



The Teaneck Community Chorus

Skyler Klein - Artistic Director

Proudly Presents

Roberta Flack

Her Life, Her Legacy



Sunday March 22. 2026
Helen Hayes Auditorium
Teaneck High School
3:00 PM





Greetings from the President

Welcome to the winter concert of the Teaneck Community Chorus, Roberta Flack: Her Life, Her Legacy. In this concert we offer a choral portrait of one of the most compelling artists of our time by celebrating her musical roots in classical and gospel traditions, her iconic songs, and her influence on contemporary artists, as well as by remembering her own resilience and resistance to injustice.

Roberta Flack's passing in 2025 was a loss not only to her family and friends, but also to her many colleagues, fans and those who were inspired by both her musicianship and her activism. Her life was a soundtrack for times of peace and times of trouble – often soothing, often provocative, always compassionate. And so we are grateful – for her, her music, and the values she exemplified.

We are also very grateful for all those who helped this concert come to be – our former artistic director, Teresa-Marie Gotanco, who with Wes Matsui and our music committee, created the program; our new director, Skyler Klein, whose artistry has shaped it; our talented accompanist, Bernie Visto; our chorus members who have rehearsed with such enthusiasm and energy these past few months; our volunteers and donors, without whose support none of this would be possible; and by all of you – our friends, family, neighbors, and audience members who share our enjoyment of the music and who encourage us to keep on singing out for compassion, justice, and peace!

Best regards,
Patrick Montesano
President



PROGRAM ORDER

Sonata in C Domenico Scarlatti

Piano Soloist: Bernie Visto

Go Down, Moses.....Traditional American Spiritual, arr. Moses Hogan

Soloist: Nadège Stretz

We Shall Walk Through the Valley..... African American Spiritual
arr. Undine Smith Moore

Mich zieht es nach dem Dörfchen hin Op. 55, No. 3.....Robert Schumann /
Robert Burns

The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face.....Ewan MacColl, arr. James Hawkins

Soloists: Noelle Lloyd, Karen Heifetz

Bridge Over Troubled Water.....Paul Simon, arr. Kirby Shaw

Killing Me Softly With His Song.....Charles Fox & Norman Gimbel
arr. Deke Sharon

Soloists: Gail Smith, Cathy Cavallone, Maria Adorno

You've Got a Friend.....Carole King, arr. Mac Huff

Soloists: Lauren Atari, Gail Smith

Breathe Again.....Baby Face, arr. Andrea Figallo

Soloist: Adriana Rodriguez

If I Aint Got You.....Alicia Keys, arr. Matthew Chalmers

Soloist: Adriana Rodriguez

Go Up, Moses!.....Roberta Flack, arr. Skyler Klein



Artistic Director – Skyler Klein



Skyler Klein is an active music educator and conductor in the New York tri-state area. His unique approach combines voice science and Kodály-inspired literacy methods to help singers of all ages achieve ownership of their musicianship and vocal technique. With this sequential approach to fundamentals his singers rise to meet the challenges of repertoire and style.

He currently teaches General Music and Choir in Minisink Valley, New York, as well as piano and voice at the Rockland Conservatory of Music in Pearl River, New York. He previously served as Assistant Conductor at the Continuo Arts Foundation in Summit, New Jersey. In that capacity he conducted in the youth choir program for both the men's and women's choirs. He also worked under Dr. Candace Wicke to assist in the preparation of the Carnegie Hall choir-in-residence Civic Chorale. After his time at Continuo Arts he founded the professional choir Qara' Vocal Ensemble where he continues to serve as Artistic Director.

Mr. Klein shares the Teaneck Community Chorus's dedication to inclusion and unity. To that end he eagerly awaits the chance to work with such dedicated singers and explore the wonderful complexity of the human experience. He believes in the importance of repertoire as a vehicle for understanding; by exploring the music of diverse peoples the Teaneck community has a platform to better understand one another and move forward with deeper human connection.

Mr. Klein holds a Bachelors of Music in Music Education from Westminster Choir College and a Masters of Music in Music Education with Kodály Emphasis from Lakeland University.



Chorus Pianist – Bernie Visto



Bernie Visto, is a pianist, music director to several plays, flutist, conductor, an all-around musician and an educator.

Mr. Visto was born in Iloilo City, Philippines. He graduated from Rosa L. Parks High School in Paterson and received a full academic scholarship to Montclair State University majoring in Management Information Systems.

His passion for music and the desire to further his education enabled him to move back home to the Philippines and finish a degree in Bachelor of Music at the University of San Agustin in Iloilo City majoring in Piano performance and Music Education. While in College, Mr. Visto taught high school music at Colegio de San Jose and managed to have a Trio group to play for weddings and other music gigs. He also played piano at church every Sunday and managed a children's choir and an adult choir. Mr. Visto now is a certified K-12 music teacher at Norman S. Weir (K-8) and a high school piano teacher at his alma mater, Rosa L. Parks High School. In the community, Mr. Visto is the music director of the Filipino Diocese choir of Paterson, Alay Awit, serving churches in the Paterson Diocese. Norman S. Weir is his home school and has received a Disney grant to perform a complete musical every year for the next three years. Mr. Visto is also a teaching artist for the Paterson Music Project who performs regularly in Paterson.



Juliette Bowen

Juliette Bowen is a recently retired sign language interpreter, who has won the hearts of the Teaneck Community Chorus audiences for over ten years. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hofstra University, a Master's of Education in School Counseling, Herbert H. Lehman College, Bronx, NY and a Master's of Education in General and Special Education, Touro College, New York. She is fluent in Spanish, English, and American Sign Language.



She currently works with multi-handicapped, autistic, blind emotionally disturbed, deaf, and severely learning-disabled students in NYC. Her first experience with the deaf and hard of hearing was when she was approached to add these students to her caseload while counseling in Valhalla, NY. Juliette did not shrink back but willingly accepted the challenge and decided to provide equal access to these students by learning their language. She began working with deaf and hard of Hearing students in 1994 and later counseled and taught at the Lexington School for the Deaf, Queens, NY. She currently interprets for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Clinton Hills, Brooklyn, as well at Trinity Baptist Church in the Bronx.



Guest Artists



Bob Stuercke- Electric Bass

Thomas Riordan– Drums

Additional Signers:

Christina DiCosmo

Danielle Nelken



Teaneck Community **Chorus Singers**

Artistic Director
Skyler Klein

Pianist
Bernie Visto

Sopranos

Maria Adorno
Sue Akiska
Lauren Atari
Cenesis Gibbons
Karen Ruth Heifetz
Monica Hodges
Olive Kapetanos
Barbara Kinter
Noelle Lloyd

Chi Mei Lu
Amanda Paulsen
Carmel Polizzi
Elizabeth Salvatore
Devorah Schatz
Cail Smith
Jan Sprance
Melanie Stern
Fern Wilensky



Teaneck Community **Chorus Singers**

Altos

Valerie Anderson
Maureen Baldassini
Anita Bluestone
Fredi Brown
Carole Boutry
Cathy Cavallone

Lisa Frazee
Judy Mars
Adriana Rodriguez
Ellen Ray
Jennifer Smith
Nadège Stretz

Tenors

Romeo Cabacungan
Justin Lu

Wes Matsui
Patrick Montesano
Eileen White

Basses

Peter Severino
Ernie Sprance

Jim White



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Founder's Circle

(\$1000+)

Wes & Mary Matsui

Director's Circle

(\$500-\$999)

Jack & Margaret Aaker

Gary Ostroff & Ellen Ray

Anita Bluestone & David Lyon

Steven Bell

Michel Kinter

Patrick Montesano & Gina Mannix

Chi Mei Lu

Melanie Stern



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Jacqueline Kates

Justin Lu

Theresa Mannix & Caleb Canby

Robert & Ann Marie Reardon

Lynn Roberts

Nadège Stretz

Fern Wilensky



Patrons

Friends

(\$100-\$249)

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Susie Hoffman & Mel Grizer

Lauren Atari

Lisa Kass & Jeremy Hoffman

Anne Atlas

Theodora Lacey

Carole Boutry

Judy Mars

Juliette Bowen

Devorah Schatz

Frederica Brown

Jennifer Smith

Coleen Bruce

Gail Smith

Cathy Cavallone

Ernie & Jan Sprance

Suzanne Cho

Ray & Edie Turkin

Janice & Ed Dabney

Roberta & Kari Walker

Rhonda Eisenberg

Maredia & Charles Warren

Debbie Feldman

Eileen & Jim White



Patrons

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Program Notes

By Cathy Cavallone

In this concert, the Teaneck Community Chorus explores the spiritual, classical, and musical traditions that shaped Roberta Flack's voice and interpretive style; presents some of her most enduring works in rich choral arrangements; and highlights other artists and songs that reflect Flack's influence on later generations.

Sonata in C Major 159 - Written by Italian composer Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757), this brisk piece meant to be played on the harpsichord or pianoforte, showcases elements of the Neapolitan Baroque style. The ornate and exuberant composition is sure to inspire audiences and set the tone for the eclectic pieces to come. The Teaneck Community Chorus is proud to feature our supremely talented accompanist, Bernie Visto, as he commences our concert with a piece greatly admired by Roberta Flack.

Go Down, Moses - A somber and moving piece dating back to the Civil War era, this spiritual was inspired by the Bible's Book of Exodus. It was first sung as a plea for enslaved Israelites to be set free, and later adopted by enslaved African-Americans, particularly by Harriet Tubman, as a code for fugitives using the Underground Railroad to escape bondage. It is believed to be the first known spiritual printed in sheet music.

We Shall Walk Through the Valley - Inspired by Psalm 23:4 from the Bible, this African-American spiritual originated shortly after the Civil War, symbolizing a journey of hardship and faith. The identity of the original composer is unknown, but later composers such as Moses Hogan and Joseph Joubert popularized it. The chorus is proud to present the divine harmonies of the 1977 rendition arranged by composer Undine Smith Moore.

Mich zieht es nach dem Dörfchen hin - Written by the renowned German composer Robert Schumann (1810–1856) in 1846, this lovely piece was based on a Scottish poem by Robert Burns. The lyrics' nostalgic tone conveys a longing for the simplicity of rural village life and celebrates themes of love and nature typical of the Romantic Era.



Program Notes

(Continued)

The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face - Written in 1957 by folk singer Ewan MacColl, this haunting melody was first sung at British venues by Peggy Seeger. After Roberta Flack discovered the song, she reimagined it and recorded it for her 1969 album *First Take*, but it would not become an international hit until 1972, a year after it was featured in the Clint Eastwood psychological thriller, *Play Misty for Me*. The moving harmonies reflect the longing one lover has for the other and their hearts' undying desire.

Bridge Over Troubled Water - In 1969, Paul Simon, of Simon & Garfunkel, composed this moving melody, inspired by the Swan Silvertones' gospel song, "Oh Mary, Don't You Weep." Its message of support and strength resonated deeply throughout the turbulent 1970s and still endures today. Over the years, numerous artists, including Aretha Franklin and Elvis Presley, have done covers of this soul-stirring piece, making it one of the most iconic songs for challenging times.

Killing Me Softly - Originally co-written by Charles Fox, Norman Gimbel and Lori Lieberman, the song was first recorded by Lieberman in 1972. Roberta Flack heard the song, changed the chord structure, and, encouraged by music producer Quincy Jones, recorded it—making it a big hit in 1973. The Fugees with Lauryn Hill would later adapt the song, giving it an R&B flair, while Wyclef Jean and Pas Michel would reinterpret *Killing Me Softly* with a reggae vibe.

You've Got a Friend - Featured on her 1971 album, *Tapestry*, Carole King won Song of the Year at the Grammys with this hit song. That same year, James Taylor put out his own rendition of the song, with backing vocals by Joni Mitchell included on his album *Mud Slide Slim and the Blue Horizon*, earning him the Best Male Pop Vocal Performance at the Grammys.



Program Notes

(Continued)

Breathe Again - Composed by performer/songwriter Kenneth “Babyface” Edmonds and sung by the soulful R&B artist Toni Braxton, the singer’s rich style makes a melancholy and haunting plea to get her lover back. This tune hit the charts in the summer of 1993 and won Braxton a Billboard Award in 1994 and her second consecutive Grammy Award for Best R&B vocal performance in 1995.

If I Ain’t Got You - Singer-songwriter Alicia Keyes wrote *If I Ain’t Got You* in honor of the death of singer Aliyah and the 9/11 attacks. It won numerous nominations and awards, namely a Grammy Award for Best R&B Vocal Performance in 2004. In 2005, this hit won the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Song and Outstanding Video. The strong backbeat offers audiences a danceable groove as the lyrics remind us that material things don’t feed the soul.

Go Up, Moses - Featured on Flack’s 1971 solo album *Quiet Fire*, this treasure of soulful funk is not only a nod to our opening selection, the African-American spiritual *Go Down, Moses*, but its groovy spunk underscores the rising voice of Feminism surfacing in The United States in the 1970s. Its cool and steady percussion sets the beat to our hearts and transports us to the ancient land of the pharaohs.



Concert Production

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Program Notes

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Acknowledgements

We thank the **Puffin Foundation Ltd.** for their continuing support and partnership with the Teaneck Community Chorus. The foundation's partnership has been critical to our mission of diversity and inclusion in all of our programs.

Thank you to **Jamie Boyle**, for leading the production crew at Teaneck High School. Thanks to the supportive students running lights and audio.

Thank you, **Jeff Merrigan & Michal Kinter** for serving as our outstanding Production Managers!

Thank you to the members of the **Teaneck Board of Education** and **Superintendent, Dr. Andre Spencer**, for continuing our long-standing partnership to increase engagement within Teaneck.





The Teaneck Community Chorus

thanks you for sharing this day with us!

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will be posted on:*

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► <https://www.facebook.com/Teaneck-Community-Chorus-105307001058>

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