative and intellectually rich” programming (Opera Obsession), Guard is passionate about communicating something unique in each concert and recording. Guard scours the world of available repertoire for each program, exhaustively researches each piece, and crafts concerts that captivate audiences with their hidden connections and seamless artistry. Guard has always had a deep love for choral music, studying conducting and music theory in college, and conducting over 150 concerts as the Music Director of the Harvard Krokodiloes, Harvard’s oldest a cappella group. Guard earned his MBA from Emory University, and spent five years as a business strategy consultant.

With Carolyn Guard, Skylark’s Executive Director, he was also part of the founding team of Babiators, a lifestyle brand of children’s products named one of “America’s Most Promising Companies” by Forbes in 2014 and to the Inc. 5000 in 2016. Guard’s true passion has always remained in the arts, and for choral music in particular. Since founding Skylark, he has been fortunate to benefit from the advice and mentorship of phenomenal conductors and teachers, including Jameson Marvin, Simon Carrington, Vance George, and Joshua Habermann. Much of his musical knowledge has arisen from self-study and practical experience, and he considers his ongoing education with the singers of Skylark to be one of the most invigorating and enriching experiences of his life.

Select Skylark Artist Biographies

Tenor **George Case** is the Director of Choral Activities at The Boston Conservatory where he directs the choral ensembles and the graduate choral conducting program. He is also the music director for the Newburyport Choral Society. George is an award-winning educator of young musicians who frequently leads clinics and workshops for high school and college singers, as well as professional development sessions for teachers around the country. As a soloist and professional chorister, George has performed with major ensembles across North America and Europe, including the Santa Fe Desert Chorale and Spire Chamber Ensemble. George is an avid tennis player.

Praised for having “the voice of an angel,” mezzo-soprano and contemporary vocalist **Carrie Cheron** defies the definition of genre. She has performed as a soloist with and as an ensemble member of such groups as the Boston Baroque, the Handel + Haydn Society, the American Classical Orchestra, Arcadia Players, Yale Choral Artists, and Atlanta’s New Trinity Baroque. Carrie is also a nationally recognized, award-winning, performing singer/songwriter and has shared the stage with such acclaimed artists as Sweet Honey In The Rock, The Barra MacNeils, David Jacobs-Strain, Anais Mitchell, and Edie Carey. She is on the voice faculty at Berklee College of Music. www.carriecheron.com

John K. Cox is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at Reed College in Portland, Oregon where he leads the Chorus and Collegium Musicum, as well as teaching courses in theory, performance practice, and pre-modern music history. Dr. Cox holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory, University of Oregon, and a doctorate from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. A specialist in 16th and 17th century music, Dr. Cox’s recent work focuses on forgotten repertoires of Italian sacred music dating from the late seventeenth century. Outside of rehearsal or the library, he can be found hiking, biking, or in a canoe.

Hailed as a “vivid countertenor” (Wall Street Journal) with a voice that is “unusually sparkling” (Kansas City Star) **Doug Dodson** is making his mark on opera and concert stages throughout the country. Notable recent engagements include: alto soloist in the American premieres of Melani’s *Lauda anima mea* and Perti’s *Magnificat* at Union College; Ignis in the world premiere of Per Bololand’s opera *Pedr Solis* with Guerilla Opera; and Ottone in *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, as part of the prestigious Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme. Mr. Dodson has a degree in Anthropology as well as Music and is a native of South Dakota.

Mezzo-soprano **Carolyn Guard** is a life-long Episcopal church musician, having begun her studies with the Royal School of Church Music at age 6. After attending the Eton Choral courses in the UK, Carolyn was a founding member of the Choral Fellow program in the Memorial Church at Harvard University. Carolyn has performed as a special guest artist with the Boston Camerata, and as a soloist at Durham Cathedral and St. Paul’s Cathedral, London. Carolyn’s decidedly nonmusical degrees are from Harvard University and Emory’s Goizueta Business School. She lives in Atlanta with her husband, son, and golden retriever.

Christopher Jackson serves as the Director of Choral Activities and Head of Voice at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA. He is in frequent demand as a guest conductor for Honor Choirs and festivals, and sings professionally with ensembles across the nation. Christopher has directed and co-founded numerous community and semi-professional groups, most recently Bricolage Project. A native of Stillwater, OK, Christopher enjoys cooking and philosophizing with his cats.

Fiona Gillespie Jackson, soprano, sings regularly with groups around the nation as both a soloist and professional ensemble member. She particularly enjoys creating musical collaborations with friends and her ensemble, Bricolage Project, that focus on education and outreach. She served on the voice faculty at Lycoming College for the past four years, where she also taught Baroque music history and directed opera. Fiona grew up playing traditional Celtic music, which she still performs with her family, and makes canvas and furniture collages in her spare time. She calls the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania home.

Tenor **Cory Klose** is gaining recognition as a sought-after performer of both choral and solo repertoire. Cory appears on the rosters of many professional ensembles including Boston’s Handel + Haydn Society, GRAMMY® Award-nominated True Concord Voices and Orchestra, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Bach Collegium San Diego, Kinnara Ensemble, The Crossing, Spire Chamber Ensemble, and The Thirteen. Recent solo performance highlights include Bach’s *Magnificat* with Music in the Mountains in Colorado and Handel’s *Messiah* with The Orchestra of the Hills in Washington, DC. Cory is also a professional graphic designer and is based in Atlanta. www.coryklose.com

Samuel Kreidenweis is an active soloist and ensemble singer throughout the US and abroad. In 2015 he recorded the Rachmaninoff *All-Night Vigil* with the Phoenix Chorale and Kansas City Chorale under Charles Bruffy, which won the GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance in 2016. Internationally Sam has toured with the Dublin, Ireland based group Anúna with whom he has toured Ireland, the U.K., Belgium, the Netherlands, China, and Japan. Recently Sam joined Conspirare for the world-premiere performance and recording of *Considering Matthew Shepard*, which was written and conducted by Craig Hella Johnson. Sam enjoys baking with his sourdough starter named Precious.

Praised for her "otherworldly" singing, **Clare McNamara** brings her sensitive interpretation to a wide variety of repertoire throughout the United States and abroad. Ensemble affiliations include Lorelei Ensemble, Cut Circle, Handel + Haydn Society, and The Boston Camerata. International festival credits include Laus Polyphoniae (Belgium), Tage Alter Musik Regensburg (Germany), and Utrecht Early Music (Netherlands). As a soloist, Clare will make her Symphony Hall debut in the Handel and Haydn Society's 2018 performance of Bach's *Mass in B minor*. Clare dreams of having a dog-friendly back yard. A.B. Princeton University; M.M. Longy School of Music of Bard College. www.claremcnamara.com

Soprano **Sarah Moyer**'s recent solo repertoire includes the American premieres of Nørgård's *Nova Genitura* and *Seadrift* with Lost Dog New Music Ensemble and a collection of Melani's works with Reed College Collegium, the world premieres of Theofanidis' *Four Levertov Settings*, Kallembach's *Easter Oratorio*, and Runestad's *The Hope of Loving* with Seraphic Fire, and Foss' *The Prairie* with Boston Modern Orchestra Project. As a choral artist, Sarah appears nationally with Skylark, Seraphic Fire, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, True Concord, The Thirteen, and Ensemble Origo. She enjoys spending time outdoors and expanding her refrigerator magnet collection. www.sopranosarahmoyer.com.

Alexander Nishibun is gaining recognition for his "smooth-toned voice [of] spring-water clarity" (Boston Classical Review), musical versatility, and engaging presence. A frequent oratorio soloist, Nishibun's recent performances include Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri*, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Mass in B minor* and *Magnificat*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Davidde Penitente*, and Haydn's *The Creation*. In conjunction with his solo work, Nishibun performs across the U.S. with Kinnara Ensemble, the GRAMMY® Award-winning Handel + Haydn Society, the Blue Heron Renaissance Choir, Ensemble Origo, and the Boston Cecilia. Outside of his career, he is a proud uncle, a grill enthusiast, and learning to play the mandolin.

Soprano **Margot Rood** performs a wide range of repertoire. Recent and upcoming appearances include those with Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, New World Symphony, Seraphic Fire, A Far Cry, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Rhode Island Philharmonic, Blue Heron, Skylark, Lorelei Ensemble, Cape Symphony, Bach Collegium San Diego, Grand Harmonie, as well as onstage with Boston Early Music Festival, Monadnock Music, and St. Petersburg Opera. Ms. Rood is the recipient of awards including the St. Botolph Emerging Artist Award, the Lorraine Hunt Lieberson Fellowship at Emmanuel Music, and The American Prize. www.margotrood.com

Ohio-based soprano **Alissa Ruth** is an emerging young artist whose love of choral music has been central to her musical life from an early age; she is the daughter of two music teachers, and can't remember a time when she wasn't in rehearsal! Her career has led her to sing with ensembles nationwide, such as the Santa Fe Desert Chorale (NM), the L.A. Master Chorale (CA), Skylark (MA), and Vocal Arts Ensemble (OH). She also regularly records for Beckenhurst Press with Aire Born Recording Studio (IN). Alissa holds a Bachelor of Music in Education Degree from Capital University.

Boston-based soprano **Janet Stone** was recently soloist in Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Britten's *The Company of Heaven*. She is a singer on staff and frequent soloist at Trinity Church, Copley Square and also sings with Handel + Haydn Society and Cappella Clausura, with whom she recently recorded *Exultet Terra: Choral Music of Hilary Tann*. Upcoming solo engagements include Fauré's *Requiem* and Bach's *Cantata 140: Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*. In her spare time, Janet continues her quest to be a professional cat-lady. You can follow her feline friend on Instagram @obiewancatnobi.

Described as a “rich-voiced” and “vivid” singer by a recent New York Times review, **Peter Walker** performs with the Handel + Haydn Society, Three Notch’d Road, Skylark Ensemble, Texas Early Music Project, Clarion Society Choir, Staunton Music Festival, Early Music New York, Gotham Early Music, Apollo’s Fire, Hudson Valley Philharmonic, Stamford Symphony, and Western Wind. Peter is a member of the choir of St. Luke in the Fields, and is a founding member of the medieval ensemble Marginalia. He holds degrees from Vassar College and McGill University, where he studied with Drew Minter and Sanford Sylvan.

Dana Whiteside’s solo appearances include concert, opera and recital. A product of Longy School of Music, New England Conservatory and Tanglewood Music Center, he has received critical acclaim for his voice of “noble clarity throughout powerful and resonant” (The Washington Post). Recent highlights include *The Magic Flute* with Boston Baroque; the role of Count Carl Magnus in Sondheim’s *A Little Night Music*; “Carmina Burana” at Mechanics Hall; Verdi’s *Requiem*; and *Sea Symphony* at the Kennedy. Dana holds a degree in economics and parlays his skills and interest organizational development as President of the Board of Directors of Emmanuel Music.