



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 Babiatators, 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

Soprano FIONA GILLESPIE JACKSON, described as "brilliant" by San Francisco Classical Voice, sings as a soloist and professional chorister with ensembles across the country. Recently, she has appeared as a soloist with The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, The Lehigh University Philharmonic, The Williamsport Symphony Orchestra, The Denton Bach Society, and the Orchestra of New Spain. In addition to Skylark Vocal Ensemble, Fiona sings with Kinnara Ensemble, The South Dakota Chorale, Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati, and The Crossing. Fiona is a founding member and soprano with the Earthshine Consort based in Pennsylvania and New York, and a co-founder of the Lycoming Baroque Choir and Orchestra. She teaches voice at Lycoming College in Pennsylvania.

Soprano **SARAH MOYER** is gaining a national reputation for her youthful sound, vocal agility, and musical versatility. In 2014 the *Boston Globe Magazine* exclusively featured her work as a professional singing artist and deemed her "the kind of church singer who will rock your sacred-music world." She performs frequently in liturgical settings such as the Church of the Advent, Music at Marsh Chapel, and Trinity Church, Boston. Nationally, she appears with the Lorelei Ensemble, Tucson Chamber Artists, Seraphic Fire, and Vox Humana. She is a founding member of Illumine, a trio devoted to the preservation of duets for soprano and trumpet.

Praised by *The New York Times* for her "velvety suaveness," and "impressive clarity and color," Boston-based American soprano **JESSICA PETRUS** enjoys a national performance career as both a versatile soloist and a sensitive chamber musician. She frequently performs across the US, with groups including Blue Heron, Clarion Music Society, Blue Heron, Etherea Vocal Ensemble, Tucson Chamber Artists, and Seraphic Fire. She holds an M.M. from the Yale University Institute of Sacred Music.

MARGOT ROOD, soprano, hailed for her "luminosity and grace" by *The New York Times*, performs a wide range of repertoire across American stages. Notable recent engagements include her Carnegie Hall debut in the world premiere of Shawn Jaeger's *Letters Made with Gold* under the direction of Dawn Upshaw and Donnacha Dennehy. Ms. Rood is a core member of the Lorelei Ensemble, an all-female vocal ensemble dedicated to the performance of new music. Ms. Rood performs regularly with top ensembles including Seraphic Fire, Tucson Chamber Artists, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Emmanuel Music, and the Handel and Haydn Society.

Soprano **WANDA YANG TEMKO** is a respected singer, voice teacher, and arts advocate. Based in Atlanta, she made her international operatic debut in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* in Rome. Sought after as a recitalist and soloist, most recently she performed as soprano soloist in Brahms' *Requiem* with Ars Musica and with New Trinity Baroque in a concert of Bach's sacred cantatas. In 2012 Dr. Yang Temko made her debut with the Alabama Symphony. She also performs and records with the Grammy-Award-winning Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus. She holds a doctorate in voice performance from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

Mezzo-soprano **CARRIE CHERON** has been praised as "inspirational," "soulful," and awe-inspiring." She performs as a soloist and with Boston Baroque, Yale Choral Artists, and Handel and Haydn's Educational Vocal Quartet, among other ensembles. Carrie is also an award-winning singer/songwriter and has performed at such venues as Club Passim, The Bitter End, Mountain Stage New Song Festival, Great Waters Folk Festival, and First Night Boston.

With a voice hailed as "vivid" (*Wall Street Journal*) and "unusually sparkling" (*Kansas City Star*), **DOUGLAS DODSON** is making his mark in repertoire ranging from the baroque to the contemporary. In recent seasons he has performed with the American Repertory Theatre, Chicago Opera Theatre, Music at Marsh Chapel, the Kansas City Baroque Consortium, South Dakota Chorale the Handel Choir of Baltimore, and the Handel and Haydn Society.

A native of Atlanta, **GEORGE CASE**, tenor, is the Director of Choral Activities at The Boston Conservatory, where he directs the choral ensembles and the graduate choral conducting program. George holds Doctoral and Masters degrees in conducting from the University of Michigan and a Bachelors degree in vocal performance from Boston University. George is also the music director for the Newburyport Choral Society, an 80-year old choral society on the north shore.

Conductor, musicologist, and vocalist **JOHN COX** recently completed his DMA in Conducting from the University of Illinois. While completing his MM at the University of Oregon, he was apprentice conductor of the Eugene Symphony. He is currently Director of Performance and Lecturer in Music at Union College in Schenectady, New York.

New Jersey native **CORY KLOSE** is an avid performer of both choral and solo repertoire. He is on the roster of many professional ensembles including GRAMMY-Award-winning Conspirare, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Skylark Ensemble, Bach Collegium San Diego, The Crossing, Apollo Master Chorale, Tucson Chamber Artists, and Kinnara Ensemble. Cory has also recorded with Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble on the GRAMMY-Award-winning record, "Songs of Ascension."

Praised for her "lushly evocative mezzo," **CLARE MCNAMARA** is a Boston-based chamber musician specializing in early and new music. She is a core member of the Lorelei Ensemble and a founding member of the Broken Consort. Recent engagements include the Connecticut Early Music Festival with Ensemble Origo, The Boston Cecilia Society, Vox Humana, and the Church of the Advent. She holds a B.A. in Music from Princeton University and an M.M. in Early Music performance from the Longy School of Music.

Kentuckian tenor **ALEXANDER NISHIBUN** is praised for his vibrant instrument and sensitive stage presence, having been characterized as “a delight...” and “capable of stealing the show with a gesture” (Portland Press Herald). He performs with many Boston-based ensembles including Music at Marsh Chapel, the Copley Singers, Trinity Church, and Cappella Clausura. He holds his M.M. from the New England Conservatory of Music.

Baritone **GLENN BILLINGLSEY**'s performance of *Messiah* under Johannes Somary was described by *The New York Times* as “smooth and fluent.” Glenn has performed with the Santa Fe and New York City Opera National companies, the Waverly Consort and New York's Musica Sacra. A founding member of Blue Heron, he sings with the Handel and Haydn Society and the Church of the Advent.

Dr. **CHRISTOPHER JACKSON**, bass, serves as the Director of Choral Activities at Lycoming College in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and the Lycoming Baroque Choir and Orchestra. In addition to conducting, Christopher sings both as a soloist and as a chorister with professional ensembles across the country. He received his degrees in conducting from The University of North Texas and Westminster Choir College, and in vocal performance from Oklahoma State University.

Bass-baritone **SAMUEL KREIDENWEIS** is quickly gaining praise for his versatile vocal abilities in choral and operatic settings. While living in Arizona, Sam performed with the AZ Bach Festival, AZ MusicFest, the Arizona Opera Chorus, and with the Grammy Award-winning Phoenix Chorale under Charles Bruffy. Now residing in Boston, Sam is a Bass Choral Scholar at Boston University's Marsh Chapel. In addition to his work with Skylark, Sam tours internationally with Michael McGlynn's Irish Vocal Ensemble Anúna. Sam holds a MM in Opera Theatre Performance from Arizona State University.

Described as “rich-voiced” and “vivid” by a recent *New York Times* review, bass **PETER WALKER** enjoys a varied and exciting career as singer of solo and ensemble repertoire. He recently revisited the roles of Balthasar and Habbakuk in the *Play of Daniel* with Gotham Early Music and Trinity Wall Street. Highlights this season include appearances with Early Music New York, Texas Early Music Project, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, and renaissance ensemble The Thirteen. Peter is a member of the choir of St. Luke in the Fields, and is a core member of The Broken Consort as a singer and bagpiper. Peter holds degrees from Vassar College and McGill University.