



Virginia Harmony

President’s Message:

Lifting Every Voice — Amy Moir



The theme for the Southern Region Conference is *Lift Every Voice!* As your VA-ACDA President, I’ve had a unique perspective as I’ve watched the conference planning process. At every turn, it is clear to me that our regional leadership has a sincere mission to represent as many voices as possible in a genuine celebration of the art of choral music.

This year’s conference will have a special focus on choirs that impact our community in unique and philanthropic ways. Each state will have a display board dedicated to an ensemble from their state that does special work for their community or a specific population. The Virginia display board will feature the Sentimental Journey Singers, the newest program of Encore Creativity for Older Adults. The group, conducted by Dr. Mary Ann East, is designed for singers diagnosed with early to moderate memory impairment and their care partners. The choir debuted this past December 2019 and had a feature article in *The Washington Post*. You can find a link to the article [HERE](#).

While attending the national ACDA conference in Kansas City last March, one of the sessions I attended was a presentation of the Dallas Street Choir, an ensemble whose mission is to “offer a musical outlet for those experiencing homelessness and disadvantage.” The session was touching and eye opening regarding the impact we can have as choral musicians in our local community. The power of music was clearly a healing experience that provided dignity and comfort to many individuals. In a profession where we often focus on perfect notes and rhythms, I found myself humbled by music that contained so much passion and humanity.

As we look at the broad range of Virginia choirs, I imagine there are many more choirs around the state that serve a unique purpose for their community’s needs. In the next newsletter, I would like for us to showcase some of our unique choirs in the state that serve a specific population, or work for philanthropic purpose. Please, take a moment to fill in [THIS](#) short form if that describes an ensemble you lead.

I look forward to hearing the great and unique ways Virginia is spreading kindness and joy through music.



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Virginia ACDA 2019-2020 Calendar

July 31, 2019	Leadership Team meeting
August 1-3, 2019	Voices United Conference, State Luncheon Meeting Honors Choirs: Children's, Intergenerational, Conductor's
All Year	<i>Sing for Virginia</i> composer advocacy initiative: #sing4va
September 1, 2019	Newsletter #1: Voices United Wrap-up, Leadership Team highlights, membership drive information
Sept. 15 - Nov. 15, 2019	ACDA SING UP membership drive
November 1, 2019	Newsletter #2: articles from membership, All Virginia Middle School Information, SING UP membership drive updates
November 10, 2019	Executive Board meeting (7:30PM Conference Call)
November 20-21, 2019	VMEA Conference: VA-ACDA state reception and meeting
January 2020	Recruitment for R&R chair position openings
January 2020 (TBD)	Full Leadership Team meeting
February 1, 2020	Newsletter #3: Voices United Conference information, All Virginia Chorus information, membership articles
March 2020 (TBD)	Executive Board meeting
March 11-14, 2020	Southern Region Conference, Mobile, AL
April 23-25, 2020	All Virginia Honor Choirs, free professional development workshops, state breakfast/lunch/dinner TBD
May 15, 2020	Newsletter #4: All Virginia Middle School highlights, Voices United Conference information, state leadership information

Voices United planning committee meetings: September, October, November, January, March, & May



LIFT EVERY VOICE

MOBILE, AL | MARCH 11-14, 2020
AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION
SOUTHERN REGION CONFERENCE

Register here: <http://acdasonthern.org>



From your Vice President and Voices United Conference Chair: Pamela McDermott

22nd Annual Voices United Summer Collaborative ACDA Conference with Headliners Michael John Trotta, Ysaye Barnwell, and Janet Hostetter

The Voices United Planning Committee is excited to share news of our upcoming summer conference, August 6-8, 2020 at George Mason University!

Michael John Trotta, composer and conductor, will headline the Conference track. He brings experience as an educator at elementary, middle, and high school as well as university levels and church choir conducting. Now composing full time, he writes music for all ages.

In addition to his full conference interest and reading sessions, Mr. Trotta will lead a Seminar track entitled “Developing Choral Artistry” for a limited number of participants. A small group of applicants will be selected to work one-on-one in developing skills and techniques for building artistry in your ensemble. All conference participants are invited to observe the seminar sessions, and all are welcome to sing under his baton in the Conductors Chorus.

Learn more about Mr. Trotta at www.mjtrotta.com.

Ysaye Barnwell, singer and composer, will lead the Voices United Chorus, open to singers ages 15-95 (and younger changed male voices). Dr. Barnwell spent 34 years with Sweet Honey In The Rock, as a singer and instrumentalist. She facilitated the group’s tradition of including a Sign Language Interpreter in the ensemble. For the past thirty years, Dr. Barnwell has been leading clinics on Singing in the African American Tradition.

Her conference interest sessions will focus on “Spirituals as Documentation, Facilitation, and Transformation of Enslaved Africans in America,” and will include singing in the tradition. She will lead the Voices United Chorus in a completely oral-tradition program, building music without scores in hands.

Learn more about Dr. Barnwell at www.ymbarnwell.com.

Janet Hostetter, Artistic and Executive Director of the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir, will lead the Children’s Honor Chorus. Singers ages 9-15 (unchanged voices) are eligible to apply for a spot in this ensemble. Dr. Hostetter has recently examined pedagogical practices of children’s choirs in Australia, the Czech Republic, Canada, and the Philippines. In 2017, she took members of her choir to Cusco, Peru, and in 2018 her singers performed in Louisville at the ACDA Southern Region Conference.

Dr. Hostetter’s interest sessions will focus on effectiveness in the choral rehearsal and on developing healthy vocal technique. Her rehearsals with the Children’s Honor Chorus are open for all to observe.

Learn more about Dr. Hostetter and the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir at www.svcc.org.

See our conference web site at www.acdavoicesunited.org to learn more about sending singers, and join us at Voices United to experience music through the perspectives of our headliners. You’ll be glad you did!

Join us in 2020!



Voices United
American Choral Directors Association

**The annual collaborative summer conference
presented by the Delaware, Maryland/DC,
and Virginia chapters of ACDA**

Sponsored by The Musical Source



Michael John Trotta
Seminar Track
Conductor's Chorus



Ysaye Barnwell
Voices United Honor Chorus
(ages 15-adult)



Janet Hostetter
Children's Honor Chorus
(age 9-15)

Save The Date! Invite a Friend! Sponsor Singers!
Join us as we celebrate 22 years of Voices United!

August 6-8, 2020
George Mason University • Fairfax, Virginia
www.acdavoicesunited.org

REBECCA TYREE "BRING A FRIEND" MEMORIAL FUND



Becky Tyree, past VA-ACDA President and Voices United Chair passed away unexpectedly on May 24, 2018. Becky had a huge heart and positive spirit. She was a constant presence at Voices United, Southern Region, and National ACDA conferences as a presenter and participant. She led an active student chapter at VCU and worked to bring young educators into ACDA.

Becky regularly reached out to friends to share rooms and meals at conferences. The Rebecca Tyree "Bring a Friend" Memorial Fund has been established to continue Becky's work and inspiration among us. Members and friends are encouraged to make donations to honor Becky, or to remember/honor others who have guided and inspired.

Recipients of this award will be nominated by a current member of ACDA. Scholarship winners will receive conference registration fees and hotel expenses for two nights. If the recipient has not already joined ACDA, they will also receive a complimentary membership from their home state during the National ACDA fall membership drive. Awards will be announced before the Early Bird registration deadline for Voices United.

Donations may be made through the Voices United website, www.acdavoicesunited.org, or by visiting the Virginia ACDA page (www.vaacda.org) or the Delaware ACDA page (www.deacda.org). Or, contact Voices United conference chair, Pam McDermott at pmcdermott@vaacda.org for information on how to mail a check.

A list of those honored through a donation to the Rebecca Tyree "Bring a Friend" Memorial Fund will be printed in Voices United Conference Brochure and Concert Program each year. Thank you for helping us continue Becky's legacy and for supporting choral excellence through Voices United!



www.acdavoicesunited.org

Tentative Voices United 2020 Schedule

Thursday, August 6

9:00-5:00	On-Site Store by The Musical Source, open for browsing and buying!
9:00-12:30	Michael John Trotta, Developing Choral Artistry Seminar Track
9:00	Interest Session 1, TBD
10:15	Janet Hostetter Interest Session
11:30	Reading Session: Accessible Music for Single Gender and SA(T)B Ensembles
12:30	Lunch
1:30	Janet Hostetter Interest Session
2:45	Michael John Trotta Reading Session
4:00	Ysaye Barnwell Interest Session
5:00	State of ACDA and Conference Sing: ACDA updates from VA, MD/DC, and DE chapter presidents
5:30	Networking Event
7:00	Conductors Chorus and Honor Choruses rehearsals open

Friday, August 7

	Honor Chorus rehearsals continue
9:00-5:00	On-Site Store by The Musical Source, open for browsing and buying!
9:00	Reading Session: Music in Worship
10:15	Interest Session 2, TBD
11:30	Ysaye Barnwell Interest Session
12:30	Pick up Lunch
1:00	Membership Lunch Meetings by State: VA, MD/DC, DE
2:15	Michael John Trotta Interest Session
3:30	Concurrent Reading Sessions: Advanced Music for Single Gender and SATB Ensembles; Unison and 2-part Music
4:45	Michael John Trotta: Conductors Chorus open rehearsal
6:00	Conference Banquet, Headliner Q&A
8:00	Guest Artist Concert, TBA

Saturday, August 8

	Final Honor Chorus rehearsals
9:00-11:30	On-Site Store by The Musical Source
9:00	President's Choice Reading Session: Vocal Jazz, The Music of Leo Nestor, and Non-Idiomatic Compositions by African-American Composers
10:15	Michael John Trotta Interest Session
11:45	Final Conductors Chorus Rehearsal
12:30	Lunch
1:30-3:00	Voices United Conference Concert: Conductors Chorus, Michael John Trotta Voices United Honor Chorus, Ysaye Barnwell Children's Honor Chorus, Janet Hostetter

Please see www.acdavoicesunited.org for all of the latest information and updates!



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Dear Virginia members,

At the end of the *Sing Up* membership drive Virginia had 513 members, which puts us just a little behind!

We added 42 NEW members including thirty-two (32) new student members, and ten (10) new active members.

A big thank you to all of you who helped us to reach new colleagues, and especially our college chapter sponsors who reached out to so many students to make them new members!

A GATHERING IN MOBILE:

Right now I am working on a get-together for all Virginia members who are traveling to Mobile for the Southern Conference. Please let me know if you would like to attend this event. All Virginia members are welcome, and as an ACDA who started attending conferences as a college student, I really hope our student members will come. Our conference gathering is always "Dutch treat" for your entrée and drinks, but Virginia ACDA will get us started with some appetizers! You may email me at: janemorison1@gmail.com to tell me you would like to be included. **I need to have final numbers by March 3 so I can make a reservation.**

I look forward to seeing you in Mobile, at Voices United, or at any of our upcoming events and concerts!

Jane DeLoach Morison
Membership Chair, VA-ACDA

From your Four Year College R&R Chair: Shane Lynch

Considering Matthew Shepard

“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”—Nelson Mandela, 1995

1998 was a pretty big year in my life. I graduated from college in the spring, got married in the summer, and moved to Colorado with my new wife to begin our lives in the fall. After spending our college years in the Midwest, moving to Colorado was going home for us, as she was from Wyoming and I grew up in Montana. Trips to Wyoming were commonplace. Shortly after beginning our new lives together, we heard of the tragedy unfolding in Laramie with Matthew Shepard. She and I both had friends who were students at UW or just living in the area—we had been in Laramie just a few weeks before—and the degrees of separation for us from everyone involved in both sides of that terrible night were minimal. As it was for many people in the nation watching this terrible story unfold, the impact for us was immediate and colors my views on the world to this day.

2017 was another pretty big year in my life, at least professionally. Many accolades came for my singers and for me personally, including one of my compositions being a featured selection at the National Collegiate Choral Organization Conference in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I went to that conference for my composition, but I was also fell—almost by accident—into seeing the LSU A Cappella Choir perform Craig Hella Johnson’s fusion oratorio *Considering Matthew Shepard*. When the work was finished, there were minutes upon minutes of silence as people took in what they had just witnessed. I sat there next to a friend from my Colorado days I hadn’t seen in years, with 1998 flying back through my mind. We spent the rest of the evening remembering that fall in 1998. I realized that I was so inwardly focused on my professional accomplishments that I had begun to forget what a gift life really was in the first place, and that my teaching and striving for musical excellence had led me to some real blind spots in my work with my students. *Ordinary Boy* was the movement that hit the hardest . . . just an ordinary life, so worth living. Something taken from Matt for no reason other than he was different. In many ways, the reality of Matthew’s story affected me that night as I realized if he had lived, he might have been just another old man in a room full of them, sitting at a conference. However, he didn’t live, all because he was “other” . . . all because of hate. It does not matter what our differences are—none of them warrant the hate he faced that night now long ago.

And I began the process of working to undertake our own presentation of the work in as many places as I could get to work, complete with grants, travel, and hate crime outreach with the Matthew Shepard Foundation. As the Collegiate R&R chair for Virginia, I encourage all of my colleagues to think about doing something similar, with this work or with one of the other amazing pieces of contemplative art being composed today (and I am happy to help connect you with potential resources necessary to make it happen). Use this art to reach the soul, a part of education that can get lost as we try to cover so many bases each day. At the collegiate level, the mental health and well-being of our students is a huge topic of concern. Finding ways to contemplate our world—and providing outlets for consideration and conversation about the difficulty in our world—is so vital in our education of the student. I have told my own students participating in this project that, if nothing else, try to leave from our performances ready to love and to work vigorously against hate. Hate is learned; it can be unlearned as well. Our role with our choirs can be such a loud voice: for our students and for the audiences who will witness such things. Only then can we all live our ordinary lives so worth living, the basic gift Matt was robbed of so many years ago.



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MOBILE, AL | MARCH 11-14, 2020

AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION
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EDITORIAL CORRECTION

The two-part article series in the September & November 2019 editions entitled...

“THE JAW and Other Terrifying Tales from Female Vocal Development: Practical Applications for the Choral Rehearsal”

...was co-authored by Leslie Dripps, VA-ACDA’s Children’s and Community Youth R&R Chair and her colleague Margaret Woods, adjunct music faculty at the University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University. Both Leslie and Margaret work with the City Singers Youth Choirs program in Richmond, VA.

From your Middle School Honor Choir Chair:

Annabelle Luebke Mills

ALL-VIRGINIA MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE!!!

Virginia ACDA will be returning to Richmond, VA from April 23-25, 2020 for the All-Virginia Middle School Honor Choir. First Baptist Church in Richmond will once again host this event for high-achieving middle school singers. This year’s conductors are Dr. Derrick Fox for the Mixed Choir and Christopher Fox for the Treble Choir. If you have students attending the event, be on the lookout for an email containing more information about signing up to help out. Any amount of time that you can volunteer during the event would be incredibly helpful! All are invited to the final concert, which will be held at 1:30 pm on Saturday, April 25th at First Baptist Church (2709 Monument Avenue). For more information, email annabelle.mills@lcps.org. We look forward to seeing many of you in Richmond!

A note from *Virginia Harmony* editor, Matthew Russell:

Dear choral colleagues,

"We are more alike than we are unlike." And, "it's our stories that ultimately save us." Please consider writing an article related to a story about repertoire, resources, models of practice, or ideas that have worked for you and for your choral communities. ALL VA-ACDA members are invited to write and to share with our membership so that we can connect, encourage both community & diversity, and build a stronger *Virginia Harmony*, together. The May newsletter deadline is Friday, May 1, 2020 by COB. Please email articles to me, Matthew Russell, at (mnr10707@gmail.com) copying the rest of the *Virginia Harmony* Editorial Team: Brandy Baxter (brandy.buckles@gmail.com), Amy Moir (alsmoir@gmail.com), Bonny Tynch (bonny.tynch@gmail.com), and Pamela McDermott (pmcdermott@vaacda.org).

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!!!

As you consider writing your article for the *Virginia Harmony* Newsletter, just a few pre-editing suggestions...

1. Please keep your articles to between 500 and 700 words. Remember less is always more; "simple and direct" and the people will read.
2. Please send the text of your article via a Word.doc. We can work with a PDF file, but a Word.doc makes things so much easier to edit and format.
3. Please make sure that any images you wish to include with your article are in JPG or PNG format.
4. Most articles for publication are solicited by the *Virginia Harmony* editorial board. **However, ALL Virginia ACDA members are most welcome to submit items of interest.** The President, President-Elect, Vice President, Communications Director, and Newsletter Editor will review all submissions prior to acceptance for publication.



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