



**HICKORY
CHORAL
SOCIETY**

NOTEWORTHY

**Opus 46, No. 4
August 2024**

**Inspiring, Educating,
and Connecting**

THROUGH SONG

This digital newsletter is best viewed on a desktop device.

CELEBRATING A MUSICAL LEGACY

The Hickory Choral Society's October 20 Fall Concert with guest conductor Dr. André Thomas (see last page) will provide an opportunity to live out all three dimensions of the mission above and do so in exciting and unprecedented ways! The performance will surely be transformative, as the audience will experience HCS singers and an orchestra performing music composed and conducted by one of the most celebrated choral musicians of our time, André Thomas. The centerpiece of the concert will be a performance of Thomas's multi-movement work, Mass: A Celebration of Love and Joy. Dr. Jason Dungee, Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Choral activities at UNC-Charlotte, will serve as the tenor soloist. He performed on the London (U.K.) Symphony's premiere of the work under Thomas's direction in 2022. Lenoir-Rhyne University graduate and Hickory's own LaKeisha Ross-Johnson will serve as the soprano soloist. Inspired by the traditional Latin texts of the Roman Mass, the music is in the gospel style and accompanied by a full orchestra. The first half of the program will include shorter selections by Thomas, including his beloved arrangement of the African American Spiritual "Keep Your Lamps", a staple of the choral repertoire found in libraries across the country.

HCS support of music education will also be a visible element of the fall concert. A select choir of 40 singers from 10 area high schools, the Lenoir-Rhyne Youth Chorus, and singers from Lenoir-Rhyne University, Caldwell Community College and TI, and



Catawba Valley Community College will all participate. Through his work as a festival conductor around the country and world, André Thomas has inspired thousands of young singers to love the choral art, and we are fortunate that this performance will provide area students with a choral experience they will remember for the rest of their lives.

Finally, we again find ourselves in another highly divisive and polarized election season. The fall concert will seek to challenge barriers to social harmony, including age, political differences, campus/town and rural/urban divisions, race, ethnicity, status, gender, and more, as hundreds of people join together for the common goal of making transformative music performance as a single ensemble. The power of music will be on full display as the Hickory Choral Society and a large cross section of the region's choral community performs under the baton of guest conductor André Thomas. An effort of this magnitude that helps us live out our mission in such a meaningful way would not be possible without your support. Thank you! We hope to see you in Lenoir-Rhyne's P.E. Monroe Auditorium on October 20!

Ryan Luhrs
Artistic Director and Conductor

Fall Concert

FEATURING GUEST CONDUCTOR

ANDRÉ THOMAS

Saturday, October 20

3:00 pm

PE Monroe Auditorium
Lenoir-Rhyne University

Hickory Choral Society is a funded affiliate of
Arts Culture Catawba.

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE, PLEASE!

The 4th annual HCS Golf Classic on Monday, May 6, was an opportunity for the Hickory Choral Society to join our wonderful friends and supporters for a great day of golf along with plenty of laughs, refreshments, and prizes. The Choral Society has been described as a gift to the community that enriches lives through music – but the support of the greater Hickory area community is truly a gift to us. Everyone that shared this day with us by playing golf, providing generous sponsorships and prizes, volunteering their time to work the event, or grooming the golf course and preparing the golf carts, was part of ensuring a successful fundraising event.

And now, the moment you have all been waiting for – drum roll, please... **the 2024 HCS Golf Classic raised \$16,500!**

These funds directly support our vision of Inspiring, Educating, and Connecting Through Song, so thank you to ALL who helped make that happen!



The HCS Golf Classic has been blessed with a dedicated group of individuals and businesses each year that sponsor holes, teams, lunch, and various contests, as well as provide the refreshments and pizza throughout the day and for our Awards Reception. The Choral Society has been especially fortunate that Modern Nissan has sponsored a Hole-in-One competition every year since we began this tournament in 2021, while a variety of donors have provided World Class putters and drivers, gift certificates, and other great prizes to raffle. We also want to thank the Catawba Country Club for being such great partners with us on this event. We could not do it without each one of you! Please join us in thanking all of our sponsors whenever you see them or visit these businesses –



Our HCS Golf Classic would also not be a success without a ton of support on the day of the event. Our HCS singers volunteer enthusiastically each year and enjoy being together for the day. Artistic Director/Conductor Dr. Ryan Luhrs and Associate Conductor Renee Shatley were both there as well, to enjoy the day and share their love for our community.

Volunteers:

Connie Burleson
 Craig Cansler
 Eddie Compton
 Linda DiCianni
 Gary Eisenbaum
 Susan Goldstein
 Anne Gonzalez
 Cathi Hall
 Stanley Hall
 Tony Ikard
 Kellie Light
 Marty Light
 Ashlyn Lloyd

Mark McGinnis
 Alexandra McNeely
 Sharon Milligan
 Beth Palermo
 Tim Penn
 Joyce Powell
 Amy Rudd
 Lori Sadowski
 Carl Sauer
 Renee Shatley
 Gail Summer
 Shirley Thomason
 Nancy Toy
 Karen Whitworth
 Tabitha West



Congratulations to all our 2024 HCS Golf Classic Winners:



FIRST PLACE: Caring Cremations
*Ben Jenkins, Marcus Houston, Nathan Thornton,
Brenton Johnson*



SECOND PLACE: Vanguard Furniture
*Jeff Williams, Jason Hawkes, Mitch Hawkes,
Randy Billings*



THIRD PLACE: Hickory Funeral Home
*Ronald Swift, Gerald Killian, Todd Setzer, Ben
Woodruff*

CLOSEST TO THE PIN:

Men - Hole #3 & #17 – Tom Schultz
Women - Hole #7 – Jennifer Foulides



Longest Drive Women (#10): Jennifer Foulides

Longest Drive Men (#18): Nathan Thornton

Putting Contest: Dane Whitworth

50/50 Raffle: Blake Mora (pic 2466)

Scratch-off Board Raffle: Hickory Funeral Home
Team

Driver Raffle: Travis Wireman (pic 2481)



Sharon Milligan
Singer, Interim Managing Director

KEEPING THE MINUTES

Introducing our **SECRETARY**

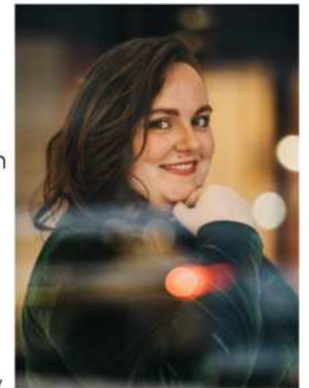
Alexandria McNeely is a North Carolina born and bred girl whose family gave her opportunities to explore music, theater and dance at an early age. She began singing as soon as she learned to talk! As a child, one of her favorite pastimes was to make up performances for her family and whoever else could be her audience. Her first solo was in church at the young age of six and she has continued to sing in a choir ever since. She started performing in musical theatre at age 11 and began serious vocal study, classically, at 17.

Allie's gift of voice led her to study Vocal Performance and Sacred Music at Lenoir-Rhyne University. Upon graduation from LRU, she entered Eastman School of Music and received a Master's degree in Vocal Performance.

During her years at LRU she attended many Hickory Choral Society concerts and realized that she wanted to be a part of HCS. She was impressed with HCS's passionate approach to excellent choral performance and also the group's music education outreach in the community. When she made the decision to audition for HCS, she convinced her mom to join her!

Music education is paramount for Allie. She desires to educate and inform those who may not have access to quality choral experiences and vocal performances. She especially sees the need to introduce and promote classical vocal music to those for whom the genre may be foreign.

Beyond music, Allie loves to travel to discover new things about other cultures and communities. Family is also very important to Allie, and they always find ways to enjoy each other's company. Allie looks forward to serving HCS as a Board member by becoming more informed and involved in any way she can.



Pat Rice
Singer

SPOTLIGHT: 2024 Children's Choral Camp

What do you get when you combine African drumming, abstract painting, an exploration with dinosaurs, singing, choreography, a visit from "Grandma", and snacks? You get a fun week at the Hickory Choral Society's Children's Music Camp. Our annual music camp was a blast and the smiles on the campers' faces were proof.



The week was filled with singing each day with Mrs. Sarah Luhrs. Clinicians for the choral camp are selected for their vast experience of teaching music to youngsters and Mrs. Sarah Luhrs definitely surpassed that expectation. For five days, the campers had the incredible opportunity to learn selections of choral music, specifically composed for young voices. Sarah Luhrs holds a B.M. and an M.A.M.E in music education from St. Olaf College and University of St. Thomas, respectively. She taught elementary general music for several years in Minnesota and Florida. Since moving to North Carolina, she has worked with local church choirs. This summer, she will graduate this summer with a degree in clinical mental health counseling. In her free time, Sarah loves to read and play card games with her family.

Our camp would not be complete without the assistance of Hickory Choral Society' collaborative pianist, Mary Texler. Mary Texer has been accompanying the Hickory Choral Society since 1984. A native of Grand Rapids, Michigan, she began her career as a pianist at age 6, studying at Interlochen. She received a Bachelor's Degree in English and Music from Albion College. She has taught privately and in the public school system as well as college level classes in theory and advanced piano. Mary started a piano program at St. Stephens Lutheran School, has accompanied the Catawba County Choristers, many choirs, recitalists and community theatre musicals. She is a member of the Hickory Rotary Club and a member of the Hickory Music Club. Mary continues to share her piano skills each year during the camp. She takes sincere interest in the campers' daily progress as she works closely with the clinician. Mary is a true gem for the HCS Children's Choral Camp.

The week not only included singing, but additional fun activities. Upon arrival each day, as campers were greeted by our HCS group leaders, many campers eagerly asked, "What is our activity today?" On day one, Rick Cline brought a djembe drum for each student and they experienced an African drumming circle. Throughout the rest of the week, campers had a great time visiting the Science Center Planetarium, creating an art project, and visiting a the Hickory Museum of Art.



Finally, the highlight of the week was the culmination of the final concert. The excitement in the room was so apparent. The concert included a total of five (5) songs the campers learned and memorized that week. Imagine the happiness our campers experienced as the audience gave a standing ovation at the end of the concert. As everyone moved to the reception, the room was buzzing with amazing energy and excitement. Fun was had by all. Pure joy!!!!

The HCS Children's Choral Camp will take place again June, 2025 for rising 4th - 6th grade children. The camp day is 8:45 am - noon daily. If you are the parent or grandparent of a child in the 4th, 5th, or 6th grade, please allow your youngster to experience this great week of music making. Nothing is more amazing than listening to the pure sound of children singing. Every child needs to experience the benefits of participation in music. Stay tuned for announcements about registration coming the spring of 2025! Don't miss the fun!

Renee Shatley
Associate Conductor

WE HAD THE TIME OF OUR LIVES

This past May, we had a blast singing with you Under the Sails in Hickory! Thank you to our Underwriter for this concert - The City of Hickory, and as always - Arts Culture Catawba (formerly the United Arts Council of Catawba County) for their continued support.

Check out a few of our highlights below:



DID YOU KNOW?

Those who contribute by **donating** to the Hickory Choral Society are eligible to receive **membership benefits**? Starting at \$65, our membership levels provide perks that include reserved and preferred seating, reserved parking, member-only events, and more.

The 2024 - 2025 Season Membership Drive will begin on October 1, 2024.

COMING SOON:

**CAPTIVATING
STORIES,
INSPIRING
MUSIC**

**OUR 47TH
SEASON**

of Inspiring, Educating, and
Connecting Through Song

1978-2025

About our Guest Conductor:

ANDRÉ THOMAS

Fall HCS concert guest conductor is a Professor Emeritus of Music at Florida State University. He was visiting Professor of Choral Conducting at Yale University from 2020-2022. He also served as a faculty member at the University of Texas, Austin. He is presently an Associate Artist with the London Symphony Orchestra.

Dr. Thomas received his degrees from Friends University (B.A.), Northwestern University (M. M.), and The University of Illinois (D.M.A). He is in demand as a choral adjudicator, clinician, and director of Honor/All-State Choirs throughout North America, Europe, Asia, New Zealand, Australia, and Africa. Dr. Thomas has conducted choirs at the state, division, and national conventions of the Music Educators National Conference (NAFME) and the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA).

His international conducting credits are extensive. He has led numerous prestigious orchestras and choirs around the world, including the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in England, the Berlin Radio Choir and the North German Radio Choir in Germany, the Netherlands Radio Choir, the Bulgarian Radio Choir & Orchestra, the Seoul Metropolitan Chorus, Ansan City Choir, Jeju

Provincial Seogwipo Chorale in South Korea, the Charlotte Symphony, China's People's Liberation Orchestra, the Czech National Symphony Orchestra, and the London Symphony Orchestra.



Thomas is a distinguished composer/arranger with Hinshaw Music Company, Mark Foster Music Company, Fitzsimons Music Company, Lawson Gould, Earthsongs, Choristers Guild, and Heritage Music Company.


Various musical organizations have recognized Thomas with the Living Legend Award, the Distinguished Service Award, the Robert Shaw Award, the NCCO (National Collegiate Choral Organization) Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Southern Region of ACDA Award of Excellence. In January 2019, he was inducted into the Florida Music Educator's Hall of Fame, and in 2022 he was presented the Samuel Simons Sanford Medal, the most prestigious honor conferred by the Yale School of Music.

We are excited and grateful to welcome him to Hickory this October for our Fall Concert, and we hope that you will join us for this incredible afternoon of music. For more details, visit hickorychoralsociety.org/events




LET'S STAY CONNECTED!

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 hickorychoralsociety.org

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Ryan Luhrs Artistic Director & Conductor	Mary Texer Accompanist	Sharon Milligan Interim Managing Director
Renee Shatley Associate Conductor		



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