



**HICKORY  
CHORAL  
SOCIETY**

# NOTEWORTHY

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**Opus 46, No. 2  
March 2024**

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

This digital newsletter is best  
viewed on a desktop device.



# AN IRISH AFTERNOON IN COUNTY CATAWBA

We may not have a massive parade in downtown Hickory or have plans to dye the Catawba River green this coming St. Patrick's Day weekend. Yet, our region will have the opportunity to celebrate Celtic heritage as HCS offers a March 17 all-Irish program for our Spring Concert at First Baptist Church in Hickory. The concert will be guest conducted by Dr. Anne Barry, Director of Choral Activities and Associate Professor of Music at Lake Forest College in Chicago. Hailing originally from Waterford, Ireland, Barry has conducted choirs throughout the United States, Europe, New Zealand, and the United Arab Emirates. Her Irish folksong arrangements have been published by Earthsongs and Cailíno Music Publishers.



*Waterford, Ireland*

The concert will feature traditional Irish tunes such as “Siúil A Rúin”, “Dilín Ó Deamhas”, “I’ll Tell Me Ma”, and “On Raglan Road”. Composers Michael McGlynn, Eoin Conway, Greg Scanlon, Fintan O’Carroll, Su Furlong, Marion Ingoldsby, Ben Hanlon, Eric Sweeney, and Barry will all be represented. The concert’s finale, *Come the Sails*, is a multi-movement work for choir and orchestra that was commissioned to honor Waterford, Ireland’s oldest city, and Barry’s hometown. Founded in 914CE by Vikings, the important port city sits on the confluence of the River Barrow and River Suir just before they spill into the Atlantic Ocean. The texts and music of the work highlight the history of this fascinating city!





In addition to choral music, this concert will also feature a set by Harpa, a Celtic harp ensemble that has performed throughout North Carolina, Norway, Sweden, and Scotland. Former HCS singer Martha Hill performs with this group.



*Dr. Anne Berry*

Want to learn more about Irish heritage? Dr. Barry will lead a session on Irish culture, music, and dance the day prior to the concert, **Saturday, March 16, 3pm in the Don Coleman Rehearsal Hall at the SALT Block.** The event is free and open to the public.

**Ryan Luhrs**  
Artistic Director and  
Conductor

# Spring Concert

## AN IRISH AFTERNOON IN COUNTY CATAWBA

**Sunday, March 17 • 3:00 pm**

First Baptist Church | Hickory, NC

*Concert Underwriters:*

**United Arts Council**  
OF CATAWBA COUNTY

Community Relations Council  
  
EST. 1963  
Diversity. Well Crafted.







# 4TH ANNUAL HCS GOLF CLASSIC

Monday, May 6, 2024

*Calling all golfers far and wide - as well as those that don't golf but like to have fun and support HCS! We will be hosting our 4th Annual Golf Classic on Monday, May 6th at Catawba Country Club in Newton, NC. All tournament proceeds will be used for HCS concerts and educational activities. You can register as an individual player or as a team (4 players). Please see the registration details inside. Even if you don't golf, you can still show your support for HCS with a sponsorship or other donation!*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION &  
TO SIGN UP, VISIT  
[hickorychoralsociety.org/golf](https://hickorychoralsociety.org/golf)**

**LET'S STAY CONNECTED!**

 **Hickory Choral Society**

 **@hickorychoralsociety**

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 **[hickorychoralsociety.org](https://hickorychoralsociety.org)**





# SPOTLIGHT: Celebrating our Christmas Concerts & Christmas Party!

“Moments of Awe In A Season of Joy” was a wonder to behold. From the opening note of, “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming,” to the thunderous applause following “O Come All Ye Faithful,” a good (and awe-filled) time was had by all! We are grateful to our underwriters, supporting members, and audience for another stunning Christmas season at the stunning Corinth Reformed Church in Hickory.







Following our Christmas Concerts, singers gathered to celebrate the joy of the season by playing games, sharing food, decorating cookies, and dancing! We take our music very seriously. Ourselves? Not so much. We loved having a space where long-time and new singers could connect and have fun!





# DISCOVERIES AND THE JOY OF SINGING



Hey everyone! I'm Justin Ward, and I came into HCS last spring (2023), just before the May pops concert. Thankfully, I already knew a lot of people in the choir and had a good idea about what to expect. Still, I was surprised by some things! One discovery that I made shortly after joining the group was just how mentally healthy this is for me! I knew that it would be a commitment, and I thought that it might be stressful, but singing in the choral society has become the highlight of my week each and every week. What we do is so uplifting, so much fun, and I've made lots of wonderful new friends that I look forward to seeing every week!

Another discovery that I made was at the end of our 2023 Fall Concert titled "Love and Music Endure." We worked for a few months to learn Robert Cohen's "Alzheimer Stories," which we performed during the latter half of this concert. I learned so much about Alzheimer's disease that I didn't know before. I thought we were definitely going to minister to lots of people through this piece of music, and we did!





I've had so many people come up to me and express how much they were blessed by this music and story, how less alone they feel, how much more they now know. But the real discovery I made was upon completing "Alzheimer Stories" as I looked up at our conductor and the other singers standing all around me. This music and this story had ministered to us! The solidarity was evident between us all, and the love for music endured and enhanced. The ministry of music and all the emotion it invokes was present in the hearts and apparent on the faces of all of us! It moved each and every person who was present, and I knew this was inevitable, but I learned that this is a ministry to all - even those of us who are learning and singing this music! Music unites us all. It is ever necessary in this world!

My experience in my first year of becoming a singer for the Hickory Choral Society is truly one of the best years I've lived. It reminds me how important it is to embrace passion, and it has reminded of how important it is to pursue passion alongside other like-minded people. We find community, we find solidarity, we find ourselves, and we find that love and music will endure, and we can learn so much from it.

**Justin Ward**  
Singer

# SING WITH US!

## OPEN AUDITIONS

Monday, June 3, 2024

SALT Block | Hickory, NC

**for more information, visit**  
**[hickorychoralsociety.org/sing](http://hickorychoralsociety.org/sing)**





# KEEPING THE BOOKS!

Introducing our

## BUSINESS & OPERATIONS MANGER

The Hickory Choral Society is excited to introduce our new Business/Operations Manager and Soprano, Sherry Carlton-Thomas. Sherry grew up in a small town about an hour north of Detroit, Michigan. She spent her summers camping off of Lake Ontario in upstate New York; she spent most of that time swimming in the lake. She's always loved to read and could often be found under a tree with a good book. Sherry started playing the oboe in 5th grade and fell in love with music. This led her to pursue music and math (her other love) in college. Tendonitis, brought on by practicing too much, ended her oboe career and led her to teach music and math for a little while. Sherry then entered into the world of technology which, when combined with her experience in education, led her to a career in curricular technology. Becoming a homeschool mom of a daughter who was eager to learn to ride horses brought more change for Sherry. She now owns her own horses on 43 acres of land near Bethlehem, North Carolina.

Outside of singing with the Choral Society and serving as our Business/Operations Manager, Sherry enjoys riding horses, Tai Chi, reading, and fiber arts. Next time you're in the HCS office, make sure to say hi and welcome Sherry to our team!

**Becca Easterling**  
Publicity Director

**Meet more of our Board & Staff Members  
in our Previous Newsletters**

[hickorychoralsociety.org/category/releases](http://hickorychoralsociety.org/category/releases)





# EDUCATION MATTERS

## 2023-24 Music Education Grants

Each fall, HCS invites public school music educators in our area to apply for grants from the J. Don Coleman Education Fund. Knowing that most public schools work with very limited funding for the arts, grant money is awarded specifically for the purchase of music related to projects or performances for the current school year. This will then help schools build a library of music that can be used for years to come.

In December, we were thrilled to award 13 different grants for a total of \$5,000. Grant recipients represented all four of our participating counties, and at least one from every qualifying school system (county and city). Those who were able joined us to be recognized in person at one of our Christmas concerts.

The J. Don Coleman Education Fund was established in 1984 to honor the Hickory Choral Society's founding conductor and help promote and expand choral music in Catawba County public school systems. The program has since been expanded to include public schools in Burke, Caldwell, and Alexander counties, and it directly aligns with the second goal in our mission statement which is the *support of music education*.

If you are interested in supporting this program, you may make contributions to the J. Don Coleman Education Fund at any time, in honor or memory of someone, by indicating your designation on your donation. Please call the HCS office at (828)322-2210 for more information.

**HCS is proud to acknowledge the following grant recipients  
for the 2023-24 school year:**

| <b>School</b>                 | <b>Teacher</b>        | <b>Principal</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Alexander Central High School | Michelle Sullivan     | Jacob Lail       |
| East Burke Middle School      | Shane Ramsey          | Karen Gaines     |
| Gamewell Elementary School    | Hannah Shoaf          | Cathy Barlow     |
| Gamewell Middle School        | Adeena <u>Stading</u> | Dr. J. Dineen    |
| Mill Creek Middle School      | Katie Tharpe          | James Byrd       |
| Newton-Conover High School    | Jason Myers           | Chris Penley     |
| Newton-Conover Middle School  | Shannon Rogers        | Billy Cannon     |
| South Caldwell High School    | Bernadette Watts      | Rob Bliss        |
| St Stephens High School       | Grant Logan           | Kyle Stocks      |
| Startown Elementary School    | Margy Butterfield     | Jennifer Stodden |
| Valdese Elementary School     | Brittany Schafer      | Charles Williams |
| Viewmont Elementary School    | Glenda Stephens       | Jamie Curtis     |
| West Caldwell High School     | Bethany Wolfe         | Richard Griffin  |

**Sharon Milligan**  
Past President





# SAVE THE DATES

**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



## **CHILDREN'S SUMMER CHORAL CAMP**

A week-long, fun-filled camp for rising  
4th - 6th graders to enjoy music and  
explore the SALT block together!

**June 17-21, 2024**



**For camp details and registration,  
visit us online at  
[hickorychoralsociety.org](http://hickorychoralsociety.org)**






# 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

Follow us for updates:

 Hickory Choral Society

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 [hickorychoralsociety.org](http://hickorychoralsociety.org)



## Contributions to the HCS General Operating Fund

*In Honor of Sharon Milligan*  
Kay & Drew Dodd





# **Contributions to the J. Don Coleman Education Fund**

*In Memory of Sir David  
Willcocks  
and Rev. Dr. Robert Q Beard*  
Mr. & Mrs. Wade Poust

*In Memory of Jonathan  
David Mott*  
Mr. & Mrs. Kyle and  
Tammie Cannerday

*In Memory of Jonathan  
David Mott*  
Susan Goldstein

## **LEAVE A LEGACY!**

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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.





# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Gail Summer**  
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**Sharon Milligan**  
Past President

**Marty Light**  
President-Elect

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Secretary

**Todd Dickerson**  
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Publicity

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Properties

**Tony Ikard**  
Member-At-  
Large

**Kate Lawhorn**  
Member-At-  
Large

**Grant Logan**  
Member-At-  
Large

## STAFF

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**Ryan Luhrs**  
Artistic Director & Conductor

**Renee Shatley**  
Associate  
Conductor

**Mary Texer**  
Accompanist

**Sherry Thomas**  
Business  
Manager



## HICKORY CHORAL SOCIETY

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