

**Heather J. Buchanan**

***conductor***

Australian-born conductor **Heather J. Buchanan**, PhD, is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Montclair State University where she conducts choirs ranging in size from 24 to 150 voices. Choirs under her direction have earned critical acclaim for their “heartfelt conviction,” “vibrant sound,” “grace and precision,” being a “marvel of diction, tuning and rhythm, “eloquence,” “impeccable dynamics and diction,” “new-minted enthusiasm and vibrancy,” and for singing with the “crispness and dexterity of a professional choir.”

During her tenure, Montclair choirs have collaborated with a variety of renowned national and international performing artists including Richard Alston Dance Company (UK), Meredith Monk, Eric Whitacre, Jake Runestad, Dr. Anton Armstrong, VOCES8, Rhiannon Giddens, and members of the Vienna Philharmonic strings. She has prepared choirs for conductors such as Neeme Järvi, Xian Zhang, Jacques Lacombe, George Manahan, Nicholas McGegan, and Jeanette Sorrell. As principal choral collaborator with the New Jersey Symphony for 20+ years, her choirs regularly perform masterworks at the professional level, including Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*, Mozart’s *Requiem*, Verdi’s *Messa da Requiem*, Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, Fauré’s *Requiem*, Mahler’s *Symphony No. 3*, Holst’s *The Planets*, Mendelssohn’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, with Handel’s *Messiah* annually since December 2014. The Chorale (symphonic choir) has also sung on two limited edition NJS recordings under the baton of Jacques Lacombe: *Carmina Burana* (2008) & *Verdi Requiem* (2014), and in January 2019 they were invited to perform Beethoven *Symphony No. 9* at Carnegie Hall for the humanitarian aid concert *Beethoven for the Rohingya* presented by Music4Life International. The University Singers (flagship elective choir) sang on the Grammy-nominated commercially produced recording *Songs of Ascension* with Meredith Monk, and in March 2020 released their first solo CD recording *I Sing Because...* The world premiere of their Jake Runestad Commission will be April 20, 2027 in Prudential Hall, NJPAC.

Dr. Buchanan’s guest conducting and residency engagements are wide-ranging and include all-state and honor choirs in the USA and international festival venues. She holds degrees from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University (Australia), Westminster Choir College of Rider University, and the University of New England (Australia). A Licensed Body Mapping Educator since 2002, Dr. Buchanan specializes in this neuro-anatomical educational technique that trains musicians to attain freedom of expression through effective movement. With a reputation as a vibrant teacher, dynamic performer, and passionate musicians’ health advocate, Dr. Buchanan is in demand as a guest conductor, somatic educator, and choral clinician in the US and abroad.