

North Fork Chorale Shines – North Fork Patch

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BY DANNY McCARTHY

THIS GROUP TRULY HAS MAINTAINED SUCH BELOVED CAPABILITY OF BEING ABLE TO MAKE THE PUBLIC & ITS MEMBERS TOO SO PROUD!

North Fork Chorale Director Lois Ross and President Mary Yourch have organized rehearsals to begin September 13, 2022 at 7:00 pm. Concerts will be held Saturday, December 3, 2022 at 7:30 pm at the Southold Presbyterian Church and Sunday, December 4, 2022 at 3 p.m. at the Orient Congregational Church.

Here is background regarding North Fork Chorale:

The County review dated August 2, 1934: “Howard Lee Koch, director of the Suffolk County Conservatory of Music has formed the North Fork Choral Society which will be composed of the {best-known} singers in this section.

Maestro Arturo Papalardo of Northport and New York City joined the Riverhead Suffolk Conservatory of Music, and in 1934, he trained and directed the {then} newly-organized North Fork Choral Society “which {would} meet in Riverhead weekly under the auspices of the Conservatory.”

The choral society was made up of mixed voices and trained in oratorio and operatic repertoire under the distinguished voice coach and conductor Maestro Arturo Papalardo. North Fork Choral Society was part of the Suffolk Conservatory to stimulate community participation. According to Mr. Papalardo, untrained as well as trained voices were accepted in the group. Mr. Papalardo earned his reputation in this country as conductor with Hammerstein, Aborn, Gallo, and the Washington Opera Companies. He has also conducted in Italy, Russia and South America. {This was according to The County review dated September 20, 1934.}

The County review dated September 27, 1934: “The first meeting of the North Fork Choral Society, an amateur group sponsored by the Suffolk Conservatory of Music of Riverhead, ... {was to be held} at the Congregation Church of Riverhead” that October 2. At the previous week’s meeting, it was decided that “At least one concert {was} planned for the season to be given in the spring during Music Week. ...”

The Southold Town Choral Society was started in 1936 by a group of people who liked good music. Walter Williams was the president and the conductor was Maestro Arturo Papalardo. Their first concert was held that year in the Mattituck High School and included 58 members. In 1939 during the World’s Fair, the group sang and was heard over WOR Radio station. Due to the gasoline shortage that occurred during World War II, activities were suspended.

The years that Benjamin Britten spent on Long Island during World War II saw David Rothman about town regularly with that “soon-to-be-famous” British composer. Rothman arranged work for Britten and Peter Pears, and also arranged for Benjamin Britten to be accompanist for the Southold Town Choral Society in 1941.

In 1951, the Southold Town Choral Society combined with the Shelter Island Choral Society.

In 1969, the name of this group changed to its presently-known form.

North Fork Chorale concerts were spread out geographically – from Orient to Port Jefferson - and then too to the South Fork.

In a The Suffolk Times story about the Chorale's 50th anniversary, Aurelie Stack wrote: "The purpose of the group has remained the same through the years: to get together to sing for the enjoyment of it."

The Peconic Bay Shopper dated April 2006 - The North Fork Chorale sang Benjamin Britten's composition A Ceremony of Carols in its 2004 Winter Concert.

The Long Island Traveler-Mattituck Watchman dated December 28, 1972: "On Saturday, December 16, the Paradise Woods Studio in Southold was the scene of a Christmas party with the title 'An Evening of Music.' Featured were Douglas Keilitz, organist of the Studio and Harold Crowell and some of his Vocal Workshop singers. Betty Jean Townsend, soprano soloist of the North Fork Choral and her husband, Alfred, of Greenport, joined in a voice and trumpet duet, accompanied on the piano by Lee Hess. Althea Seavers sang 'White Christmas', accompanied by Doug at the organ and Lester Little at the piano. Marna Williams was the piano accompanist. Ted Stoll of Southold entertained at the piano. Also, Charles Corwin of Ronkonkoma played a number of carols on the studio organ for all to sing. Refreshments on the stage closed a pleasant evening for the nearly fifty invited guests, some from as far away as Huntington."

After Mr. Papalardo, other conductors through the years included Walter Williams, Peter Pears, Herbert Studter, Stuart Gracey, S. James Hughes, Eugene Mott, Ben Burns, Myron Slater, Nadine Puller, William Trehy, Stephen Marusevich, Jane Mather Armbrust, and Lois J. Ross, [She will prepare and direct the Spring, 2023 concert also. Mrs. Ross Has directed the Chorale for 30 years.]

While I was on-staff at Southold Historical Society ~ then-Director-Geoffrey K. Fleming - requested me to join-in with him on composing an item about Benjamin Britten to be placed on-board the Southold Historical Society website - AND - it was - BUT - now the bylines have been DELETED - I'm giving due credit - Here's something that is definitely not-that-far-from-a-missing-link carrying that item on Benjamin Britten from the Southold Historical Museum website:

<https://www.southoldhistoricalsociety.org/benjamin-britten>

I took-care-of-composing-additional-information re: Benjamin Britten - and here is my "take"-
<https://patch.com/new-york/northfork/another-british-invasion-benjamin-britten>