WHAT KEEPS THE GLEE CLUB GOING

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VPSOA 2012–2013

My job this year was to recruit the best possible “rookie” (nickname for first-year) class that would continue the Glee Club’s 140 year legacy. Now some of you may be thinking… “How hard can it be to get some guys to sing in the Glee Club?” Considering the increasing size and complexity of the university, the task of attracting students to sing in Glee Club has really changed since the days of Rutgers College.

There are many different factors that didn’t exist in years past. Rutgers University has increased enormously in size and now regularly enrolls record-breaking first-year student classes. This September, the university created its largest class in over 30 years by enrolling over 7,000 first-year students. With such a vast number of students to reach out to, recruitment is more work than it has ever been before. The teamwork contributed by Dr. Gardner and past VPSOA’s has created a system that allows the Glee Club to reach the maximum number of students. In order to recruit effectively, we first reached out to students through two kinds of mail: snail mail and e-mail. Letters were sent out in May to every high school choral director in the state, to pass along information about the Glee Club to students planning to attend Rutgers in the Fall. After the letters were sent, we moved on to the next step.

With the help of Dr. Gardner, we accessed a Student Life survey that asks students what extra-curricular activities they are interested in at the university. The survey has a section for students interested in music and, more specifically, asks whether they sang in high school choir. Once we obtained their information, we sent interested students an email blast with information about how to audition for the choirs.

Choosing the best students is no easy task, especially given the logistical challenge of presenting such a vast number of students to reach out that is part of a choral area committed to presenting not just great music, but music that is intellectually challenging and very diverse culturally. Under Dr. Gardner’s leadership, the choral area at Rutgers has presented a setting of the Buddhist Heart Sutra, ragas from India, and a wide variety of unusual European music, and has even been featured singing at Rutgers Stadium to welcome the Dalai Lama. This past semester, the Glee Club once again stepped to the front in performance, taking a major part in the concert: “Masterworks of the Jewish Tradition.”

Our November 11th concert of Jewish repertoire was comprised of music that was either written by Jewish composers or that set Hebrew texts. This concert was a collaboration between the Rutgers University Glee Club, Rutgers University Kirkpatrick Choir and two community choirs: the Kol Emet Choir from New Brunswick’s Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple and Makhelat HaMercaz Jewish Choir of Central New Jersey.

Dr. Gardner observed that the concert was important for the Rutgers University community because it embodied the intellectual challenge that the university experience is supposed to offer. “The four ensembles’ collaboration in the concert is a unique way for students to discover a diverse element of the Central New Jersey Jewish community,” said Dr. Gardner. “The vision behind the concert is to gain an intellectual appreciation for Jewish texts and music through the choral art.”

Dr. Gardner designed a concert that progressed from the challenging to the comforting to the romantically lush. The Rutgers University Glee Club addressed the horrors of Nazi Germany, dramatically presented in Kurt Weill’s setting of Bertolt Brecht’s texts in Das Berliner Requiem, accompanied...
After all forms of mailing were finished, it was time for the greatest recruitment method of all: face-to-face communication. Over the course of last summer, members of the Glee Club—including Christopher Glass, Joseph Heldmann, Jeremy Ballack and Dr. Gardner—attended over 32 New Student Orientation sessions. NSOs are sessions that all first-year students coming to Rutgers are encouraged to sign up for in order to get better acquainted with the university. At these NSOs, we are able to set up a recruitment table designed to attract students to audition for the Glee Club. Posters, pictures and a TV display that plays the Fight Song at full volume greet hundreds of students at each session. The following day, Dr. Gardner presents a lecture—complete with PowerPoint projection and high volume audio on “Choral Music at Rutgers.” Additionally, the Glee Club is featured prominently in the game show video shown to all NSO participants. Many times throughout the course of the day we heard students say to Dr Gardner, “Hey, you’re the guy in the video!”

“Without Christopher Glass recruiting me at the choral area table at Orientation over the summer, I probably would have never joined Glee Club,” said David Trestini, a new rookie this year. “After hearing Dr. Gardner’s lecture, I knew that joining this group was an opportunity that I could not pass up on.”

Having obtaining over 546 email addresses from sign-ups at the NSOs and 432 email addresses from online general interest surveys, we totaled about 978 addresses in our database of students interested in choral singing. Once emails were sent out, it was a matter of waiting for the students to show up to auditions.

Besides dealing with a massive influx of enrolled students, the New Brunswick campus has grown and diversified into a much different place from it once was. With construction taking place on multiple campuses and almost ten different kinds of bus routes, the layout of buildings at Rutgers can be very confusing for a first-year student. This makes the job of the VPSOA much more difficult because we are try-
The 2012–2013 rookie class at our annual Rookie Banquet in Winants Hall

As the week of auditions pressed on, I realized that our recruitment efforts over the summer paid off, because over 200 students came out to audition for the choral groups. This year was one of the largest audition classes that Dr. Gardner has seen in his tenure at the university. 87 men auditioned for the choral groups and 30 of those men were accepted into the Glee Club. This year, the Glee Club began the Fall with 85 members, making it a slightly larger group than in years past. With such a strong rookie class I am pretty sure there will be some great music making in 2012–2013. After the rookies are welcomed into the organization, a special Rookie Banquet is held at Winants Hall before a great first semester of concerts. I can’t help but feel rewarded to see the joy in these students’ faces. Seeing this year’s rookie class in McKinney Hall demonstrating the same excitement and eagerness that I felt myself as a first-year student has made the long months of attending orientations, sending emails and letters incredibly worth my time and the time of everyone who helped along the way. I hope that this rookie class will stay with the Glee Club throughout their time at Rutgers and continue the legacy that so many brothers in song have laid down before them. I know that I will look back fondly on the memories that Glee Club has given me and I hope that these new recruits can say the same in the years to come.
by an orchestra made up of some of the New York area’s finest instrumentalists. Dr. Frederick Urrey, baritone Curtis Streetman, and the Glee Club’s assistant director, Daniel Spratlan, sang the solo parts. Dr. Gardner said, “It was important that this work come first in the concert—the text is so disturbing that upon its completion, we wanted to lead the audience away from its horrors into the better nature of mankind as presented in texts for worship and then celebration.” It was followed by the Jewish prayer *Barechu*. This work by Renaissance composer Salamone Rossi begins the call to worship for peace and faith within the community’s congregation.

Next on the Glee Club’s set was Steven Sametz’s tribute to Franz Biebl’s *Ave Maria*, entitled *En Kelohenu*, a Hebrew text that allows Jewish congregants to chant the prayer with every lyric of the hymn counting as a blessing. Like the well-known Biebl piece, it features a double chorus in antiphonal alternations. Cantor Anna Ott West and Cantor Sheldon Levin then led the community choirs in several beautiful liturgical and secular pieces in Hebrew. To conclude the first half of the concert, members from all choirs took the stage—nearly 200 singers—for a performance of *Baruch Habah*, written by local composer Steven Cohen. After intermission, the Kirkpatrick Choir premiered Kenneth Lampl’s *Jerusalem*—a real hit of the evening—and then presented Eric Whitacre’s *Five Hebrew Love Songs* and *Romancero Gitano* by Italian composer Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

“The music of the concert was a great way to pay homage to my religion and culture while learning new methods to express my heritage through song,” said Rutgers Business School first-year student Zachary Jaffe. “Singing about my heritage with my Brothers in Song really meant a lot to me and I look forward to learning about more cultures through our repertoire.”

**EATING OFF THE SUCCESSES OF 140 YEARS**

MARK HANSEN, SAS ’13
PRESIDENT 2012–2013

Building on the energy of our 140th anniversary, this year’s council was determined to make the Summer Barbeque 2012 one to remember. As always, there was plenty of singing, eating, drinking, and laughing, but the gorgeous day let our officers cook up a storm—and of course our alumni were jumping in to assist at the grill!

The work of this year’s council is already paying off in many ways. As you may have read from my articles in the past, we have been working hard in the past year to reorganize our historical archives, our music archives, and every other part of McKinney Hall. While at the last BBQ we were able to have pictures from our international tours, we’ve also recovered song books from the 19th century, pictures of Glee Club members performing at radio stations in the 50s, and posters from our concerts around the world. If you would like to see some of the items we have organized, please stop by our Spring Concert or next year’s BBQ to see these interesting snapshots of Glee Club history.
Thank you, council, Glee Club members and alumni for taking the time to mingle with old friends and keep in touch. I don’t think it could have been a more pleasant time. I hope to see you all at our upcoming concerts and, of course, a year from now when we have a new graduating class to welcome as first-year alumni!

### Upcoming Events

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<td>Spring Concert</td>
<td>Saturday, May 4, 2013</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Summer Alumni BBQ</td>
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<td>IMC</td>
<td>March 6–9, 2014</td>
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<td>Nicholas Music Center</td>
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leadership. He has been an active singer himself (Tenor 1) for 55 years, too!

Dr. Gillett is not the first honorary member to be in the advisory position, as Dr. Roger R. Locandro, another Honorary Member of the Glee Club, once held the same position. Dr. Locandro was a prominent science educator at Cook College; while at Cook College, Dr. Locandro studied and taught Ecology and Natural Resources. He was also deeply involved with vocational agriculture throughout New Jersey. When he wasn’t focused on his ecological work, Dr. Locandro planned and implemented Student Life Programs in finance, leadership development and student government.

But professors have worked with the Glee Club in many ways, not just as advisors to the hard working council. For instance: when Professor David Drinkwater led the Kirkpatrick Chapel Choir, he assisted the Glee Club in many events with his close friend and colleague, Glee Club director “Soup Walter.” From the musical direction of the Christmas concerts to social events—receptions at his house on Mine Street provided fond memories for many members of the Glee Club—Professor Drinkwater interacted closely with Council and the members of Glee Club.

Professor James W. Reed supported the Glee Club financially and personally during his tenure as the Dean of Rutgers College. He was made an Honorary Member in the early 1990s, and still teaches in the Rutgers University’s History Department. Alumni of the Glee Club often recollect Dr. Reed attending the annual Rookie Banquet, where he would give each rookie a copy of “The Rutgers Picture Book: An Illustrated History of Student Life in the Changing College and University.”

Our first Honorary Member, Dr. Howard J. Crosby, graduated from Rutgers in 1941 and functioned as Associate Dean of Men from 1951 until 1965. The voluntary service he provided is what distinguished the Glee Club from other music ensembles in the Rutgers community. His early financial support publicly shaped the national and international face of the Glee Club. Dr. Mason Welch Gross showed support as the 16th President of Rutgers College, serving from 1959 to 1971. His
outright commitment to the arts quickly garnered the Glee Club’s gratitude, and his lasting legacy can be seen by the commemoration and naming of the Mason Gross School of the Arts.

However, despite the successful rise of the Glee Club, there were some years when its relevance and important place in Rutgers tradition seemed in doubt. Mrs. Barbara Gordon—who joined the Rutgers Alumni Relations staff in 1970s—was crucial in supporting the Glee Club through the 1980s when revolving directors, unstable finances and eroded support from administrators and faculty threatened its existence. Mrs. Gordon regularly reminded officers and members of the Glee Club of its significant history and cultural importance to the campus and community, as well as negotiating difficult political and organizational issues of the time. When Dr. Gardner was appointed as the director of the Rutgers University Glee Club, the stability and support would grow once again in the 1990s. Rutgers Foundation officer Sharon Suarez worked with Dr. Gardner and Bob Mortensen to build the very effective Telethon campaign that was the basis for the current Glee Club fundraising outreach efforts. Dr. Marilyn Somville, former Dean of Mason Gross School of the Arts from 1990–2000, created new programming and events that highlighted students within their individual disciplines; she was also responsible for the hiring of conducting professor, Dr. Patrick Gardner.

For over 25 years, Dr. Marie Logue, the retired Dean of Students at Rutgers College and then Rutgers University Associate Vice President for Academic Engagement and Programming, had been involved in the Glee Club’s affairs. During her time, Dr. Logue helped the Glee Club’s student leaders navigate their way through the university administration while improving the financial stability of the organization. Dr. Logue continues to serve on the Glee Club’s Advisory Committee. She has been very committed to the social activities of the Glee Club—including attending numerous Rookie Banquets, in addition to organizing Friends & Family International Tours that traveled alongside the Glee Club.

This passion for domestic and international tours grew from many decades back, under the direction of F. Austin “Soup” Walter. However, successful and meaningful international tours could not have come about without the support of Harry Morgan and Wobina Kwast. Harry Morgan, Rutgers University class of 1960, created a cultural exchange organization known as the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation. During the Cold War era, he helped establish several tours throughout Eastern Europe for the Glee Club. Wobina Kwast was an ally to the Glee Club, and also a friend to Professor Walter. She lived in Amsterdam as the American Representative of the Holland-American Ancestor Society. Ms. Kwast devoted an immense amount of time and effort to organizing the itineraries for the ensemble’s stay. Between performances, Professor Walter and several other students would visit her quaint cottage.

Hopefully these words can in some small way acknowledge the work these Honorary Members have done for us. Without them, it would be hard to imagine the Glee Club being able to thrive in the past, present and future for years to come.
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