



P.O. Box 633, Andover, MA 01810

November 2018

Dear Friends,

Do you remember what you were doing when you were 18 years old? I do, and it pales in comparison to what Giacomo Puccini was doing at that age. When Puccini was 18, he wrote the beautiful *Credo* that was to become part of his *Messa di Gloria*; a work he completed at age 20 as a graduation exercise for the Istituto Musicale Pacini in Lucca, Italy. This winter, the Andover Choral Society will perform this first mass of Puccini's and **I am writing to ask for your help.**

Our winter concert will be held on Sunday, January 27, 2019 at 3 p.m. at Veteran's Memorial Hall in Andover. Even though Puccini's mass is a sacred work, the dramatic melodies and harmonies of Italian opera that we associate with Puccini are evident throughout. The concert will also include a selection from Giuseppe Verdi's *Requiem*.

As we enter our 89th season, ACS is still fresh and exciting. Our spring concert on Saturday, May 4, 2019 will feature a unique piece called *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight* by Florence Price, based on a poem of the same name by Vachel Lindsay. Price was the first African-American woman to be recognized as a symphonic composer and to have a composition played by a major orchestra.

In 2009, a substantial collection of Price's papers was found in an abandoned house on the outskirts of Chicago. Among these works was *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight*. Our director, Michael Driscoll, has obtained Price's unpublished manuscript and arranged this beautiful piece for chorus and orchestra, in preparation for its world premier with the Andover Choral Society this spring. The concert will also feature a selection of pieces by George Gershwin, a contemporary of Price's. We will be joined for the concert by the Andover Baptist Church Unity Choir, directed by Michael Belcher, and we are looking forward to our first collaboration with these amazing singers.

We continue to expand our community outreach programs to unite our community through music. The Choral Scholars program focuses on high school music students in the Merrimack Valley, while the Bringing Culture to Students and the Bringing Culture to Seniors programs encourage these groups to enjoy our concerts. The EBT Card-to-Culture program, in partnership with the MA Cultural Council and MA Health and Human Services Department of Transitional Assistance, makes our concerts available to low-income individuals. And, of course, our ACS Christmas Carolers become more popular every season.

You have helped us in the past by making a financial contribution and attending our concerts, and we thank you so much for your support. **We need your help again this year.** Although we carefully control our expenses, it is a constant challenge to cover our costs. Dues paid by our members cover a third of expenses. Tickets, program advertisements and grants make up the rest of our income, but these revenue sources still do not fully cover our concert expenses and community outreach programs.

You receive many requests for donations throughout year, but I hope you will find a way to include the Andover Choral Society in your annual year-end giving. A contribution of any amount is welcome and will help us to continue to bring fine classical music to the Merrimack Valley. If you prefer, you may make your donation electronically, at <http://andoverchoralsociety.org/support>. All contributions will be recognized in our concert program and are fully tax-deductible.

At our December 17 rehearsal we will raffle off two free tickets for our winter concert. Return the enclosed card so that it is received before that date, you will automatically be entered into the raffle, whether or not you choose to make a donation. On behalf of the Andover Choral Society, I thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Tom Connolly

Tom Connolly
President, Andover Choral Society Board of Directors

P.S. Many of our business sponsors have been adversely impacted by the gas explosions in Lawrence, Andover, and North Andover. Please check out our business sponsors list on the ACS website and patronize them.