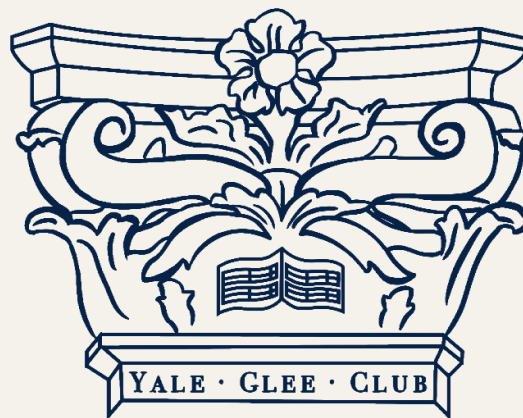


Fol - de - Rol



Fall 2025

Letter from the Director

Warmest greetings from Hendrie Hall and from the 165th Yale Glee Club! As you are undoubtedly aware, it continues to be an uncertain time for our colleges and universities (and for many of our country's institutions) but I am happy to report that the Glee Club remains as healthy and vibrant as ever, and that this singing community continues to be a place of respite for our students — a place where they can focus for a few hours each week on what we share with one another rather than on what divides us, and on working together to create something beautiful.

After perhaps the most competitive audition cycle I've experienced in my time as director (with over 100 new students auditioning for 22 openings), we celebrated many of our favorite fall traditions, including Tap Night, retreat at Silver Lake, and our pizza dinner (Pepe's!) with members of the Yale Glee Club Associates board. Our first performance was just last weekend at our annual Family Weekend concert and the students sang beautifully.

In addition to our other annual fall semester events — Princeton, Harvard, our December performance at the Yale Club of NYC, and our Messiah Singalong with the Yale Symphony Orchestra — we will be hosting and performing with a choir from Tunisia in just a few weeks. The ensemble is comprised of students from Tunisia88, a non-profit organization whose mission is to bring music into Tunisian schools. We also look forward to joining forces with the Yale Philharmonia, Yale Choral Artists, and student and faculty soloists from the School of Music for a performance of a massive new oratorio, *Siddhartha, She*, composed by my good friend and YSM faculty colleague Chris Theofanidis. We co-commissioned this piece along with the Aspen Festival where the work was premiered just last August. Our performance will be the second as well as the east coast premiere.

We are also busy at work planning for our 165th anniversary reunion weekend, which will take place on October 16-18 of 2026! Please mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details in the weeks and months to come. I hope we will see you all there!

Yours in song,

Jeff

Introducing YGC 165's Assistant Conductor:

Kevin Vondrak

Anna Zoltowski (AZ): Tell us about yourself!

Kevin Vondrak (KV): I'm Kevin Vondrak, and I'm a second-year D.M.A. student in choral conducting. I grew up outside of Chicago, did undergrad in St. Louis at Washington University, and did a master's at Northwestern. After that, I moved to Philadelphia, where I lived for seven years, to work for a professional choir called "The Crossing." During breaks from the Yale school year I continue to work with The Crossing as an associate conductor and recording producer.

AZ: What inspired you to want to work with the Glee Club?

KV: Part of it was I heard Mahima Kumara (M.M. '25) and Alex Whittington (M.M. '25) talk about their time as undergraduates singing in the Glee Club and how much it shaped them and the joy that they felt. Community is such a big part of why I do what I do. I'm really interested in how choral communities are shaped and I wanted to lend my voice and artistry to the Glee Club, learn something new, and take that experience wherever I'm going next.

AZ: Tell me the D.M.A. program!

KV: We largely go through the same day-to-day curriculum as the master's students in choral conducting. A big difference between the two degrees is that the types of jobs that I'm looking at after this are mostly teaching at universities, where I'll be working with undergraduates. It's a different kind of leadership than working with graduate students, like I did last year with Schola Cantorum. That was something that I really thought I could learn, especially from Jeff's model, because he's doing it so well. Other than that, there's academic aspects to the D.M.A. program here that are unique. For example, just this weekend, I had a written comprehensive exam where I was assigned two paper prompts on Friday at noon, and they were due Monday at noon. So, I wrote two 2000-word essays this weekend!

AZ: The Glee Club is a large ensemble. Can you talk about how it feels to lead a choir of 80+ people as compared to your previous conducting work?

KV: The biggest difference is breath. So much of how I find phrasing is through my own experience as a singer. When you have a huge choir of 80 people, stagger-breathing is such a different concept because you can just sit on a chord for so much longer than singing alone, and you can trust that the community will sustain the sound. It's really encouraging in that regard. It's also just a different type of energy to be around, to see so many faces looking back up at you. It's a little intimidating, but it's also much more reassuring. And, making a really big sound is always fun. But also, the inverse of that is to have 80 people making a really focused, soft sound, which can be just as captivating.

AZ: Can you talk a little bit about the challenges that you've faced conducting such a big ensemble?

KV: The biggest challenge is coordination. There's also a bit of a challenge with flexibility and nimbleness because there's so many more voices to join in sync and move as one. But, a group like YGC can certainly do that. And it's all about, from the conductor's perspective, clarity of gesture.

AZ: You're conducting "The Firmament" by Juniper Duncan. How did you come to know this piece, and what about it makes it special?

KV: Over the summer, Jeff sent a list of pieces for me to choose from. "The Firmament" was the one that spoke to me. Juniper wrote an amazing poem, and for me, everything about our craft of choral music comes down to the text. It's our unique privilege as musicians of the textured realm. And the other thing is that I really love new music — Juniper's piece is the winner of the Emerging Composer's Competition. Don't get me wrong, I love historical music, and understanding history helps us understand how we got to our place in the world. But equally as important is new works that address how we live in 2025. One of my previous mentors has a phrase that goes, "Art is a means to define and describe the world. Who has the voice and how are they using it?" Pieces like "The Firmament," which is about the experience of setting out on a new, transformational journey — really relatable to the college experience — operate at this deep level, combining art and lived experience, where we can learn something about ourselves and about people around us through the process of singing.



AZ: How do you spend your time outside of the classroom and rehearsal?

KV: Cooking is how I like to relax. I also have this theory that the idea of presenting concerts is similar to hosting a dinner party. You spend a lot of time preparing something that represents a little bit about who you are, and you're tasting it along the way. You invite people over, and then you serve it to them. The concert is about sharing a part of yourself in a creative way that expresses something, but nourishes someone else. Outside of New Haven, I'm really into spending time outside — my fiancée Brittany and I do a lot of backpacking, hiking, canoeing, and spending time in the wilderness of Maine, Minnesota, Colorado, and Montana.

AZ: Are you excited to return to Philadelphia on winter tour?

KV: Very. Philly's home. Philly's got this kind of gritty, underdog spirit that's really endearing. I'm really excited to experience it with the amazing Yale Glee Club!

Meet our newest members!

Alexandre Campanant

Year: 2029

Residential college: Berkeley

Voice part: Bass 1

Hometown: London, England

Favorite piece this year: "Twa Tanbou" by Sydney Guillaume



Alexis Mburu

Year: 2027

Residential college: Pierson

Voice part: Alto 2

Hometown: Tukwila, Washington

Favorite piece this year: "My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord" by Moses Hogan



Audrey Jamieson

Year: 2029

Residential college: Saybrook

Voice part: Alto 2

Hometown: Los Altos, California

Favorite piece this year: "The Road Home" by Stephen Paulus



Charlie Zhong

Year: 2029

Residential college: Saybrook

Voice part: Bass 2

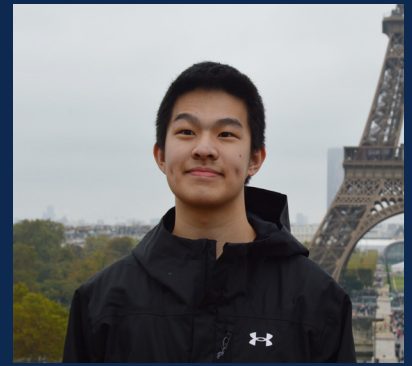
Hometown: Boston, Massachusetts

Favorite piece this year: "America Will Be!" by Joel Thompson



Corin Wang

Year: 2029
Residential college: Ezra Stiles
Voice part: Tenor 2
Hometown: Beijing, China
Favorite piece this year: "The Road Home" by Stephen Paulus



Dibora Yilma

Year: 2029
Residential college: Trumbull
Voice part: Alto 2
Hometown: Falls Church, Virginia
Favorite piece this year: "North" by Sleeping at Last, arranged by Ryan O'Neal

Ethan Cooper

Year: 2029
Residential college: Branford
Voice part: Bass 2
Hometown: Greenwich, Connecticut
Favorite piece this year: "Warum ist das Licht gegeben" by Johannes Brahms



Fiona Ress

Year: 2029
Residential college: Ezra Stiles
Voice part: Alto 2
Hometown: Kailua, Hawai'i
Favorite piece this year: "The Road Home" by Stephen Paulus

Francesca Sisskind

Year: 2029
Residential college: Morse
Voice part: Alto 1
Hometown: New York, New York
Favorite piece this year: "My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord" by Moses Hogan





Frank Petty

Year: 2029

Residential college: Morse

Voice part: Bass 1

Hometown: Columbia, Maryland

Favorite piece this year: "Warum ist das Licht gegeben" by Johannes Brahms

Harry Pambianchi

Year: 2029

Residential college: Timothy Dwight

Voice part: Tenor 1

Hometown: Madison, New Jersey

Favorite piece this year: "The Firmament" by Juniper Duncan



Hila Tor

Year: 2028

Residential college: Benjamin Franklin

Voice part: Alto 1

Hometown: Sammamish, Washington

Favorite piece this year: "Warum ist das Licht gegeben" by Johannes Brahms

Manon Gilles

Year: 2029

Residential college: Silliman

Voice part: Soprano 2

Hometown: Mount Horeb, Wisconsin

Favorite piece this year: "Warum ist das Licht gegeben" by Johannes Brahms



Miriam Levenson

Year: 2029

Residential college: Silliman

Voice part: Soprano 1

Hometown: Hamden, Connecticut

Favorite piece this year: "America Will Be!" by Joel Thompson

Naomi Tracy-Hegg

Year: 2029

Residential college: Berkeley

Voice part: Soprano 2

Hometown: Grand Marais, Minnesota

Favorite piece this year: "North" by Sleeping at Last, arranged by Ryan O'Neal



Parker Mednikow

Year: 2029

Residential college: Grace Hopper

Voice part: Tenor 2

Hometown: Memphis, Tennessee

Favorite piece this year: "My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord" by Moses Hogan

Sreetama Kushari

Year: 2029

Residential college: Saybrook

Voice part: Alto 1

Hometown: Avon, Connecticut

Favorite piece this year: "Warum ist das Licht gegeben" by Johannes Brahms



Tavian Jones

Year: 2026

Residential college: Pierson

Voice part: Tenor 2

Hometown: McLean, Virginia

Favorite piece this year: "Warum ist das Licht gegeben" by Johannes Brahms

Temiladeoluwa Adeniran

Year: 2029

Residential college: Trumbull

Voice part: Alto 2

Hometown: Seymour, Connecticut

Favorite piece this year: "North" by Sleeping at Last, arranged by Ryan O'Neal





Teresa Ng

Year: 2029

Residential college: Davenport

Voice part: Soprano 2

Hometown: Wellington, New Zealand

Favorite piece this year: "The Road Home" by Stephen Paulus

Vishwa Rakasi

Year: 2029

Residential college: Trumbull

Voice part: Bass 1

Hometown: Great Falls, Virginia

Favorite piece this year: "America Will Be!" by Joel Thompson



Zachary Jarvis

Year: 2028

Residential college: Silliman

Voice part: Bass 2

Hometown: Danville, California

Favorite piece this year: "America Will Be!" by Joel Thompson





A note from your Alumni Coordinators

Dear YGC Alumni,

Our names are Anna Zoltowski and Nate Stein, and we're honored to be this year's Alumni Coordinators for the Yale Glee Club. When we joined the group last fall, experiencing lasting friendships and shared traditions among generations of singers gave us a new understanding of what makes this community so special. In our role this year, we're excited to strengthen the connection between current members and alumni, continuing to celebrate the legacy and spirit that unite us all.

Be on the lookout for an email about our Alumni Mentorship Program. We hope you will be available to continue this meaningful and rewarding experience.

We hope you've enjoyed this issue of the Fol-de-Rol. We welcome any comments or questions. Feel free to email us at anna.zoltowski@yale.edu and nate.stein@yale.edu.

With much glove,

Anna Zoltowski '27 and Nate Stein '28

Upcoming performances & tours

Friday, November 21st @ 7:30 PM, Woolsey Hall
Yale-Harvard concert

Sunday, December 7th @ 1:30 PM, Battell Chapel
Handel's *Messiah* sing-along concert

January 8th – 11th
Winter tour to Philadelphia and New York City!

Friday, 13th @ 7:30 PM, Woolsey Hall
Susan Botti's *Vespers* with the Yale Concert Band

March 7th – 15th
Spring tour to Puerto Rico!

Thursday, April 16th @ 7:30 PM, Woolsey Hall
José Maurício Nunes Garcia's *Requiem* with the Yale Symphony Orchestra

Saturday, May 16th @ 8:00 PM, Sprague Hall
Commencement concert

The newsletter of the
Yale Glee Club Associates