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**Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts and William Linthicum-Blackhorse
Receive 2024 Dale Warland Singers Commission Grant**

Chorus America is thrilled to announce New Jersey-based **Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts** as the recipient of the 2024 Dale Warland Singers Commission Grant, which will support a composition from composer **William Linthicum-Blackhorse** to be premiered by Wharton Arts' New Jersey Youth Chorus. Chorus America and the **American Composers Forum** partner to present this grant, which supports a chorus entering into an artistically meaningful and mutually beneficial partnership with a composer to contribute a new work to the choral repertoire. A panel curated by Chorus America selects the annual grantee.

This grant is made possible by the Dale Warland Singers Fund for New Choral Music, a permanently restricted endowment fund established in 2004 to honor Warland and the Singers. The selected chorus receives a grant of \$10,000, \$7,500 of which supports the commissioning fee and \$2,500 of which supports engagement with the project composer, and production and promotion costs to present the project. In the 2024 cycle, children and youth choruses were eligible to apply for the grant.

With the 2024 grant, Wharton Arts will commission Linthicum-Blackhorse to compose an original work based on the speech "Long Ago When They Lived in the East" given by now-deceased native-Lenape speaker Nora Thompson Dean. This piece, through the use of English and the Lenape languages, aims to shed light on the true history of the Lenape people who were forcibly removed from their ancestral home where the US states of New Jersey, Delaware, and New York are today. Engaging with the Delaware Nation of Oklahoma's revitalization resources, composer Linthicum-Blackhorse seeks to honor the cultural heritage and stories of the Lenape people, so that audiences throughout the Lenape ancestral homelands and beyond will hear a language once native to these lands and a history nearly forgotten. The finished work will be premiered by the New Jersey Youth Chorus, a program of Wharton Arts, in May 2025.

"We are honored to be selected for the Dale Warland Singers Commission Grant," said Helen H. Cha-Pyo, artistic director of the Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts. "As we endeavor to learn, share, and preserve the history and language of the Lenape people—and in alignment with our commitment to amplifying the voices of LGBTQ+, BIPOC, women, and other underrepresented composers—it is our hope that this project will serve as a powerful educational and artistic tool, fostering understanding and appreciation for indigenous languages and histories among youth in New Jersey and beyond, while honoring the Lenape people, on whose ancient homelands we are standing."

"Chorus America is thrilled to support such an innovative and affirming project with the inaugural Dale Warland Singers Commission Grant," said Chorus America president and CEO Catherine Dehoney. "This collaboration will result in an incredibly meaningful addition to the choral repertoire as well as a foundational cultural education experience for young singers in New Jersey."

"We strive to honor and acknowledge the ancestral caretakers of this land, and hope this is one of many efforts for us to understand the acts of violence, displacement, and unjust treatment that make up our history," said Vanessa Rose, American Composers Forum's executive director. "Through the creative process, we believe learning, reckoning, and healing is possible. We are grateful for Dale Warland's incredible vision."

This is the inaugural year of presenting the Dale Warland Singers Commission Grant, after undergoing a transition from a former award (the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award) in the fall of 2023. While continuing to support the creation of new choral music, the program's focus has shifted to funding future work, rather than recognizing past achievement, in its new form as a grant program.

Visit chorusamerica.org/grants to learn more about Chorus America's Grants Program.

About Chorus America

Chorus America is the advocacy, research, and leadership development organization that advances the choral field. We support and serve choral conductors, administrators, board members, and singers with tools, training, peer networking, and access so that choruses are better able to contribute to their communities. Our membership includes more than 6,000 choruses, individuals, businesses, and organizations that are part of the choral field.

Chorus America is governed by a diverse board of accomplished arts leaders from the U.S. and Canada, and the executive staff is headquartered in Washington DC. Learn more at chorusamerica.org.

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