



**HICKORY
CHORAL
SOCIETY**

NOTEWORTHY

**Opus 46, No. 1
November 2023**

**Inspiring, Educating,
and Connecting
THROUGH SONG**

This digital newsletter is best
viewed on a desktop device.

MOMENTS OF AWE IN A SEASON OF JOY

I first encountered Morten Lauridsen's "O Magnum Mysterium" as a baritone in my college choir, and the experience was unlike any other I'd had as a chorister. From the opening chord, I found that the music so beautifully captured the awe and mystery of the Christmas story. Twenty years later, I can't wait to perform the choral standard again, this time with the Hickory Choral Society in its upcoming concert titled "Moments of Awe in a Season of Joy." But "O Magnum Mysterium" is only one of multiple selections on the program striving to bring about a sense of awe. The ethereal "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" by Jan Sandström and atmospheric "Angel Song II" by Will Todd can transport listeners to another world.

The majestic "Angels We Have Heard on High" arranged by Mack Wilberg and Lara Hoggard's "Personent Hodie" are awe-inspiring in their own right, relying on full-throated singing led by brass, organ, and percussion. Familiar, joyous music such as "It's the Most Wonderful Time of Year", a rip-roarin' new setting of "Deck the Hall", and the premiere of a thrilling orchestrated version of "Once in Royal David's City/Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" by Charlotte-based composer Philip Biedenbender will heighten the excitement. Amid our celebration, we'll also have moments of musical introspection and acknowledge that parts of the world will likely continue to not be at peace during this season. The selections above and the others on the program will be enhanced by the fantastic orchestra and stunning venue of Corinth Reformed Church. We hope you can join us December 8-10!



Our Christmas concerts serve as our entrance point for an exciting 2023-2024 season entitled Measured In Love. Mark your calendars now for our March 17 Concert “An Irish Afternoon in County Catawba” guest conducted by Waterford, Ireland native Dr. Anne Barry. The outdoor Under the Sails Concert on May 19 will feature “Timeless” music of popular and musical theater genres. We’ll conclude the season on October 20, 2024 with another guest conductor, this time Dr. André Thomas. He will lead HCS and additional choirs from our region in a concert of his own music.

In this season of gratitude, I’m thankful for (and in awe of!) the opportunities we have to bring these transformational performances to our audiences. Thank you for your support, and all the best and love to you and yours this holiday season!

Ryan Luhrs

Artistic Director and Conductor

Christmas Concerts MOMENTS OF AWE IN A SEASON OF JOY

Friday, December 8 • 7:30 pm

Saturday, December 9

3:00 pm & 7:30 pm

Sunday, December 10 • 3:00 pm

Corinth Reformed Church | Hickory, NC

Concert Underwriters:

Lee and Cindy Combs

Elizabeth and Michael Philhower



visit hickorychoralsociety.org for more information and membership details



CELEBRATING OUR FALL CONCERT & RECEPTION

The Hickory Choral Society closed out its 45th season with an awesome concert at PE Monroe Auditorium. We would like to thank our generous underwriters who helped make this concert possible: Corning, Every Age/Abernethy Laurels, and Catawba Valley Health Systems. Under the theme Love and Music Endures, the musical program offered songs honoring love in our human lives. In particular, we performed the North Carolina premier of Robert Cohen's Alzheimer's Stories, featuring fantastic solos from HCS soprano Allie McNeely and guest baritone Edward Bland. Ryan's vision once again took us to new heights with Alzheimer's Stories as Allie and Edward acted their solo parts throughout all three movements, which truly told the stories composer Robert Cohen captured. Allie and Edward worked many additional hours with retired Lenoir-Rhyne University music faculty member Judith Burbank to bring the stories to life for our audience. We hope you became fully immersed in the music, acting, and the screen visuals that HCS alto Becca Easterling designed as we came to better understand Alzheimer's, which is likely to impact many of us. According to the CDC, about 1 in 9 people over the age of 65 have been diagnosed with Alzheimers. In 2020, an estimated 5.8 million Americans aged 65 years or older had Alzheimer's disease. This number is projected to nearly triple to 14 million people by 2060. In 2010, the costs of treating Alzheimer's disease were projected to fall between \$159 and \$215 billion. Alzheimer's Stories was important to share with the unifour area, and we were so fortunate to have Composer Cohen fly in from the northeast to join us for the concert!



Alzheimer's Stories composer, Robert Cohen







Our annual Members Reception followed the concert at Lake Hickory Country Club. We are so grateful to all our contributing members, and this annual event is so important to us to show our appreciation to you for your support. Many of you had the opportunity to meet Robert Cohen at the reception, and he enjoyed connecting with our singers and our contributing members. Thank you to so many of you who greeted him so warmly and made him feel so very welcome.

Gail Summer
President



HOLDING DOWN THE FORT

Introducing our PROPERTIES CHAIR

For the most part, I grew up in Beckley, West Virginia. I started playing classical piano at a very young age and continued through high school. During my high school years I earned a small amount of money playing "dinner music" at a local country club. I was also the accompanist for my junior high school and high school choruses, which, combined with a lack of male voices in the choirs, led me to sing bass on a cappella pieces. I then joined my church choir and sang there through college.

I also played basketball and ran cross-country and track through high school. I attended West Virginia University for college and medical school, where I sang bass during my undergraduate studies. During the 12 years of medical school, internship, residency, and fellowship, I didn't participate in any musical activities. My surgical training involved



periods of time in Chattanooga, New York City, and Baltimore. When I settled into my practice in Hickory, North Carolina in 1992, I attended the Hickory Choral Society concerts and then tried out and joined the following year in 1993.

My wife of 40 years, Diane, and I have 3 children and 5 grandchildren. We enjoy spending time with our family in the Hickory and Raleigh area. My wife and I love the mountains of North Carolina and have a mountain home near Boone, North Carolina. Since I was a kid growing up in West Virginia, I have always enjoyed playing in the woods or "forest bathing" as some call it today. I have accumulated a parcel of over 400 acres of woodland in the hills of Caldwell county and upon retirement 2 years ago, I purchased a mini-excavator that I utilize to create roads and trails and clearings over and around hills and across small streams in the woods.



This is my second "term" in this board position, and I have always enjoyed the camaraderie of working with other people to physically set the stage that helps create the pageantry of our concerts. At the conclusion of unloading the last riser or last timpani at the end of a concert week is a feeling of accomplishment that is somewhat bittersweet as we wish each other Merry Christmas or a "see you next season!"

Mark McGinnis
Properties Chair

COOKIES, CAROLS, AND CHRISTMAS... OH MY!

Our "Cookies and Carols" concert is just around the corner! It's a great way to ring in the holiday with your children.

Children and their families are invited to join the Hickory Choral Society, instrumentalists and special guests - Santa and the Grinch - for a wonderful interactive concert, Saturday, December 2, 2023 at 11:00 AM in Drendel Auditorium at the SALT Block.

Little ones will receive a holiday cookie and the opportunity to sing songs to start the season. The highlight of the concert is The Twelve Days of Christmas. As they enter the auditorium, each child will receive an illustrated fan depicting one of the twelve days. All children are invited to represent their special day and participate in the big sing. After the concert, take a moment to take a photo with our special guests.

It is happy chaos as the children sing up front with Choral Society members! Start a new holiday memory for a young person in your life!

COOKIES & CAROLS

FREE Concert for Children + Families

Saturday, December 2 • 11:00 am

Drendel Auditorium, SALT Block | Hickory, NC

Concert Underwriters:

Dr. Kimberly Jones Pediatric Dentistry and Unifour Pediatrics






LET'S STAY CONNECTED!

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SPOTLIGHT: Singing at Abernethy Laurels & the Walk to End Alzheimer's



In preparation for our Fall concert, we were grateful for the opportunity to spend time with the residents in Memory Care at **Abernethy Laurels**. As we sang timeless classics and familiar hymns together, the words of Robert Cohen's "Alzheimer's Stories," came to life for us - "Keep faith. Love and music are the last things to go. Sing anything!"

Additionally, a group of singers participated in the October 29 "**Walk to End Alzheimer's**" in Hickory, North Carolina, and helped to raise money for disease research, treatment, and prevention.

We are grateful to have been able to support and share hope with those walking through the difficult journey of Alzheimer's.



LIVING LARGE!

Introducing our **MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

Yes, you've heard her beautiful soprano voice, but there's much more to Kate Lawhorn than meets the ear!

Kate came into the world in Valdese, NC, but spent her growing up years in Roanoke, VA where her father was a minister. As ministers do, the family relocated several times and that gave Kate the opportunity to live in five states: North Carolina, Virginia, Alabama, Florida, and Louisiana. So, you can safely say that she is a true southern girl! Kate's younger sister and parents live in the Yorktown, VA area, and her other sister and brother-in-law live in Birmingham, AL. Kate says that her Hickory family is Hickory Choral Society, and we are SO glad to have her in our family!



While many “preacher’s kids” run away from most things “church”, that is not the case with Kate. Upon getting her undergraduate degree in choral music education at the Baptist College of Florida, Kate pursued a career as music educator, worship leader and ministry creative. She is currently a graduate student at Gordon-

Conwell Theological Seminary. Kate’s hope after completing her seminarian degree will be to serve the local church and aid ministry leaders as they seek spiritual formation. She is very aware of the need for church leaders to have a healthy soul. She also wants to continue to serve in the arts.

Kate has been singing “since she could talk” and music has been a constant thread throughout her life. When she moved to the Hickory area in 2018, she began the search for a professional choral group. To HCS’s good fortune, she Googled and found Hickory Choral Society. Her passion for good music and arts education has added a new dimension to HCS—not to mention her lovely soprano voice that has enhanced our concerts.

Kate, along with so many of our other young singers, has brought new life and energy to HCS. We welcome her passion and artistry to the mission and purpose of Hickory Choral Society.



We join her in her desire to see this Hickory Choral Society grow and thrive in the coming years!

Joining Kate as a newly-appointed Member-At-Large to our board is Tony Ikard. Having grown up right here in the Maiden area of North Carolina, Tony is a certified local. His large family, consisting of 8 siblings, held this mantra near and dear to their hearts: "Everybody is somebody, God is all." Tony has a vibrant career as a Chef and Caterer, as well as experience in Country Club Management and Floral Artisanhip. His passion for music began at an early age as he grew up taking piano lessons and singing solos. He later took his musical talents to Mars Hill College and Trinity Episcopal Church in Asheville where he served as a soloist throughout his years in school. After moving back to the foothills, joining the Hickory Choral Society gave Tony the opportunity to sing great music with others.



Beyond his passion for music, Tony began the initiative "Catherine's Table" to share culinary skills to care and bless others, especially the elderly, sick, and shut-in. He is looking forward to serving on the board to focus on the sustainability of our organization and advocate for and serve our singers well.

We hope you will join us in welcoming these two talented and enthusiastic people to our Board of Directors!

Pat Rice & **Becca Easterling**
Singer & Publicity Director

**Meet more of our Board & Staff Members
in our October Newsletter**
hickorychoralsociety.org/category/releases



SAVE THE DATES

SPRING CONCERTS

An Irish Afternoon in County Catawba

March 17, 2024 | 3:00 pm
First Baptist Church, Hickory

Singing Under the Sails: Timeless

May 19, 2024 | 6:00 pm
Downtown Hickory

FALL CONCERT





featuring
**André Thomas, guest
conductor**
October 20, 2024 | 3:00
pm
Location TBD

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.

For seasonal membership information,
visit our website or call our office at
(828) 322-2210

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Contributions to the HCS General Operating Fund

*In Honor of Bobby
Bush's 70th Birthday*
Rusty and Sara Isenhour

*In Memory of
Dr. Fred Gachet*
John Edenwelder and
Nancy Noonan

LEAVE A LEGACY!

Please remember the
Hickory Choral Society with a gift
in your will, trust, retirement
account,
or life insurance policy.
Contact the HCS office for more
information.



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