Marion Buckelew Cullen Center Opens

The 2014–2015 academic year opened with a flourish as several events celebrated the opening of the Marion Buckelew Cullen Center, the first new building constructed on the Westminster campus in 39 years.

To take advantage of the seating in the Hillman Performance Hall and the building’s webcasting capability, the Opening Convocation on September 2, was moved from Bristol Chapel for the first time in recent memory. Pianists Phyllis Alpert Lehrer and Ingrid Clarfield played a processional and recessional on the piano, which was also used to accompany the hymns sung by everyone in attendance. And for the first time families and friends were able to watch the entire ceremony as it was webcast live. A video of the event is now on the Westminster Choir College YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/westminsterchoircoll.

On October 22, a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in conjunction with a Board of Trustees meeting in the new building. The event also included the unveiling of a portrait of Marion Buckelew Cullen, a performance of a passage from Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 “Resurrection” by the Westminster Symphonic Choir and the presentation of Rider University 150th Anniversary medals to Elsie Hilliard Hillman ’48, Ernestine (Mickey) Lazenby Gast ’68 and Herbert B. Mayo.

Before the ribbon cutting, President Mordechai Rozanski welcomed guests, thanked donors and recognized the hard work of many people.

Dr. Gregory G. Dell’Omo Will be Rider University’s Next President

The Rider University Board of Trustees has announced the appointment of Gregory G. Dell’Omo, Ph.D., as Rider’s seventh president. Dell’Omo will succeed Mordechai Rozanski who is retiring on July 31, 2015. Dell’Omo will assume the presidency on August 1, 2015. Dell’Omo will step down from his position at Robert Morris University (RMU), in Pittsburgh, Pa., at the end of the 2014–2015 academic year.

“The Rider opportunity is an exciting one, and I am honored to have been selected to lead this outstanding university,” Dell’Omo said, adding that while leaving RMU and the progress and achievements that it has made over the past 10 years is difficult, returning to his home state of New Jersey where he will be closer to his extended family was an important factor in his decision.

Michael B. Kennedy, chairman of the Rider University Board of Trustees and chair of the Presidential Search Committee, said the board selected Dell’Omo from an extensive pool of candidates.
Cullen Center Opens  continued from page 1  

who helped make the Cullen Center a reality. He also announced that the renovation of The Playhouse, would begin in December and, once completed, it would be renamed the Robert L. Annis Playhouse, honoring Westminster Choir College’s dean and director, who retired in December.

The Cullen Center is located beside The Playhouse, creating a new quadrangle and courtyard that will be a primary outdoor venue for Westminster student and alumni events. Its design was inspired by the Georgian style of the four original buildings surrounding the Morgan Quadrangle. Funds from the State of New Jersey’s “Building Our Future” bond program were central to the completion of the $8.5 million project, as well as pledges, gifts and grants from various sources.

The building is a sustainable learning environment that will receive LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver certification. Some of the LEED components include Green Power, low emitting materials, FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified wood, recycled materials, water use reduction, stormwater management and construction activity that focused on pollution prevention. It contains the Hillman Performance Hall, a 3,000-square-foot performance and rehearsal hall, named in recognition of the Henry L. Hillman Foundation, which provided a $3 million grant to support the project. In addition to the performance/rehearsal hall, the Cullen Center includes a large lobby, a green room and three flexibly configured classrooms that will accommodate a wide range of academic and choral uses. It also includes an integrated connection to The Playhouse that provides improved audience access and amenities, including a ticket booth and handicap-accessible restrooms.

Four cameras captured every moment of Opening Convocation and shared it with viewers around the world through a live webcast. Watch the video on the Westminster YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/westminsterchoircoll.

Despite a driving rain storm that forced the ceremonial opening indoors, the mood was festive as Rider University administrators and the Cullen Center Campaign Chairs cut the ceremonial ribbon to officially open the Marion Buckelew Cullen Center and Hillman Performance Hall. Pictured (from left): President Mordechai Rozanski, Rider Board of Trustees Chair Michael Kennedy, Joseph Beck ’59, Ernestine (Mickey) Lazenby Gast ’68, Henry Simonds, Hillman Family Foundation President Dave Roger, Howard McMorris, Anne Sears and Dean Robert Annis.

Thomas Hampson  Master Class  

R enowned singer and recording artist Thomas Hampson led a master class on campus and worked with six students who performed works by Schubert. It was a standing room only audience in the Hillman Performance Hall—plus many more watching through a webcast. Pictured below with Mr. Hampson: Scott Purcell, Thomas Carle, Thomas Lynch, Thomas Hampson, Morgan Ulyat, Orin Strunk, Elizabeth Perry.
Westminster Bids Farewell to Dean Robert Annis

Westminster College of the Arts faculty and staff from both campuses gathered together to bid a fond farewell to Dean Robert Annis and his family in The Playhouse after classes ended in December. The reception was the last official event held in the historic building before it was closed for renovations. The location seemed especially fitting since, when it reopens in the fall, the building will be renamed the Robert L. Annis Playhouse as a result of more than $500,000 in gifts made in his honor.

University of Aberdeen Honors James Jordan

Professor James Jordan was awarded an honorary Doctor of Music at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland in November, as part of the University’s Winter Commencement, during which he also gave the Commencement address. Since it was founded in 1495, the University of Aberdeen has awarded an honorary doctorate to only two Americans: renowned composer Morten Lauridsen and Dr. Jordan. Other leading musicians who have been recognized with an honorary doctorate from the University of Aberdeen are Sir Edward Elgar, Dame Joan Sutherland, Benjamin Britten, James MacMillan and Neeme Järvi. The degree was granted to Dr. Jordan by Sir Ian Diamond, principal of the University, and it was conferred by Iain Torrance, pro-chancellor of the University. Dr. Jordan was presented for the degree by composer Paul Mealor.

The Aberdeen University Chamber Choir will collaborate with the Westminster Williamson Voices in April to perform Leonard Bernstein’s Chichester Psalms at Westminster and in New York to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the choral masterwork’s premiere. Details are on the web at www.rider.edu/arts.
Dell’Omo is Next Rider University President

“After a very thorough, inclusive and comprehensive selection process, involving all facets of the Rider community including deans, chairs, faculty members, student leaders, administrators, union representatives, alumni and board members, the board is extremely confident in the selection of Greg Dell’Omo as Rider’s next president,” Kennedy said. “I am certain that Greg is the right candidate who will provide the direction and vision required to continue the momentum Rider has experienced over the past decades, while leading our University into the bright future our community deserves.”

Dell’Omo’s years as the seventh president of RMU (2005–2015) have been marked by growth unparalleled in the University’s 93-year history, as it continued its transformation from a regional, commuter-based institution to a comprehensive residential university that draws full-time and part-time students from not only the tri-state area, but across the country and around the globe.

Dell’Omo led RMU through the completion of its most recent five-year strategic plan and its most comprehensive capital campaign. The fundraising campaign ended in September 2012 and raised $41 million, exceeding its goal. The campaign funded two academic buildings: the School of Business Building and the Wheatley Center, which is home to the School of Communications and Information Systems. The campaign helped to boost RMU’s endowment by more than 60 percent and allowed the University to fund 30 new endowed scholarships and a research center focused on achievement among African American men. Most recently, the University broke ground on its new building for the School of Nursing and Health Sciences that is expected to open in fall 2015. At the same time, full-time undergraduate enrollment has grown 35 percent, from 2,928 10 years ago to 3,968 in fall 2014. Total enrollment for fall 2014 was 5,359.

Dell’Omo earned a bachelor’s degree in Economics from Montclair State University, a master’s degree in Industrial Relations from Rutgers University, and a doctorate in Industrial Relations/Human Resource Management from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He earned certifications at Harvard University from the Institute for Education Management and the Seminar for New Presidents. He held previous academic positions at Canisius College and Saint Joseph’s University, where he was dean of the Haub School of Business and vice president for External Affairs.

Away from campus, Dell’Omo has been very active in the Pittsburgh community. He served on numerous boards including the Board of Directors for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Civic Light Orchestra and Magee-Women’s (UPMC) Hospital, among many others.

Dell’Omo, 59, is married to wife Polly, and together they have three children and two grandchildren.

Rozanski praised the selection of Dell’Omo. “He is the ideal candidate for Rider. His superb and proven leadership skills will successfully advance the University to its next level of excellence. I am delighted that Greg will be Rider’s next president.”

“I know that Rider’s leadership team, the Board of Trustees and the University community will work with Greg to shape a new and compelling vision for Rider’s future,” Rozanski said. “In the meantime, I look forward to continuing our work together over the next eight months to complete the important tasks still remaining and ensure a smooth leadership.”

Westminster Jubilee Singers Celebrates 20 Years

The Westminster Jubilee Singers, conducted by Brandon Waddles, will celebrate its 20th anniversary with a concert Sunday, April 19 at 7:30 p.m. at Princeton Meadow Church and Event Center. It will be a night to remember as former conductor J. Donald Dumpson and Jubilee alumni return to raise the roof—and the spirit—with the music that has been a Jubilee hallmark for the past two decades. Tickets are $20 for adults and $15 for students and seniors. Order yours today from the Westminster box office at 609-921-2663 or online at www.rider.edu/arts.

A Jubilee Alumni Dinner is planned for Saturday, April 18. For details, please visit alumni.rider.edu/jubilee.

Westminster Jubilee Singers and Brandon Waddles
Rider University 150th Anniversary Medals of Excellence Awarded to Three in October

In celebration of Rider University’s Sesquicentennial anniversary, a Medal of Excellence has been established to recognize members of the Rider family for their exemplary achievements that have brought honor to the University. Three medals were awarded to members of the Westminster community at the ceremonial grand opening of the Marion Buckelew Cullen Center and Hillman Performance Hall in October: Ernestine (Mickey) Lazenby Gast ’68, Elsie Hilliard Hillman ’48 and Herbert “Buddy” Mayo.

Ernestine (Mickey) Lazenby Gast has enjoyed a successful career in business while also singing in several professional choirs in the Philadelphia area. A member of the Westminster Choir while she was a student, she has generously committed time and talent to the Choir College. She has served on the Westminster Choir College Alumni Council and the Dean’s Advisory Council and is currently serving her sixth term on the Rider University Board of Trustees. She has been secretary of the Board, and she has chaired the Student Affairs and Human Resources Committees. Currently vice chair of the Board and co-chair of Rider’s Sesquicentennial Executive Committee, she serves on the Student Affairs, Human Resources, Senior Compensation and Executive committees. She was also co-chair of the Campaign Committee that secured the funds for the Marion Buckelew Cullen Center.

Elsie Hilliard Hillman has helped lay the foundation for the success that Westminster enjoys today. A member of the Board of Trustees of Westminster Choir College and of Rider University, she has been an enthusiastic advocate for the Choir College and its legacy with her extended family, and she has introduced many new friends to Westminster over the years. With her husband, Henry, she has contributed significant financial resources that have enabled talented students to receive a Westminster education and go on to serve the world through music. She was unable to attend the ceremony, and her grandson Henry Simonds accepted the medal on her behalf.

Herbert “Buddy” Mayo began his teaching career as a professor at Rider in 1969, where he stayed until 1980. For the past 30 years, he has taught finance at The College of New Jersey. He established the Westminster College of the Arts Performance Endowment, which benefits both opera and musical theatre productions on both campuses. He also endowed a scholarship in honor of his mother, Mildred Mayo, which benefits students studying voice performance, and a scholarship for piano accompanying in honor of his aunt, Beatrice B. Pearman. Additionally, he has provided significant support to capital initiatives on both campuses, as well as serving on the boards of the Opera Festival of New Jersey and Opera New Jersey, with whom many Westminster students and alumni have performed.
Westminster Choir Tours California

The Westminster Choir and Joe Miller headed to sunny California in January, performing concerts in San Francisco, Aptos, Fresno, Pasadena, Santa Monica and San Diego. The program, titled “The Invention of Love,” examined the question of what inspires man to create and to cultivate ideas that can change the world. It featured Urmas Sisask’s Oremus, Eric Whitacre’s Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine, Monteverdi’s Si chi’io vorrei morire and the opening chorus from J. S. Bach’s Gott, der Herr, ist Sonn’ und Schild, bwv 79.

They also presented workshops at six high schools and colleges with some of California’s leading choral programs. The workshops included the ensembles performing for each other and time for questions and answers. Perhaps the best way for the choir members to get to know one another came when they stood side-by-side, shared their scores and sang together. What a glorious sound!

Thank you to F. Thomas Simpson ’89 for hosting an alumni reception in his home in Pasadena.

Check the Westminster Choir Facebook page for tour photos and videos: www.facebook.com/westminsterchoir.

Sharing dinner and catching up before the San Francisco concert were Anne Sears, Matthew Knickman ’06, Yuhi Aizawa Combatti ’07, Martin Benvenuto MM’06, Colby Smith ’08, Kimberly Lostetter ’09, Steve Wilson ’85, Kate Wadley ’02.

Two lovebirds at the San Francisco concert loved the “Invention of Love” theme: Louis Weiner ’82 and Mitzie Kay Weiner ’79.
Gathering before the concert in Pasadena were (from left) William Vallandigham MM’12, Danielle Callahan Vallandigham ’12, Emma Ozman ’14, Anne Sears, Justin Su’ese’ 14, Kyla Williams ’03 and Jeffrey Breeden ’05.

The final concert was at First United Methodist Church in Pasadena. As a serendipitous bonus, a model of the Wright Brothers’ first plane was suspended from the ceiling as part of the church’s “Dare to Dream” series of programs. Perfect for performing Whitacre’s Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine.

Wayne Huber MM ’81 and his wife Laurell MM ’83 (not pictured) hosted choir members Cheukoe Wong, Kanisha Feliciano, Tiarina Islam and Temple Hammen in Fresno.

“Gingham Style” Ryan Board MM ’02 and his wife Ida Nicolosi ’99 introduced one of their students to Joe Miller after the Santa Monica concert.

A workshop with the Santa Monica Concert Choir included shared music and some comments from Joe Miller.

During the choir’s visit to the Getty Center, Conductor Joe Miller and tenor Keith Lathrom followed the Getty’s invitation to “Lounge like Maillol’s sculpture L’Air.”
Westminster Concert Bell Choir Travels to Florida

The Westminster Concert Bell Choir and its conductor Kathleen Ebling Shaw ’85 followed the route of many snowbirds, traveling from Princeton to Florida and back in January, performing nine concerts and meeting alumni along the way. Their Twelfth Night Tour program featured traditional English Christmas carols and was a big hit. When they returned to Princeton, the ensemble recorded the repertoire for a recording that will be released in the fall. Plan your holiday gifts now!

It was a delight to see many alumni, friends and families along the way. Check the Westminster Choir College Facebook page for tour photos: www.facebook.com/westminsterchoircollege.

The Choir’s photo was on the church’s message board in Warner Robbins, Ga.

Westminster Concert Bell Choir 2014–2015

Jeff Faux ’89 and Lester Erich ’72, MM’78 were at the concert in Cape Choral
Westminster Symphonic Choir 2014–2016 Performances

The Westminster Symphonic Choir continues Westminster’s long tradition of working with the world’s leading orchestras and conductors. New York Classical Review wrote about the ensemble’s fall performances of Mahler’s Symphony No. 2, “Resurrection”: “The Westminster Symphonic Choir, made up of students from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, was splendid, entering with a lovely hush. They amassed superb power in the glorious, ringing, heart-filling close.”

ORFF: Carmina Burana
DEBUSSY: Nocturnes
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
Jacques Lacombe, conductor
October 10, 2014
New Jersey Performing Arts Center
October 11, 2014
State Theatre
October 12, 2014
Mayo Performing Arts Center

MAHLER: Symphony No. 2 “Resurrection”
The Philadelphia Orchestra
Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor
October 30, November 1,
November 2, 2014
Kimmel Center
October 31, 2014
Carnegie Hall

BRAHMS: Ein deutsches Requiem
Vienna Philharmonic
Daniele Gatti, conductor
March 1, 2015
Carnegie Hall

BACH: St. Matthew Passion
The Philadelphia Orchestra
Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor
April 1 and 4, 2015
Kimmel Center

BERNSTEIN: Mass
The Philadelphia Orchestra
Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor
April 30, May 1–3, 2015
Kimmel Center

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 9
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS:
Serenade to Music
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
Jacques Lacombe, conductor
November 5, 6 and 8, 2015
New Jersey Performing Arts Center
November 7
State Theatre

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 9
Berlin Philharmoniker
Sir Simon Rattle, conductor
November 21, 2015
Carnegie Hall

HANDEL: Messiah
New York Philharmonic
Jane Glover, conductor
December 15–19, 2015
Avery Fisher Hall

MAHLER: Symphony No. 8
The Philadelphia Orchestra
Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor
March 10–13, 2016
Kimmel Center
Westminster Welcomes the Community for Cullen Center Open House

Hundreds of community members came to the Westminster campus on October 26 to celebrate the opening of the Marion Bucklew Cullen Center and Hillman Performance Hall. The day included performances by ensembles, students and faculty from Westminster Choir College and Westminster Conservatory, Westminster’s community music school. Visitors also had the opportunity to learn more about musical instruments in a “Meet the Instruments” activity.

The Westminster Community Orchestra, conducted by Ruth Ochs, presented Prokofiev’s popular Peter and the Wolf, narrated by Lois Laverty, in The Playhouse, which is connected to the Cullen Center. Westminster Opera Theatre performed opera scenes in Hillman Performance Hall. Additional performers were the Conservatory’s Suzuki Violin Ensemble; students enrolled in the High School Honors Music Program; Choir College piano student Asher Severini; the Westminster Chinese Instrument Orchestra; the Cantus Children’s Choir, conducted by Patricia Thel, and Westminster Harmonie, a chamber music ensemble composed of Westminster Conservatory faculty and advanced students.

Lois Laverty ’51, delighted a packed audience with her narration of the Westminster Community Orchestra’s performance of Prokofiev’s Peter and the Wolf.

Curious children couldn’t wait to learn more about the trombone and other instruments during the Meet the Instruments activity.

Members of the Westminster Chinese Instrument Orchestra demonstrated their skill at mastering some unfamiliar instruments.

Want to keep up with Westminster news between issues of Symphonic? Check us out on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. Westminster students are also blogging about several programs.

Here’s where you can find us:

www.facebook.com/westminsterchoircollege
www.twitter.com/wccnj
www.youtube.com/WestminsterChoirColl
www.instagram.com/westminsterchoircollege
westminsterchoir.wordpress.com
choralmusicinstituteoxford.wordpress.com
A Sea of Selfies!

Backstage before the Westminster Symphonic Choir’s performance of Mahler’s Symphony No. 2, Philadelphia Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin signed scores and posed for photos with the choir members. No stranger to Facebook and the fun of posting selfies, he gamely posed for some treasured photos that quickly made their way onto the students’ Facebook pages. The selfie streak continued on Halloween, when the Maestro walked out on Carnegie Hall stage for a sound check with the choir and orchestra and was greeted by 140 photocopied images of himself held in front of each choir member’s face. “I can’t believe it—140 selfies!” he exclaimed, pulling out his phone to post on his own Facebook page.

Phyllis Alpert Lehrer and Suzanne Lehrer: Family Matters

Professor of Piano Phyllis Alpert Lehrer and her daughter Suzanne Lehrer presented a concert titled “Family Matters” in March.

They were joined by Ena Bronstein Barton, piano; Ileana Ciumac, violin; Kenneth Ellison, clarinet; and Eric Schultz, cello.

“Music has always been at the center of our family; my husband Paul’s parents were both musicians and Paul has played violin in the Westminster Conservatory Orchestra for over 27 years,” Phyllis said about the performance. “My mom was a piano teacher, my dad a great opera lover, and my dad’s piano teacher sister, Rose, introduced Paul’s parents to my parents before either of us was born!”

Suzanne, now a piano teacher at Westminster Conservatory, and her brother, Jeff, studied piano all through their growing up years, and played string instruments as well. Their children are now studying piano, violin, clarinet and saxophone.

“Collaborative music making, whether in piano duets and duos or chamber music, furthers that sense of family...a community of musicians who share the privilege of loving music, playing it together, and often teaching together, as is the case of nearly all the musicians on our March program,” she continued. “It has been an exciting adventure to put together a program of diverse works by the great composers Johann Sebastian Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, their family members and members of their musical circle.”

Rider University Sesquicentennial Gala

With special recognition of Dr. Mordechai Rozanski’s presidential leadership and the recipients of the Sesquicentennial Medal of Excellence

Saturday, April 18, 2015
Rider University • Bart Luedeke Center

For more information on the gala and sponsorship opportunities, please visit www.rider150celebration.org
Campus Happenings

Francine M. Gordon (wearing red pants), director of the Sacred Rights, Sacred Song Project (SRSS), visited Professor Jay Kawarsky’s Analytic Theory class to prepare for a November performance titled “Sacred Rights, Sacred Song: A Concert of Concern.” The program featured the premiere of a new work by the students in the class. Gordon is a Jewish communal activist, creative philanthropist and artist with nearly 25 years of involvement in the local, national and international Jewish community. SRSS combines her years of Jewish activism with her belief that music in general, and choral singing in particular, can be transformative.

The weather was glorious as the entire Westminster community welcomed the Class of 2018 to campus and helped the newest members of the community to move into the residence halls.
Westminster hosted a Public Musicology conference in January, attracting musicologists from around the United States and abroad. Titled “The Past, Present and Future of Public Musicology,” the conference focused on how music scholars, performers, educators, journalists and industry professionals can engage the public. Speakers included prominent musicologists, ethnomusicologists, museum professionals who work inside and outside academia. The conference was organized by Associate Professor Eric Hung, and Susan Key, executive director of the Star Spangled Banner Foundation, delivered the keynote address.

Renovation of The Playhouse began in the fall, and, despite the cold weather, progress is being made. The foundation for the addition to the back of the stage has been poured, and work continues inside.

Paul Head ’97 and Regina Carlow ’82, pictured with Music Education Department Chair Al Holcomb, were inducted into the Westminster Music Education Hall of Fame.

Happy Halloween! Members of Westminster Chapel Choir came to rehearsal on October 31 dressed to represent their favorite genre of music. Ingenuity and creativity reigned!
May 15-16

Friday, May 15
8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Registration
All participants are asked to register
Williamson Hall (Lower Level)

8:15–9:15 a.m.
Class Agent Breakfast
Martin Room

9:00–10:00 a.m.
Westminster Concert Bell Choir
Concert
Kathleen Ebling Shaw ’85, conductor
Hillman Performance Hall

10:00–11:30 a.m.
Alumni Chapel Service
Westminster Chapel Choir
Amanda Quist, conductor
Bristol Chapel

11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Westminster Williamson Voices
Concert
James Jordan, conductor
A Pin Ceremony for the Class of 2015
will take place immediately following
the concert.
Members of the Alumni Council will
welcome new graduates into the alumni
family and present them with a special
gift recognizing their participation in
the Senior Class Gift Campaign.
Bristol Chapel

12:30–3:00 p.m.
Class Reunion Lunches
(Classes ending with a 0 or 5)
Locations on and off campus
Please visit the website for more
information about reunion plans for
individual classes.

3:00–4:30 p.m.
George Lynn Centenary Celebration
George Lynn will be honored at this
Centenary Celebration of his birth
(1915). Dr. Lynn returned to Westmin-
ster at the request of Dr. Williamson in
1964 and remained at the college until
1969. During those years he conducted
the Westminster Symphonic Choir and
the Westminster Choir, and he was
chair of the Voice Department. We will
gather to sing some of his compositions
as well as other works associated with
Dr. Lynn. It is fitting that the Class
of 1965 is celebrating its 50th Reunion
as that class was the first graduating
class of the Lynn era. Please check the
reunion website (see box at right) for a
list of Celebration participants.
Bristol Chapel

4:45–6:00 p.m.
All Alumni Cocktail Reception
Free Event
Marion Buckelew Cullen Center Lobby

6:15–8:30 p.m.
All Alumni Dinner
$55 per person (includes open bar)
There will be a presentation of the Wil-
liamson Medal to President Mordechai
Rozanski, the Sesquicentennial Medal
of Excellence to Joan Hult Lippincott
MM’57, MM’61 and the Alumni Merit
Award to Dr. John Romeri ’74 and
Laquita Mitchell ’99.
Bristol Chapel

8:30 p.m.
Westminster Choir Concert
Joe Miller, conductor
Hillman Performance Hall

Saturday, May 16
9:45 a.m.
Commencement
Princeton University Chapel
There is a limit of 2 tickets per
alumni/a and you MUST reserve
tickets by May 1. First come, first
served.

To register or for more
information, go to
alumni.rider.edu/2015wccreunions
Class Notes

'Rita Padilla Cummins and Richard L. Cummins released a CD titled, The Early Years in celebration of their 53 years of making music together. The recording features a compilation of classical and devotional music that was originally recorded from 1957 to 1961. Proceeds will benefit the Fine Arts Series at Greene Memorial in downtown Roanoke.

Andy Koebler retired from All Saints Episcopal Church in Henrico County, where he was the organist and choirmaster for 26 years. Reflecting on his years at All Saints he said, "I have loved the marvelous people I’ve had singing in my choir. It has been an honor to have had this experience."

Masterworks Choir, conducted by John Gregory Bates, performed Ola Gjeilo’s Sunrise Mass in November, which was the first performance of the work in the Philadelphia region. Masterworks Choir is composed of 50 local artists ranging in age from 17 to 80, of which John has been the director for 25 years.

David Agler celebrates his 10th year as artistic director of Wexford Festival Opera. He previously served as music director of the Vancouver Opera; principal conductor of the Australian Opera; resident conductor of the San Francisco Opera; principal guest conductor of the Oper der Stadt Köln; conductor and administrator of the Spoleto Festival; artistic director of the Opera Festival of New Jersey; and music director of the Syracuse Opera.

Cynthia Powell, artistic director and conductor of Melodia Women’s Choir of NYC, celebrated the release of the group’s first commercial recording, Lullaby. The summer of 2015 will mark Douglas Renfroe’s fifth season as artist-in-residence at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Quebec City. Last summer, the Cathedral held its first Chamber Organ and Choral Music Festival, in which there were singers from throughout Canada and the United States. This season’s festival, on August 16, 2015, will feature Vivaldi’s Gloria and many works from British composers.

In June, Louise H. Beard as a part of the Four Ladies & a Gent producers group won a Tony Award for the musical A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder.

Brian Fogelson, superintendent/chief education officer of North Warren Regional School District, was selected as the 2015 Warren Country Affiliate Chapter of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators Superintendent of the year. He has championed raising the academic standards of the school resulting in improvement of the state programs.


Michael T. Kevane is the organist and choirmaster at Saint Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Lambertville, N.J., where he directs the Saint Andrew’s Choir. He also serves in the same capacity at the Stockton Presbyterian Church.

Brian-Paul Thomas, director of music and organist at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in New Canaan, is organist for the church’s liturgies and is responsible for a graded choir program. The St. Mark’s Chorale performs larger choral works with orchestra as part of the church’s Musica Lenox concert series. Under his direction the St. Mark’s Choir has performed in England in the course of residencies at Norwich Cathedral and Chester Cathedral.

Julia J. White recently formed the Virginia Girlchoir, a community choir for girls in grades two through nine. The program is a performance-based choir, with emphasis on tone production, breathing, diction, posture, score-study and ensemble singing.

Darren Dailey is the artistic and executive director of the Jacksonville Children’s Chorus, who for the past nine years has worked tirelessly to hone the talents of each of the 280 singers who participate in one of the five choirs. In recognition of his talent and leadership, he was the recipient of the 2014 Celebrate Clay Extraordinary Executive Director Award from the Reinhold Foundation.

Norah Amsellem portrayed all three heroines (Olympia, Antonia and Giulietta) in Seattle Opera’s production of The Tales of Hoffmann. The Seattle Times heralded her performance as, “her most impressive work” and was praised for her “highflying coloratura agility and warmth of tone.”

Lynnel Joy Jenkins directed the 2015 Honor Choir at Lee University in February. Approximately 200-225 high school students, representing 21 schools from Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and Kentucky participated in the event.

Jonathan Ng is a vocal instructor at Pima Community College and directs its Choral and College Singers. The choir performed a concert titled “Amore” on February 8, featuring love songs from popular musicals and operas. He said of his experience at PCC, “my role is to inspire my students to succeed.”

Described by The Times-Picayune as having a “luxurious voice with a rich tone” in her latest production of Rusalka, Melissa Citro sang the title role this year with New Orleans Opera. Her most recent engagements include performances with San Francisco Opera in Das Rheingold as Freia and Göttterdammerung as Gutrune. Elizabeth Barrett was a guest clinician for the 2014 District 10 Ohio Music Education Association Honors Choir Festival hosted at Mount Vernon Nazarene University (MVNU) in November. At MVNU, Elizabeth teaches voice and stage
production, and directs the Goldards Chamber Ensemble.

**’98**

Julie Karpenko Reid and her husband Charles Reid performed a concert, featuring repertoire centering on the subject of love, in November 2014 at Andrews University’s Howard Performing Arts Center. Julie met Charles at the Spoleto Festival USA while she was there, performing with the Westminster Choir.

The Rev. Mikie Roberts recently completed his Ph.D. at the University of Birmingham (U.K.) and graduated on December 12, 2014. In his dissertation, “Hymnody and Identity: Congregational Singing as A Construct of Christian Community Identity,” he examined how both the texts and tunes of hymns contribute to the formation of a congregation’s collective identity. Rev. Roberts currently serves as the minister of music for the Moravian Church in the Virgin Islands and also as provincial director of music for the Moravian Church in the Eastern West Indies Province. He and his family reside in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands where he is the associate pastor of the Memorial Moravian Church.

In conjunction with the Music in the Somerset Hills 2014–2015 Concert Series, Stephen Sands and his wife Kristen performed an intimate recital at Peapack Reformed Church in November. Stephen is the founder of Music in the Somerset Hills; founding member and executive director of Antioch Chamber Ensemble; continues to teach choral music in the Somerset Hills School District; and sings professionally at Trinity Wall Street; among other musical commitments.

**’99**

LaQuita Mitchell recently performed the role of Bess in the PBS broadcast of San Francisco Opera’s production of Porgy and Bess. Alongside tenor, Eric Owens, Mitchell’s performance was called “unforgettable, ennobling and majestic” (Mercury News).

**’01**

Kiera Duffy in collaboration with the MET Chamber Ensemble performed Schoenberg’s expressionist masterpiece Pierrot Lunaire at Carnegie Hall. This year, she performed Barber’s Knoxville: Summer of 1915 with the St. Louis Symphony as well as Le Feu/La Princesse in Ravel’s L’enfant et les sortileges with the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy in Japan.

Hailed by The New York Times as “a versatile, charismatic soprano endowed with brilliant technique and superlative stage instincts… indispensable to New York’s new-music ecosystem,” Melissa Hughes will be featured as the soprano soloist in Songs of the Season at the Metropolitan Museum of Art this December.

**’04**

The Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus named Adam Luebke as its new music director. He entered a multi-year commitment to lead the non-profit chorus, beating out a field of four semi-finalists chosen from over 30 applicants. He currently serves as an associate professor and director of choral activities at the Greatbatch School of Music at Houghton College.

**’05**

James “Jimmy” Byrne accepted the position of Ryan Opera Center Manager at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He bid farewell to Houston Grand Opera where he had been for several years.

**’08**

Elizabeth Kelsay sang the title role in Cenerentola with Tulsa Opera. Her past engagements include Cherubino in Le Nozze di Figaro with Tulsa Opera and Dorabella in Così Fan Tutte with the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

**’09**

Kristin Ditlow married violist Zheng Yuan in 2013 and earned her Doctor of Musical Arts from the Eastman School of Music in 2014. In the Summer-Fall, 2014 she began a full-time job as the new faculty vocal coach at University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. In December 2014 she recorded a CD of viola and piano works with Ellen Rose, principal violist of the Dallas Symphony.

Robin Shuford Frank joined the artistic team of Opera Naples as its music director and chorus master in June 2014. Since joining the company, she has been instrumental in engaging Southwest Florida’s youth through the company’s student apprentice program, community outreach performances, in-school tours and its young artist program.

The Philadelphia Singers will perform its last concert on May 16, 2015. Brian Schkeper, assistant conductor of the Philadelphia Singers, and a core group of members will create its own organization – a 150-voice symphonic choir. Brian said of this new endeavor, “I think it’s an artistic imperative to continue professional music-making.”

**’10**

Broadway Lights the Night, a federally-recognized charity, was founded by Leigh Emery ’09, Russell Fischer ’08, Amy Toporek ’08, Jackson Williams ’10, Gillian Velmer ’09 and Aaron Lenhart ’07. Broadway Lights the Night has raised over $75,000 towards research and awareness.

Nicholas Landrum was selected as the inaugural Composition Fellow of the MusicaNova Orchestra of Phoenix, Ariz. His composition Gaslight was premiered by the orchestra in October 2014.

**’11**

Alexandra Batsios will return to perform with Sarasota Opera this season and its production of The Golden Cockerel as Queen of Shemakha.

**’12**

Laura DellaFera won second place in the Young Professional division of the 2014 Amici Vocal Competition. She is in her
season as an active member of the Boston Opera Collaborative, and will be singing the role of Almirena in its Spring 2015 production of Handel’s *Rinaldo*.

Andrew Paulson was accepted as an Apprentice Artist with Santa Fe in Summer 2015.

**'13**

Audra Jo Casebier performed the role of Anna Maurant in Kurt Weill’s *Street Scene* as a Young Artist with Opera North. *Valley News* said of her performance, “special notice should be made of Audra Jo Casebier, who pours her heart into the aria *Somehow I Never Could Believe.*”

Kelsey Stark D’Emilio performed in *Master Class* with Theater Latté Da in October. *How Was the Show?* described her as “the powerhouse singer in the trio of student roles.” She married Gerard Michael D’Emilio MM’14 on September 6, 2014.

James Kenon Mitchell was selected as Apprentice Artist pianist at Sarasota Opera. His duties range from accompanying the chorus and staging rehearsals to running supertitles, conducting backstage choruses, and performing in outreach concerts. In November, he directed Tri-Cities Opera’s production of Poulenc’s *La Voix Humaine*.

Kyle van Schoonhoven was a young artist at Opera North last summer, performing roles in its productions of *Street Scene*, *La Traviata* and *My Fair Lady*. This season, he will join Sarasota Opera as an Apprentice Artist.

George Ross Somerville appeared in *Roscoe* as Alex Fitzgibbon and O.B. Conway as an apprentice with Opera Saratoga. He will return this season to perform Spoletta in its production of *Tosca*.

**’14**

Gerard Michael D’Emilio won an Encouragement Award in The Gerda Lissner Foundation International Vocal Competition. After winning the award, Mr. D’Emilio spent the summer as a Young Artist at the Glimmerglass Festival. He was also among four winners at the Washington District MET auditions. Summer 2015 he will join Des Moines Metro Opera.

Luca Levy will join Sarasota Opera this season as an Apprentice Artist.

Brian Mextorf was a District Winner in the North Carolina MET auditions. He placed second in the Southeast Regionals in Atlanta.

In 2015, Rexford Tester will join the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program at Washington National Opera at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; perform in Rossini’s *L’italiana in Algeri* (Lindoro) with Tri-Cities Opera; as well as cover and perform the role of Tamino with The Glimmerglass Festival in their summer production of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*.

**In Memoriam**

Virginia Harlin Fischer ’36 passed away on June 20, 2014.

Martha Bradway Fletcher ’43, MM’44 passed away on November 28, 2014.

Shirley Chace ’44 passed away on November 18, 2014.

Muriel Hoffman Teague ’45 passed away on July 12, 2014.

Barbara Boggs Robertson ’46 passed away on September 25, 2014.

Virginia Lepine Thomas ’46 passed away on June 24, 2014.

Elisabeth Turner Allgood ’47 passed away on April 5, 2014.

Kathryn Kline Dyck ’47 passed away on June 2, 2014.

Thomas Hibbish ’47 passed away on February 23, 2015.

Louise Wenzel Blanchard ’48 passed away on November 15, 2014.

Mildred Clarke Sharp ’48 passed away on September 13, 2014.

Stewart I. Schall ’49 passed away on May 31, 2014.

Elizabeth Salmon Miller ’50 passed away on September 12, 2014.

Mary Beth Sheppard Lowry ’51 passed away on May 16, 2014.

Clinton C. Crocker ’52 passed away on October 9, 2014.


Paul V. Berry ’55 passed away on October 16, 2014.


Doris Hoff Pessel ’55 passed away on June 29, 2014.


Robert S. Porter ’59 passed away on April 25, 2014.

Gail Gregolet Hurst ’61 passed away on August 9, 2014.

Helen White Ritchey ’61 passed away on July 25, 2014.

Steven R. Sigler ’61 passed away on October 3, 2014.

Stephen H. Waters ’66 passed away on May 24, 2014.

Ruth Ann Hippel Burke ’69 passed away on August 29, 2014.

Richard D. Wallace ’71 passed away on August 20, 2014.

Sarah C. Tarr ’76 passed away on December 2014.

Heather Lesh Forsha ’90, MM’93 passed away on November 4, 2014.

Margaret Carl Trantham ’92 passed away on November 3, 2014.

John M. Dunn ’99 passed away on October 12, 2014.

William H. Scheide died on November 14, 2014. Dr. Scheide served on the Westminster Board for 27 years, nine of them as chairman.

Arthur Palmer Morgan died on January 30, 2015. Mr. Morgan served on the Westminster Board of Trustees and as its chairman.
Dear Alumni and Friends,

Westminster is currently experiencing an exciting period of expansion, growth and transition. The new Cullen Center is now a wonderful reality, and renovations to The Playhouse are already under way. According to an update in November from Dean Robert Annis, “The garage is being taken down, fencing is being installed, and the first trenches will be dug before Thanksgiving…it will add yet another dynamic to the campus.”

As we say farewell to President Mordechai Rozanski, who will be retiring in July 2015, Rider University has welcomed a new Provost, DonnaJean Fredeen. In December 2014 Dean Annis retired, and the search for successors is well under way. Westminster’s dear friend and generous supporter, William Scheide, passed away in November 2014 at the age of 100. “Ode to Joy,” the concert celebrating his 100th birthday, featured the Westminster Symphonic Choir and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra. He served as a trustee of, and gave generously to, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, where the Student Center bears his name.

Westminster Symphonic Choir is currently in such demand that they are turning down many of the requests they receive. Next year is fully booked and negotiations are already under way for 2016–2017. After its thrilling performances of Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 “Resurrection” with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and The Philadelphia Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in October, Eric Simpson wrote in the New York Classical Review that, “The Westminster Symphonic Choir, made up of students from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, was splendid, entering with a lovely hush. They amassed superb power in the glorious, ringing, heart-filling close.”

Plans for Alumni Reunion in May 2015 are well under way and we look forward to welcoming you back for some exceptionally memorable and meaningful events and performances. The new buildings on the Princeton campus, and the tremendous success Westminster is now enjoying would not be possible without your generous contributions, and Reunion will be the perfect time to come back and experience them first hand.

With sincere gratitude for your continuing support,

Constance Fee ’71
Alumni Council President

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P.S. Include your business card with your gift and receive a complimentary Westminster luggage tag as a token of our sincere appreciation!
Patricia Guth Creates a Choral Sisterhood

Rider University senior Natasha Fuller visited with Patricia Guth and the Bucks County Women’s Chorus last fall and wrote this profile about Pat and the ensemble.

Patricia Buchholz Guth ’81, has always dreamed of conducting a community choir. “I realized that there were no women’s choirs in Bucks County so I decided that was my new project and mission,” says Guth. In September of 2012, in Pennsylvania’s Bucks County, Guth’s dream was realized with the first rehearsal of the Bucks County Women’s Chorus (BCWC).

The BCWC has grown from 70 members in its first year to its current membership of 85 women with ages ranging from 21 to 80.

Guth says, “When I think about them, I think about the original mission of Westminster, which was to train professionals to go out and bring music to the masses. I feel like I’ve done that with this group.”

Sitting with eight of the BCWC members, the outpouring of gratitude for Guth was overwhelming. Most of the women in the choir did not consider themselves musicians before joining the group. Many hadn’t sung since high school, and others can’t read music, but in the BCWC the only thing that matters is that you love to sing. One of the BCWC women said, “You never feel like you’re being judged or like you’re doing anything wrong. Pat always has a smile on her face. She makes us believe that we can do this. She knows we’re going to do it.” Another member chimed in, “When we’re performing she sparkles. She gives us a smile that makes us want to sing even better. It’s just such a great feeling. I love her sparkle. She inspires us all with it.”

The friendship and community of these women is electric and can be felt the moment you walk into a room with them. Guth explained, “BCWC has become so much more than a choir. It’s now a group of friends.” And the feeling is unanimous throughout the group. Every BCWC woman I talked to said the same thing: “The friendships, I think, are the most important thing.” “I like the comradery. All the friends you make. It really comes down to that.” “It’s like a sisterhood. No matter who we are we have this in common—we all love to sing!”

For more information on the Bucks County Women’s Chorus and concert information visit www.buckscountywomenschorus.com.
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