

MGC MEMBER PROFILES

MEET MGC

What makes The Mendelssohn Glee Club special? Meet some of our members and find out (see below).

If you would like to become a part of our venerable 156-year history, contact conductor Gene Wisoff at 917-916-1959.

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NED DARNALL

president

(former treasurer, librarian)

member since 1973

second tenor

education

Princeton University, University of Virginia (Darden)

military service

Army Reserve (21 years); Vietnam, active duty;
lieutenant colonel, retired

profession

real estate finance (retired)

favorite composer

Dvořák

favorite opera, musical

Rusalka, South Pacific

favorite performer/group

Dave Brubeck Quartet, Bill Evans, Beatles, Judy Collins, Elton John

music purchased recently

Bill Evans, Ahmad Jamal

favorite author

Ron Chernow, Lee Child, David McCullough

last book read

The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made by Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas

regular reading, listening

Wall Street Journal, New York Times, WQXR

favorite visual artist

Monet, Rodin

favorite movie

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, The Sorrow and the Pity

favorite TV show

*M*A*S*H*

best pizza, sushi

Sal & Carmine, Miyako (Upper West Side)

favorite team

Yankees, Giants

favorite comedian or comic actor

Robin Williams

person I admire

Benjamin Franklin

pastime

golf, tennis, bridge

favorite museum, outdoor space

AMNH; my roof garden

why I sing

It's therapeutic – it relaxes and soothes me.

.....

DAVID ANCHEL

member since 2009

bass

education

City College of New York, Brown University

profession

opera singer, product manager, project manager,
programmer/tech manager, high school physics teacher

favorite composer

Wagner

favorite opera, musical

Die Meistersinger, West Side Story

favorite performer/group

Beatles, Ella Fitzgerald, David Oistrakh

performance attended recently

Metropolitan Opera (*Rake's Progress*)

favorite author

Fyodor Dostoevsky

last book read

Fer-de-Lance by Rex Stout

regular reading, viewing, listening

New York Times, Guardian, MSNBC, WQXR

favorite visual artist

Nolde

favorite movie

On the Waterfront

favorite TV show

Seinfeld

best pizza

Patsy's (East Harlem)

favorite spectator sport

golf

favorite comedian or comic actor

George Burns, Danny Kaye

person I admire

Louis Armstrong

pastime

cooking, travel

favorite museum, outdoor space

Neue Galerie; Central Park

why I sing

Love of opera led me to singing (after having played the clarinet).

Music is central to my life.

.....

STEVE ARMSTRONG

member from 2003-2007; rejoined 2022

second tenor

education

Harvard College, Columbia University School of Law

profession

regulatory consultant, teacher of food law; food and drug lawyer (retired)

favorite composer

Mozart, Florence Price

favorite opera, musical

Die Meistersinger, West Side Story, The Music Man

favorite performer/group

Wynton Marsalis, Philadelphia Orchestra, Beatles, Alicia de Larrocha

performance attended recently

Norah Jones

favorite author

John Steinbeck, Thomas Mann

last book read

Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom by David W. Blight

regular reading, viewing, listening

New Yorker, MSNBC, NPR

favorite visual artist

Van Gogh

favorite movie

Citizen Kane, 2001: A Space Odyssey

favorite TV show

Law and Order (original series)

best pizza

Venice Restaurant (Ridgefield, Connecticut)

favorite team

Giants

favorite comedian or comic actor

George Carlin, Amy Schumer

person I admire

Dr. Anthony Fauci, Winston Churchill, Harriet Beecher Stowe

pastime

playing guitar, reading

favorite museum, outdoor space

MoMA; Kent Falls State Park (Connecticut)

volunteer work

board member and speaker, Food and Drug Law Institute

why I sing

I love “harmonizing” with my fellow singers – in both senses of the word: creating wonderful music amplifies feelings of friendship and camaraderie.

.....

ALBERT BOUCHARD

librarian

member since 2018

second tenor

education

Clarkson University, Hunter College, Empire State College, City College of New York, Fordham University

profession

musician (founding member, Blue Öyster Cult); play and tour with Blue Coupe, the Bouchard Brothers, the Dictators, and Robert Gordon; high school music teacher (retired)

favorite composer

Beethoven

favorite opera, musical

Turandot, Hamilton, Kinky Boots

favorite performer/group

Dave Brubeck Quartet, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, Ventures, Beach Boys, Beatles, Muddy Waters, Chuck Berry, Metallica, Steely Dan

performance attended recently

Foo Fighters

favorite author

Stephen King

last book read

Unrequited Infatuations: A Memoir by Steven Van Zandt

regular reading, viewing, listening

Rolling Stone, PBS; Marc Maron, Mary Spender, Band Geeks, Home Skoolin' (podcasts/vlogs); NPR, WQXR

favorite visual artist

Seurat

favorite movie

The Apartment

favorite TV show

Breaking Bad

best pizza

Famous Famiglia 96th (Upper West Side)

favorite team

Mets

favorite comedian or comic actor

Chris Rock

person I admire

Barack Obama

pastime

running

favorite museum, outdoor space

Met; Central Park

volunteer work

New York Road Runners events; United Federation of Teachers

why I sing

I sing to express myself in a universal language and as a form of meditation. I also love it.

.....

MARTY EDELMAN

assistant secretary

(former president, vice president)

member since 1986

first tenor

education

Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn

military service

Army Corps of Engineers (combat engineer), first lieutenant

profession

materials management

favorite composer

Mozart, Mendelssohn

favorite opera, musical

Madama Butterfly, South Pacific

favorite performer/group

Beatles, Moody Blues, Charles Aznavour, Nina Simone, Yo Yo Ma

performance attended recently

Toby Keith

favorite author

Clive Cussler

last book read

The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz by Erik Larson

regular viewing, listening

MSNBC, WQXR

favorite visual artist

Michelangelo, Picasso

favorite movie

Gone with the Wind

favorite TV show

The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, Monk

best pizza, sushi

Rizzo's (Astoria), Ko (Upper East Side)

favorite team

Yankees

favorite comedian or comic actor

Mel Brooks, Benny Hill

person I admire

Winston Churchill

pastime

picking up litter in Central Park, swimming in saltwater pool

favorite museum, outdoor space

Met; Central Park

volunteer work

secretary, Vietnam Veterans of America (Manhattan chapter)

why I sing

I'm continuing a family tradition – my mother and sister were in choruses. I started singing as a teenager and have not stopped.

.....

RICHARD FARREN

member-at-large

(former president, secretary, treasurer)

member since 1977

baritone

education

Yale University, Harvard Law School

military service

Army captain

profession

attorney

favorite composer

Mozart, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Handel

favorite opera, musical

Don Carlos, Le Nozze di Figaro, Carmen, Die Meistersinger, The Sound of Music, South Pacific, Fiddler on the Roof

favorite performer/group

Beatles, Isle of Rhodes (my son's group),
Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Anna Netrebko, Luciano Pavarotti

performances attended recently

New York Philharmonic (Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich), Glimmerglass Festival (*Carmen*, *The Sound of Music*), Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn)

favorite author

Mark Twain, James Clavell

last book read

Bruno, Chief of Police by Martin Walker

regular reading, viewing, listening

New York Times, *Wall Street Journal*, *Atlantic*, *Drudge Report*, *Morning Joe* (MSNBC); Metropolitan Opera classical music (SiriusXM)

favorite visual artist

Caravaggio, Canova, Bernini

favorite movie

My Cousin Vinny, *The Godfather* (I, II)

favorite TV show

Homeland, *Ted Lasso*

best pizza, sushi

Lombardi's (Soho), Zuma (Midtown East)

favorite spectator sport

soccer, golf

favorite comedian or comic actor

Johnny Carson, Bob Hope, Carol Burnett, Jon Stewart

person I admire

George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt

pastime

golf, wine tasting, travel, studying military history and

visiting battle sites

favorite museum, outdoor space

Met; New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Zoo

volunteer work

board member, League of Conservation Voters

why I sing

Everyone in my family is talented. I can experience the joy of making music without having to learn an instrument. Singing has become a passion.

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RON FORBES

member since 2006

first tenor

education

Baruch College, Long Island University (Brooklyn campus)

profession

comptroller

favorite composer

Mozart, Handel, Fauré

favorite opera, musical

Carmen, Hamilton, 110 in the Shade

favorite performer

Mandy Patinkin

last book read

Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging by Afua Hirsch

regular reading, viewing

New York Times, HG network, MSNBC

favorite visual artist

Sargent

favorite movie

The Sound of Music

person I admire

Winston Churchill

pastime

painting, gardening

favorite museum, outdoor space

Met; New York Botanical Garden

volunteer work

taught reading to learning-disabled adults

why I sing

It brings me joy.

.....

GEORGE FRIEDLANDER

member since 2017

second tenor

education

Stony Brook University, Pace University

profession

investment strategist, political analyst, policy analyst

favorite composer

Beethoven

favorite opera, musical

Turandot, Guys and Dolls

favorite performer/group

Beatles

performance attended recently

Melody Gardot

last book read

The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs: A New History of Their Lost World by Steve Brusatte; *The Story of Life in 25 Fossils: Tales of Intrepid Fossil Hunters and the Wonders of Evolution* by Donald Prothero

regular reading, viewing, listening

Washington Post, MSNBC, PBS; listen to all types of music via cable

favorite visual artist

Picasso

favorite movie

Casablanca

favorite TV show

Mad Men

best pizza, sushi

Felice 83, Sushi Seki (Upper East Side)

favorite team

Knicks

favorite comedian or comic actor

Robin Williams

person I admire

Christopher Hitchens

pastime

politics, writing (including humorous song lyrics to existing melodies), swimming, bicycling, hiking, being a smarta**

favorite museum, outdoor space

Met; Fort Tryon Park

why I sing

I have music in my head and on my mind all of the time.

.....

CHUCK HARDY

member since 2009

baritone

education

Cornell University

profession

manager (workshop for people with intellectual disabilities)

favorite composer

Mozart

favorite opera, musical

The Magic Flute, The Sound of Music

favorite performer/group

Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, Eagles

performance attended recently

Roger McGuinn

favorite author/last book read

The Madness of Crowds by Louise Penny

regular listening

Fresh Air, Selected Shorts (NPR), WQXR

favorite visual artist

Monet

favorite movie

Casablanca

favorite TV show

Vera

best pizza

Angelo's (Midtown East)

favorite spectator sport

tennis

favorite comedian or comic actor

Red Skelton

person I admire

John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr.

pastime

New York Times "Crossword"

favorite museum, outdoor space

Frick; Roosevelt Island

volunteer work

feeding homeless people (St. John's Memorial Episcopal Church in New Jersey)

why I sing

It makes me feel connected to the universe.

.....

ELMER JEORG

member since 1993

first tenor

education

Stevens Institute of Technology, New Jersey City University

profession

math teacher, piano technician, musician, mental health worker, program aide (working with high school students)

favorite composer

Beethoven, Bach, Brahms

favorite opera, musical

La Bohème, Les Misérables, Anything Goes, West Side Story

favorite performer

Nat King Cole

performance attended recently

Ocean Grove Choir Festival

favorite author

Kahlil Gibran

last book read

algebra and geometry texts

regular reading, viewing

RV magazines, MSNBC

favorite movie

It's a Wonderful Life, Gone with the Wind, On Borrowed Time

favorite TV show

All in the Family, Blue Bloods, Jeopardy!

favorite team

Yankees, Mets, Giants

favorite comedian or comic actor

George Burns

person I admire

Richard Rodgers

pastime

motorhome camping, conducting, bicycling

volunteer work

Partnership for the Homeless; crisis intervention hotline counselor

why I sing

I love the male choral sound – as a toddler I listened to Fred Waring on the radio and TV (he featured a men’s chorus with his orchestra). My mother said I sang before I talked.

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DENNIS O’NEILL

member since 2016

bass

education

Manhattan College, Purdue University

military service

Air Force ROTC

profession

computer scientist (retired)

favorite composer

Mozart

favorite opera, musical

Aida, H.M.S. Pinafore, Man of La Mancha, Carousel, South Pacific

favorite performer/group

Rolling Stones, Roy Orbison, Frank Sinatra

performance attended recently

Andrea Bocelli

favorite author

Connie Willis (science fiction)

last book read

Tom Jones by Henry Fielding

regular listening

Siriusly Sinatra, Willie's Roadhouse, 60s Gold (SiriusXM)

favorite visual artist

Michelangelo

favorite movie

Casablanca

favorite TV show

Keeping Up Appearances

favorite team, spectator sport

Mets, golf

favorite comedian or comic actor

Mel Brooks

person I admire

Jesus Christ, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr.

pastime

bass fishing

favorite museum

MoMA, AMNH

volunteer work

control subject, U.S. POINTER Study (Alzheimer's Association)

why I sing

When I took voice lessons a while back, I discovered I'm a bass, not a tenor. At that point, singing became much more gratifying and has since become an avocation.

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JOÉL PÉREZ MORA

member from 2015-2017; rejoined 2022
baritone

education

Lehman College, Pacific College of Health and Science

profession

student (master's program in acupuncture)

favorite composer

Mozart, Handel

favorite musical

Little Shop of Horrors, Into the Woods

favorite performer/group

Lake Street Dive, La Santa Cecilia, Whitney Houston,
Catherine Russell

performance attended recently

El Caribefunk

favorite author

Paulo Coelho

last book read

The Dawn of Yangchen by F. C. Yee

regular viewing, listening

Gaia TV (YouTube), Tiny Desk concerts (NPR)

favorite visual artist

Caravaggio

favorite movie

Matilda, Jumanji

favorite TV show

Avatar: The Last Airbender

best pizza

Two Boots (East Village), Fumo (Harlem)

favorite comedian or comic actor

Joan Rivers (and our conductor Gene Wisoff)

person I admire

Don Miguel Ruiz, Eckhart Tolle, Joe Dispenza

pastime

learning Italian and other languages

favorite museum, outdoor space

AMNH; Central Park, Highline

why I sing

It makes me ecstatic. Nothing compares to making a joyful noise with others. The harmonic blending of voices feels like a sonic hug and always makes my day 1,000 times better.

.....

JORY PROBBER

member since 1999

second tenor

profession

manufacturer's representative

education

Brandeis University

favorite composer

Bach

favorite opera, musical

Don Giovanni, Guys and Dolls

favorite performer/group

Glenn Gould, John Coltrane, Jackson Brown, Les Brown and His Band of Renown, Otis Redding, Leonard Cohen

performance attended recently, music purchased

War (live), Oshima Brothers (*Dark Nights Golden Days*)

favorite author

Herman Melville

last book read

Historic Black Brooklyn: 400 Years of Struggle and Hope by Brian Merlis and Clarence Taylor

regular reading, viewing, listening

New York Times, New Yorker, Mother Jones, Atlantic, BBC TV, NPR, WNYC, WFUV, WQXR

favorite visual artist

Calder

favorite movie

Pennies from Heaven (1981 version)

favorite TV show

The Wire

best pizza, sushi

Denino's (Staten Island) and dessert across the street at Ralph's Italian Ices; Kouzan (upper West Side)

favorite team

Mets, New York Rangers, Giants

favorite comedian or comic actor

Charlie Chaplin

person I admire

Martin Luther King Jr., Barack Obama, Albert Einstein, Nelson Mandela, King David

pastime

golf, archival research in art and design

favorite museum, outdoor space

Whitney; Highline

volunteer work

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

why I sing

Singing is instant happiness. It gives me hope and courage and connects me to the musical world.

.....

STEVE RIDLEY

secretary

member since 2017

bass

education

Computer Processing Institute

profession

desktop technician

favorite composer

Beethoven

favorite musical

The Fantasticks

favorite performer/group

Stevie Wonder, Prince, George Benson, The Manhattan Transfer, Patti Austin, Diane Schuur, Ann Hampton Callaway; Earth, Wind & Fire

performance attended recently

Ann Hampton Callaway

favorite author

James Baldwin

last book read

A Promised Land by Barack Obama

regular viewing, listening

Eyewitness News; Urban View (SiriusXM)

favorite visual artist

Basquiat

favorite movie

American Pop

favorite TV show

The Flintstones

best pizza

Famous Famiglia 96th (Upper West Side)

favorite team

Giants

favorite comedian or comic actor

Richard Pryor

person I admire

Bill Russell

pastime

writing music

favorite museum

AMNH

why I sing

It's in my blood!

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BEN RINZLER

treasurer

member since 2009

bass

education

University of California (Berkeley)

profession

software analyst, program management

favorite composer

Bach, Handel, Haydn, Vivaldi

favorite opera, musical

The Magic Flute, West Side Story, Jesus Christ Superstar

favorite performer/group

Beatles, Zombies, The Who, George Jones, Louis Jordan, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, James Taylor, Carole King, Radiohead

performances attended recently

Resurrection Symphony (Mahler), American Utopia (David Byrne)

favorite author

George Eliot, J. R. R. Tolkien

last book read

A Time of Gifts: On Foot to Constantinople: from the Hook of Holland to the Middle Danube by Patrick Leigh Fermor

regular listening

WNYC, *In Our Time* (BBC Radio 4)

favorite visual artist

my brothers Peter and Jonathan; Michelangelo, Rembrandt

favorite movie

Lord of the Rings

favorite TV show

Only Murders in the Building

favorite comedian or comic actor

Monty Python, Marx Brothers, Larry David

person I admire

my wife; Beyoncé

pastime

skiing, outdoor activities

favorite museum

Frick

volunteer work

co-op board president; backup cook, St. Michael's Saturday Kitchen

why I sing

Making music together, and especially singing, always lifts the spirit and evokes the sublime.

.....
GARY SAMUELS

vice president
(former secretary), member since 2018
baritone

education

Middlebury College, Columbia University Graduate
School of Journalism

profession

senior vice president, chief communications officer
(clinical laboratory)

favorite composer

Rachmaninoff

favorite opera, musical

Turandot, Sweeney Todd

favorite performer/group

Bill Evans; Earth, Wind & Fire

performance attended recently, music purchased

Ron Carter Trio (live); *Toshiko Akiyoshi-Lew Tabackin Big Band*
(Novus Series '70)

favorite author

Tom Wolfe

last book read

Chapman Piloting & Seamanship (69th edition)

regular reading, listening

New York Times, Wall Street Journal, WKCR

favorite visual artist

Pissarro

favorite movie

Dr. Strangelove

favorite TV show

The West Wing

best pizza

Roberta's (Bushwick)

favorite team

Mets

favorite comedian or comic actor

Larry David

person I admire

Winston Churchill

pastime

listening to music, going to concerts, skiing, bicycling, boating, kayaking

favorite museum, outdoor space

Met; Central Park, Highline

volunteer work

food pantry, Newark; homeless shelter (Breaking Ground)

why I sing

I love harmonizing and blending with other voices. There's something about singing in an ensemble that's just great for my soul.

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MIKE SEIDITA

member since 2021

second tenor

education

Long Island University (Brooklyn campus)

profession

collections, U.S. Treasury Department (retired)

favorite composer

Verdi

favorite opera, musical

Aida, Jersey Boys

favorite group

Duprees

last book read

The Orphan Master by Jean Zimmerman

regular reading, viewing, listening

New York Post, Kings Courier, PBS, 1950s-60s music stations

favorite visual artist

Van Gogh

favorite movie

Casablanca

favorite TV show

Law and Order (original series)

best pizza

Famous Joe's and Bleecker Street Pizza (West Village)

favorite team

Mets

favorite comedian or comic actor

George Carlin

person I admire

Abraham Lincoln

pastime

going to dinner and a movie with my family

favorite museum, outdoor space

New York Transit Museum; Central Park, Prospect Park, Roosevelt Island

volunteer work

tour guide, Big Apple Greeters; tour assistant, Ellis Island

why I sing

I love it. I was in a folk group and glee club in high school and college. I'm especially fond of the American Songbook.



CLELL TICKLE

member since 2017

first tenor

education

Midwestern State University

profession

commercial real estate broker, actor

favorite composer

John Williams, Beethoven

favorite opera, musical

Don Giovanni, Tommy, Fiddler on the Roof, Little Shop of Horrors, The Rocky Horror Picture Show

favorite performer/group

Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Beatles, Rush, Blue Öyster Cult, Spyro Gyra, Weather Report, Miles Davis

performance attended recently, music purchased

Paul McCartney, Primus (live); *Yesterday and Today* (Beatles) with original "butcher" album cover

favorite author

God, Stephen King

last book read

No One Here Gets Out Alive by Jerry Hopkins and Danny Sugarman

regular reading, viewing, listening

my Facebook feed, Google News,
New Yorker, BBC, late-night shows (including Bill Maher, Stephen
Colbert, Jimmy Fallon); Spotify

favorite visual artist

Close, Degas, Warhol, Mucha, da Vinci

favorite movie

Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory,
The Blues Brothers, *The Godfather Part II*

favorite TV show

Twin Peaks, *The Sopranos*, *Sex and the City*

best pizza

Vesuvio (Bay Ridge), Lombardi's (Soho)

favorite team

Mets, Texas Rangers, Knicks, Nets, Mavs, Giants, Cowboys,
New York Rangers

favorite comedian or comic actor

Robin Williams

person I admire

John F. Kennedy

pastime

playing electric bass and upright string bass, acting, photography,
collecting vinyl records

favorite museum, outdoor space

MoMA, Met, AMNH, Whitney; Central Park

volunteer work

served holiday meals at Tompkins Square Park

why I sing

It's amazingly fun to harmonize.

.....

GENE WISOFF

conductor (since 1995)

education

Brooklyn College, Baruch College

profession

conductor, singer, vocal coach, high school math teacher, IT professional, performing arts manager

favorite classical composer

Brahms, Mozart, Verdi

favorite opera, musical

La Bohème, The Magic Flute, Les Misérables, West Side Story, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers

favorite performer/group

Beatles, Karen Carpenter, Luciano Pavarotti, Kelly Clarkson, Whitney Houston, Lady Gaga, Alexandra Beliakovich

performances attended recently

Inspire (chamber chorus); Metropolitan Opera (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*)

favorite author

John Steinbeck, John Barth, Charles Dickens

last book read

Betrayal: The Final Act of the Trump Show by Jonathan Karl

regular viewing, listening

TCM, CNN, MSNBC, PBS, WQXR

favorite visual artist

Renoir, Monet, Rodin

favorite movie

The Godfather (I, II), My Cousin Vinny, The Shawshank Redemption, Amadeus, Dirty Dancing

favorite TV show

Breaking Bad, Fawlty Towers, The Odd Couple, Blue Bloods, Monk

best pizza, sushi

Freddie & Pepper's, Miyako (Upper West Side)

favorite team, spectator sport

Mets, Yankees, tennis

favorite comedian or comic actor

Kevin Kline, Stephen Colbert, Lewis Black, Rodney Dangerfield

person I admire

Benjamin Franklin, Sonia Sotomayor, Frederick Douglass, Fred Rodgers, Volodymyr Zelenskyy

pastime

watching movies, cooking

favorite museum, outdoor space

Frick, West Side Community Garden (W. 89th Street)

volunteer work

co-op board member

why I conduct

I delight in the synergy I share with the singers and in the emotions expressed in the melody, harmony, and lyrics. I love the sound of a chorus. Conducting makes me feel alive.