



**Teaneck Community Chorus,
Teresa-Marie Gotanco Artistic Director
presents:**

WE



**A Concert
Celebrating Unity
in
Our Community**

**Sunday • February 2nd • 3:00 PM
Teaneck High School
100 Elizabeth Avenue
Teaneck, NK 07666**



This program has been made possible in part by a grant administered by the Bergen County Department of Parks, Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs from funds granted by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.



THE VISION FOR “WE”

This concert aims to loosely challenge the listener’s concept of togetherness, unity understanding and justice - specifically, its implications.

The program begins with the platitudes we like telling ourselves and everyone else. We want to discuss togetherness and happy things but do not consider what that means (“For the Beauty of the Earth”). We will juxtapose that with the discontent of “People Make the World Go Round” -- we’re faced with things that are wrong all around us and how the people around us make things right, wrong, and everything in between.

We contend with cyclical discontent/disillusionment, especially with the people around us (“Circle,” “Both Sides Now” “Yesterday”). “The Road Not Taken” was a pick that highlighted that we have a choice to make regarding how we approach the people around us. Artistic Director **Teresa-Marie Gotanco** hopes “to make a case/commitment to understanding and bridging the gap between myself and those not like me in place of judgment and conflict as a response” to the songs.





Greetings from the Chorus President

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the Teaneck Community Chorus's first concert of 2025. This concert is titled "**We**," as in "We the People." The music celebrates inclusion, unity and the universality of the human experience, focusing on those things that bring us together despite our differences. This concert also marks the debut of Teresa-Marie Gotanco as our new artistic director!

As always, thank you to all who have generously supported the Teaneck Community Chorus. Your commitment has made it possible for us to continue to deliver high-quality musical performances for our community. We appreciate the support of the Teaneck Board of Education, the Bergen County Arts Council and The Puffin Foundation.

We hope you have fun with this concert. While the messages are important, the music is beautiful. Feel free to sing along with any tunes you know and enjoy the experience of "**We!**"

Michel Kinter

President

Teaneck Community Chorus



WE

PROGRAM ORDER

"For the Beauty of the Earth".....John Rutter

"People Make the World Go Round".....The Stylistics, arr. Teresa Gotanco

"Circle"Harry Chapin, arr. Steven Bell

"Both Sides Now".....Joni Mitchell, arr. Roger Emerson
Soloist: Eileen White

"Yesterday".....The Beatles, arr. Bob Chilcott / Jacob Narverud
Soloists: Maria Adorno, Barbara Kinter

"The Road Not Taken".....Randall Thompson

"Light of a Clear Blue Morning".....Dolly Parton, arr. Craig Hella Johnson
Soloists: Bernie Visto (flute), Gail Smith (vocals)

"Unity".....Glorraine B. Moone / Rev. Freddie Washington, arr. Daniel M. Cason II

"Somewhere".....Leonard Bernstein, arr. Robert Edgerton

"A Promise I Will Keep".....Nick Page
Soloists: Gail Smith, Wes Matsui

"We the People".....The Staple Singers, arr. Michel Kinter

"Bridge Over Troubled Water".....Simon & Garfunkel, arr. Mark Hayes



An Allegory for "We"

I am Wes Matsui, Chair of the TCC Music Committee, and I will be your storyteller. Teresa-Marie Gotanco, our new Artistic Director, Bernie Visto, our new Accompanist, and the Teaneck Community Chorus, with many new voices, welcome you to a “once upon a time” story called:

"The Bridge to We"

In a land veiled in mist and memory, there was a realm called *Amerineck* (America/Teaneck). This land was born from two guiding stars—**Liberty**, the freedom to chart one’s path, and **Equality**, the belief that all people deserve dignity and fairness. These stars shone brightly for generations, illuminating a bridge between them—the magnificent **Bridge to We**, a passage that united all who walked its path.

As the bridge stood firm, the people of *Amerineck* flourished; we sang their aspirations and truisms: "*For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies...*". Years passed, and memories of why the bridge was built faded. The followers of Liberty, who lived on one side of the river, feared that Equality would shackle their independence. Conversely, the people of Equality believed that Liberty’s unchecked pursuit of individualism left too many behind.

The stones fell into the River of Differences through neglect and cynicism, and the land fractured. The masses sang, "*People make the world go round...*"



The Call to Rebuild

As the rift deepened, two leaders emerged—one from the land of Liberty, one from the land of Equality. Each spoke for their people yet blinded by their vision. One stood firm in the belief that all should be free to make their way. The other, standing on the West side of the River of Sack, (imagine the Hackensack River with the MLK statue on the west side of the bank) fought to ensure that no one was left behind.

One night, as the river raged between them, a figure appeared in the mist—a radiant being called Vision, glowing with the light of both Liberty and Equality. The vision spoke: "The bridge must be rebuilt, or *Amerineck* will be lost to the darkness of division. But hear this: neither Liberty nor Equality can rebuild it alone. You must walk together, or the River of Differences will sweep you away."

While the uncertain leaders contemplated the wisdom of the Vision, the chorus chanted, "*All my life's a circle, sunrise, and sundown. The moon rolls through the nighttime, till the daybreak comes around.*"

The two reluctant leaders set out to understand the Vision's wisdom. Their path led them to the Valley of Reflection, where shimmering pools revealed the past. The song of the valley of reflection whispered: "*I've looked at life from both sides now, from win and lose and still somehow...*"



And in aching nostalgia, these words reverberated in the valley. *"Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away. Now, it looks as though they're here to stay."*

The Decision.

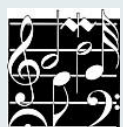
The leaders continued, their hearts heavy with what they had seen. Soon, they entered a shadowed wood, where two paths diverged before them. The wide road was well-travelled, familiar, and comfortable. The other was narrow and uncertain, overgrown with tangled vines. They hesitated, then ventured down the uncharted path, contemplating: *"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood..."*

Their path led them to the Chasm of Discord, where the remains of the bridge lay in ruin. The river roared below, and above them, storm clouds churned—a tempest of fear and mistrust. The weary yet resolute leaders clasped hands, knowing the only way forward was together.

As they lifted their eyes, the first light of morning broke through the storm, illuminating the way ahead: There's a *"light of a clear blue morning..."*

The people of *Amerineck* gathered on both sides of the river, watching as the leaders worked together for the first time. The once-lost Bridge of Trust began to rise from the depths, stone by stone, conversation by conversation.

The people, witnessing the possibility of unity, raised their voices: *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*



The bridge began to take shape. The stars of Liberty and Equality shone brightly once more, guiding the people toward a new hope: *"There's a place for us, somewhere a place for us..."*

The Promise of the Future

As the final stone was placed, the leaders stood together, hands outstretched to their people. The bridge was not perfect, nor would it stand without care.

On the Village Green of *Amerineck*, with dedicated spirits, the leaders and the people made a vow: *"This is a promise I will keep, "*

From both sides of the river, the people stepped forward, joining hands to span the length of the bridge, raising their voices in song: *"We the people, who are darker than blue, must join together for what is true..."*

I trust you have awakened from this dream-like reverie and those crying naivete. We acknowledge that raging River of Discord. And yet we persevere to rebuild that Bridge to We with each note, a stone, each voice, a pillar. As a community, let us enjoin those shining stars of Liberty and Equality as we sing as one: *"Like a bridge over troubled water, I will lay me down..."* Well, not *"I will lay me down,"* but *"I will comfort you."*



Artistic Director – Teresa-Marie Gotanco



Born and raised in New Jersey, Teresa-Marie Gotanco is a music educator, director, and performer based in north New Jersey. She is currently in her first year building the music program at Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child in Summit, New Jersey.

Prior to her involvement at Oak Knoll, Ms. Gotanco enjoyed an extensive career as an accomplished pianist, traveling around the

New York/New Jersey region to play for various churches, choral performances, and musicals. Among the musicals she has played for are *Once on this Island*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (for which she also served as Choirmaster and Assistant Musical Director). With a passion for voice science, vocal health, and authentic expression in performance, she has led choirs, taught voice classes, and provided vocal coaching to clients from all walks of life.

Ms. Gotanco has also worked as a professional vocalist since 2018, when she made her professional singing debut as a soprano concertist and soloist with the Princeton Baroque Chorus. In 2019, she was featured as part of a septet at Carnegie Hall under the baton of Mr. John Rutter, and during that summer, she had the privilege of performing at the Apollo Theater in Syros, Greece, during the Festival of the Aegean. Ms. Gotanco holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Rutgers 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 in 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 finished 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 3 years. Mr. Visto is also a teaching artist for the Paterson Music Project (PMP) who performs regularly in Paterson.

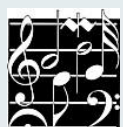


Juliette Bowen

Juliette Bowen is a 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 as Trinity Baptist Church in the Bronx.



Teaneck Community **Chorus Singers**

Artistic Director
Teresa-Marie Gotanco

Pianist
Bernie Visto

Sopranos

Sue Akiska

Chi Mei Lu

Maria Adorno

Amanda Paulsen

Ilene Gilbert

Jan Sprance

Monica Hodges

Cail Smith

Barbara Kinter

Fern Wilensky



Teaneck Community Chorus Singers

Altos

Anne Atlas

Judy Mars

Anita Bluestone

Evelyn Plummer

Carole Boutry

Ellen Ray

Cathy Cavallone

Katy Sastre

Suzan Cho

Jennifer Smith

Adriana Cibbons

Nadège Stretz

Cinger Cordon

Eileen White

Tenors

Justin Lu

Alejandro Molano

Wes Matsui

Patrick Montesano

Luke Savoy

Basses

Christian Camacho

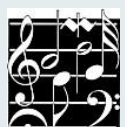
Jeff Pieper

Michel Kinter

Ernie Sprance

Jim Norman

Jim White



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Bo Bo Poultry Market

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Benefactors

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Juliette Bowen

Suzan Cho

Monica Schulze-Hodges

Michel Kinter



Patrons

Benefactors

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Chi Mei Lu

Justin Lu

Theresa Mannix & Caleb Canby

Gina Mannix & Patrick Montesano

Mary Jo Carville Nutt

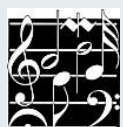
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Nadege Stretz

Fern Wilensky

To Then From Now -

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Program Notes

By Barrie Peterson

For the Beauty of the Earth began as a poem by Folliot Pierpoint (1835-1917), inspired by a walk in the countryside near Bath, England. John Rutter arranged it, and it has become a beloved Protestant hymn. We sang it at last winter's concert.

People Make the World Go Round, by Thom Bell and Linda Creed, was performed by The Stylistics, a popular R&B group, in 1971. Energizing the world is not money or gravity but people and our love.

Circle by Harry Chapin (1942 to 1981 death in a car crash) was a prolific songwriter and performer giving a third of his earnings to various charities. His brother Tom resides in Rockland County and, at the invitation of TCC Chorus member Barrie Peterson, who works for Rockland Community College, led several thousand people in singing this anthem at a graduation.

Both Sides Now is singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell's most fabulous contribution. Judy Collins made it popular in the turbulent year of 1968. Canada-born Joni, 81, recovered from a brain aneurysm 10 years ago and sang at the Grammys a year ago with a silver-tipped cane and her signature black beret and blonde braids. Innumerable artists have covered the song used at the 2010 Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony.



Program Notes (Continued)

Yesterday by Paul McCartney with input from John Lennon, was released in 1965 in the “Help” album. It has been covered over 2,000 times and is a top royalty producer.

The Road Not Taken: from a Robert Frost 1915 poem was set to music by Randall Thompson and dedicated to the people of Amhurst, MA. The phrase has graced thousands of books, articles, and TV series. The sense of indecisiveness and not knowing the result of choices are held up.

Light of a Clear Blue Morning was written by Dolly Parton in 1977 as “my song of deliverance” from the pain of divorce from fellow country singer Porter Wagoner.

Unity was composed in 2019 by Alan Walker (born 1997), a Norwegian music producer and DJ currently on a world tour. He follows his philosophy of “You are not alone; we are family” by crediting his many collaborators and listing them on his YouTube videos, which have 47 million subscribers.



Program Notes (Continued)

Somewhere from West Side Story, the 1957 masterpiece by Stephen Sondheim and Leonard Bernstein, the yearning for some place, some community where young people can be together in peace and love has never been better expressed.

A Promise I Will Keep was commissioned by the TCC and composed by Nick Page and Nita Penfield. Page has visited and led workshops and members of his group at past TCC concerts. In this age of greed, lies, avoidance of responsibility, and violence, the song's message of honor and character is vitally needed in our public and professional lives.

We The People by the Staple Singers first appeared on their 1972 album "Be Authentic: Respect Yourself." This family group migrated from the south to Chicago and began singing in churches in 1948. Professional contracts followed with Epic and Stax as they developed R&B, soul, and Gospel musical contributions. They were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1999. Mavis, 86, is the only surviving member at 86, and you can experience her Valentine's Day in San Francisco.

Bridge Over Troubled Water: we have sung this iconic Simon and Garfunkel piece several times. It is one of the most recorded songs in history, covered by Elvis, the Royal Philharmonic, Roberta Flack, Johnny Cash, Aretha, Willie Nelson, Celtic Women, Whitney Houston, and Bon Jovi.



WWE

Concert Production

Production Manager

Jeffrey Merrigan

Graphic Design

Margaret Aaker, Wes Matsui, Ernie Sprance

Web Master

Laura Downs-Buma
Monica Hodges

Publicity Chairman

Jack Aaker

Program Design

Gail Smith

Program Notes

Barrie Peterson

THS Production Leader

Jamie Boyle

TCC Music Committee Chairman

Wes Matsui

TCC Membership Chairman

Sue Akiska
Jeri Kadison

TCC Fundraising Chairman

Ellen Ray

Reception Coordination

Sue Akiska



Acknowledgements

This program has been made possible in part by a grant administered by the **Bergen County Department of Parks, Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs** from funds granted by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

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** for serving as our outstanding Production Manager!

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!

WWE

An illustration of a chorus of people holding hands on a bridge, with the letters 'WWE' overlaid in a large, yellow, stylized font.

- ▶ Updates and information about TCC
 - ▶ will be posted on:
 - ▶ www.teaneckcommunitychorus.org
 - ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/Teaneck-Community-Chorus-105307001058>
 - ▶ <https://www.instagram.com/teaneckcommunitychorus1/#>

