

History

The Canton Symphony Orchestra Chorus was founded during the 1976-77 season. The new symphony conductor, Thomas Mahalic, wanted to celebrate the opening of Umstattd Hall with a production of the opera Carmen. Soloists were contracted, and an opera chorus was formed under the direction of Dr. Jeffrey H. Brandes. This production of Carmen was so well received that two more operas were then scheduled – Madam Butterfly and La Boheme.

By 1983, Dr. Brandes had made the Chorus an integral part of the Canton Symphony Orchestra. With Gerhardt Zimmerman conducting the Symphony and Dr. Brandes working with the Chorus, large musical works that also featured a chorus were performed each year.

By 1988, the Chorus had grown to over 100 singers from the ages of 17-70. They performed major works including the Messiah, Beethoven's 9th, and the Mozart, Brahms, and Verdi Requiems.

Since 2010, the Symphony and the Chorus have collaborated with local and nationally known musicians to do more than “just classical” music. Concerts featuring the work of Queen, Elton John, and Billy Joel have been performed along with the original production of “The Gift” and a ballet interpretation of Carmina Burana.

The Chorus has also performed in concerts without the Symphony at varied venues including Cable Recital Hall, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Temple Israel, First Friday Café Tour, and even Carnegie Hall!

Today the Chorus is composed of about 100 volunteer singers from all walks of life who have a wide array of choral experience levels. They are united in their love for music and their desire to create remarkable musical experiences for both the audience and for themselves.

For a complete historical timeline of the Canton Symphony Orchestra, please visit www.cantonsymphony.org/historical-timeline.