



For Immediate Release

Contact: Robin L. Perry
202-331-7577 ext. 243
Robin@chorusamerica.org

**CHORUS AMERICA RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING CHORUSES AND INDIVIDUALS
at 31st Annual Conference**

Chorus America presented an array of awards to individuals and choruses at the 31st Annual Conference at the National Performing Arts Convention in Denver, Colorado, June 10-14, 2008. The awards recognized a broad range of achievements, including artistic excellence, adventurous programming, innovative education programs, and generous philanthropy.

“The exemplary leadership demonstrated by these deserving individuals and organizations serves as a model for all choruses as they strive for success in their communities,” said Ann Meier Baker, president and CEO of Chorus America. “We are both inspired and enriched by their contributions, and delighted to give them the recognition they so richly deserve.”

Chorus America/ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming and Alice Parker Award

Three choruses received the Chorus America/ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming. The awards recognize choruses that demonstrate a sustained commitment to adventurous programming through performances of choral music written in the last 25 years. The 2008 winners are:

- **The Esoterics**, founded by director **Eric Banks**, is a Seattle-based vocal ensemble that is dedicated to performing and perpetuating contemporary *a cappella* choral settings of poetry, philosophy, and spiritual writings from around the world.
- **Chanticleer**, directed by **Joseph Jennings**, is a 12-voice men’s vocal ensemble based in San Francisco. They perform music ranging from Renaissance to jazz to gospel to new music.
- **Peninsula Girls Chorus**, founder and artistic director **Catherine Doyle Wesolek**, is a 220-member girls chorus and arts education/performance center located in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Chorus America/ASCAP Alice Parker Award honors Alice Parker, whose career has spanned almost six decades and has been devoted to the creation of works for the human voice. The award was established in 2003 to recognize a chorus for programming recently-composed music that expands the mission of the chorus and challenges the chorus’s audience in new ways.

The 2008 award went to **Monmouth Civic Chorus**, directed by **Mark Shapiro**. The Chorus received the award for its March 2007 world premiere of Jorge Martin's *Stronger Than Darkness*, a Cuban-American opera in concert. "What a tremendous and unexpected honor for The Monmouth Civic Chorus," said director Mark Shapiro. "This ASCAP award acknowledges the passion and commitment of MCC's dedicated singers, hard-working board, loyal supporters, and fearless audience."

Michael Korn Founders Award for Philanthropic Contribution to the Arts

Paul Caldwell received the 2008 Michael Korn Founders Award for Philanthropic Contribution to the Arts. Caldwell is artistic director of the Youth Choral Theater of Chicago, a training and performance company involving nearly 300 young people. He has helped to raise over \$100,000 for Chorus America through his creative and energetic leadership of the Annual Auction. This award is given periodically to an individual, corporation, or foundation whose financial support of Chorus America and the choral art has been especially significant and generous.

Chorus America Philanthropic Award

The Chorus America Philanthropic Award recognizes an individual, corporation, or foundation whose financial support has been especially significant and generous to the host of Chorus America's Annual Conference. The 2008 Award honored **The Bonfils-Stanton Foundation**, a private, nonprofit corporation created to enhance the quality of life for residents of Colorado. The mission of the Foundation is to advance excellence in the areas of Arts and Culture, Community Service, and Science and Medicine through strategic investments resulting in significant and unique contributions in these fields.

"Bonfils-Stanton has a spirit of generosity that encourages all of us in the performing arts to move from success to significance, and they provide the resources to make it happen," said Diane Newcom, executive director of the Colorado Children's Chorale, co-host of the 2008 Chorus America Conference.

Dale Warland Singers Commission Award

The inaugural recipient of the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award is **Chanticleer**, who will partner with composer **Shawn Crouch** to create and premiere a new choral work in 2009. Chorus America and the American Composers Forum have partnered to present this new award to honor the lifelong commitment of Dale Warland to new music. The \$5,000 award is made possible by the Dale Warland Singers Fund for New Choral Music, a permanently restricted endowment fund established in 2004 to honor Dale and the Singers.

"Dale Warland has been, more than many people might know, responsible for what Chanticleer is today," said Joseph Jennings, music director of Chanticleer. "We hope we can continue to be true to his ideals of repertoire and musicmaking and uphold the high standards he set for American choral music around the world."

Chanticleer is a GRAMMY Award-winning 12-voice men's vocal ensemble based in San Francisco. Shawn Crouch is an emerging young composer, conductor, and educator in New York City. Chanticleer will perform Crouch's composition in March 2009 as part of a concert program dedicated to works by composers under the age of 30.

Chorus America Education Outreach Award

The 2008 Education Outreach Award was presented to the **Los Angeles Master Chorale**, conducted by Grant Gershon. The \$2,500 award is presented to a Chorus America member ensemble whose education outreach program demonstrates mission-based program development, viable music education, effective management and fiscal integrity, a commitment to artistic excellence, and a collaboration that is sustainable, beneficial, and meaningful for all partners.

LAMC's *Voices Within* program has engaged nearly 22,000 elementary school children since its launch in 2001. A collaboration between the Los Angeles Master Chorale, the Los Angeles County Public Schools and a dozen teaching artists, *Voices Within* pairs a lyricist, a composer, and a singer with a fifth- or sixth-grade classroom for a 10-week residency during which the students compose their own original songs based on a theme taken directly from their curriculum. The students' compositions are performed for an all-school assembly, and often in other community venues as well. The Los Angeles Master Chorale Chamber Singers performs four- to eight-part arrangements of each composition at the assembly, and students and their families are invited to attend a LAMC dress rehearsal at the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal

The 2008 Botto Award was given to **Jonathan Miller**, founder and artistic director of Chicago *a cappella*. Miller founded Chicago *a cappella* in 1993, directly inspired by Louis Botto's Chanticleer model. Miller is a passionate champion for new music; his own compositions are published by Walton and Hinshaw Music. He is also a lifelong singer, starting out in the Chicago Children's Choir, and later becoming an original member of His Majestie's Clerkes (now Bella Voce).

The Botto Award was established in memory of Louis Botto for his artistry, selfless service to the choral art, and entrepreneurial spirit in founding the men's vocal ensemble Chanticleer. The award is given periodically to a mid-career choral leader who through his or her work with a member ensemble of Chorus America has demonstrated innovative action and entrepreneurial zeal in developing a professional or professional-core choral ensemble.

Michael Korn Founders Award for Development of the Professional Choral Art

Chorus America established this Honorary Citation in 1978 to honor an individual with a lifetime of significant contributions to the professional choral art. The 2008 award went to **John Alexander**, artistic director of the Pacific Chorale.

Celebrating his 35th Season with the Chorale, John Alexander has provided extraordinary leadership in the choral field both on and off the podium for more than five decades. He is well-known as a strong champion for American music, commissioning composers such as Jake

Heggie, John Adams, Morten Lauridsen, and Eric Whitacre, among many others. He actively supports the creation of new music through programs such as the annual Young Composers Competition and has helped to foster the next generation of choral conductors through his long-time position at California State University Fullerton. A board member and former chair of Chorus America, Alexander has also played an important role in protecting and fostering the role of professional and professional-core choruses through his work as artistic director of the Pacific Chorale and the John Alexander Singers.

Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence

The Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence honors the memory of Margaret Hillis, founder of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, for her more than 40 years of professional achievement and outstanding contributions to the choral arts. The \$5,000 award is presented annually to a member chorus that demonstrates artistic excellence, a strong organizational structure, and a commitment to outreach, education, and/or culturally diverse activities.

The 2008 Hillis Award went to **Anima** (formerly the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus), conducted by Emily Ellsworth. Anima serves more than 250 children in its four main performing ensembles and reaches more than 1,000 additional youth through its education programs. In its 43-year history, the chorus has enjoyed a long-term relationship with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, including partnering on four GRAMMY Award-winning recordings, and is building similar relationships with Music of the Baroque and the Grant Park Orchestra, among others. The chorus has commissioned more than 60 new works for children, many of which have entered the standard repertoire for youth choruses. Anima operates five education outreach programs in addition to a scholarship program.

About Chorus America

Chorus America's mission is to build a dynamic and inclusive choral community so that more people are transformed by the beauty and power of choral singing.

Chorus America strengthens choral organizations and provides their leaders with information, research, leadership development, professional training, and advocacy to help them deliver the best possible contributions to their communities and to the choral art. Chorus America provides invaluable news, resources, and expertise delivered in myriad accessible ways. Chorus America's programs bring professionals and volunteers together to learn and collaborate in a friendly, supportive environment that promotes networking, information exchange, and shared goals.

Chorus America speaks with a strong and unified voice to increase recognition of choral singing as an essential part of society. More than 1,600 choruses, individuals, arts organizations, and businesses are members of Chorus America.

###

1156 15TH STREET, NW, SUITE 310 • WASHINGTON DC 20005 • 202/331-7577 • 202/331-7599 (FAX)
SERVICE@CHORUSAMERICA.ORG • WWW.CHORUSAMERICA.ORG