

Alexandria
CHORAL
SOCIETY

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF
CHANGE

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2023 | 7PM
WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, MAY 7, 2023 | 4PM
PATRICK HENRY RECREATION CENTER

1 PROGRAM

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF CHANGE

BRIAN FONTAINE-ISAAC

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

THOMAS PANDOLFI

PIANIST

LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL MADRIGALS

CAROLINE PLAYER, DIRECTOR

featuring the world premiere of

YOU BIRTH THE SEEDS

commissioned by the Alexandria Choral Society

MUSIC BY **MELISSA DUNPHY**

POETRY BY ALEXANDRIA'S POET LAUREATE, **ZEINA AZZAM**

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO

ELEANOR DALEY (b. 1955)

Gloria in excelsis Deo et in
terra pax hominibus bonæ
voluntatis.

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to
people of good will.

2 PROGRAM

WE SHALL WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY AFRICAN AMERICAN SPIRITUAL

arr. Undine Smith Moore (1904–89)

We shall walk through the valley in peace.

*If Jesus himself shall be our leader, we shall walk through
the valley in peace.*

There will be no trials there.

LAUS TRINITATI

Laus Trinitati, que sonus et
vita
ac creatrix omnium in vita
ipsorum est,
et que laus angelice turbe
et mirus splendor
archanorum,
que hominibus ignota sunt,
est,
et que in omnibus vita est.

FAITH ZIMMER (b. 1997)

Praise to the Trinity—the
sound and life
and creativity of all within
their life,
the praise of the angelic
host
and wondrous, brilliant
splendor hid,
unknown to human minds, it
is,
and life within all things.

Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179)

TO SIT AND DREAM

ROSEPHANYE POWELL (b. 1962)

To sit and dream, to sit and read,
To sit and learn about the world.
Outside our world of here and now—
Our problem world—
To dream of vast horizons of the soul.
Of dreams made whole.
Unfettered, free—help me!
All you who are dreamers, too,
Help me make our world anew.
I reach out my hand to you.

Langston Hughes (1901–67), To You (adapted)

3 PROGRAM

LIGHT OF A CLEAR BLUE MORNING

DOLLY PARTON (b. 1946)

arr. Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962)

Langley High School Madrigals

It's been a long dark night and I've been waiting for the morning.

It's been a long hard fight but I see a brand new day a-dawning.

I've been looking for the sunshine 'cause I ain't seen it in so long.

Everything's gonna work out fine, everything's gonna be all right, it's gonna be okay.

I can see the light of a clear blue morning.

I can see the light of a brand new day.

I can see the light of a clear blue morning.

And everything's gonna be all right, it's gonna be okay.

Parton

DANIEL, DANIEL, SERVANT OF THE LORD AFRICAN AMERICAN SPIRITUAL

arr. Moore

Langley High School Madrigals

Oh, the king cried, "Oh! Daniel, Daniel, oh!

A-that-a Hebrew Daniel, Servant of the Lord!"

Among the Hebrew nation,

One Hebrew, Daniel was found.

They put him in the lion's den.

He stayed there all night long.

Now the King in his sleep was troubled

And early in the morning he rose

To find God sent His angels down

To lock the lion's jaws.

4 PROGRAM

BRIGHT MORNING STARS

AMERICAN FOLKSONG

arr. Alice Parker (b. 1925)

Bright morning stars are rising,
And day is a-breaking in my soul.

Oh, where are our dear mothers?
They are sowing seeds of gladness.

Oh, where are our dear fathers?
They have cross'd the river shouting.

Bright morning stars are rising;
They are all by the streams a-dancing.

ABENDLICH SCHON RAUSCHT DER WALD

Op. 3, No. 5

FANNY MENDELSSOHN HENSEL (1805–47)

Abendlich schon rauscht der Wald	Evening breezes rustle yet in the wood
aus den tiefen Gründen, droben wird der Herr nun bald	from the deepest grounds; above the Lord will now soon
an die Sterne zünden, wie so stille in den Schlünden,	light the stars. How silent in the chasms!
abendlich nur rauscht der Wald.	Just evening breezes in the wood.

Alles geht zu seiner Ruh. wie die Welt verbrause, schauemd hört der Wandrer zu, sehnt sich tief nach Hause,	Everything goes to its rest. Wood and world vanish; shuddering, the wanderer listens, yearning for home.
hier in Waldes grüner Klause, Herz, geh' endlich auch zur Ruh!	Here in the green hermitage of the forest, Heart, at last, you too go to rest.

Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857)

5 PROGRAM

ILUS HÄÄL

MARGRIT KITS

arr. Laura Jēkabsone (b. 1985)

Helisege helded metsad	Ring out, generous forests
Hüüdke vastu hütikesed	Shout back the huts
Minu kauni heale vastu	In return for my graceful voice
Lahedama laulu vastu	In return for my wonderful song
Kus mu healta kuuldaneksi	Where my voice is heard
Kus mu laulu laksuneksi	Where my song is sung
Seal kõik metsa murduneksa	There all forests will fall
Ilma rauda rabamata	Even without striking iron

Kits

YOU BIRTH THE SEEDS

MELISSA DUNPHY (1980)

World Premiere, commissioned by the Alexandria Choral Society

Alexandria Choral Society & the Langley High School Madriagls
Jacquelynne Fontaine-Isaac, *soprano*

Do not mistake our white hair for weariness.
We've earned and love
each snowy strand and coil.

Look up to see the ample rainclouds
greening open fields, and think of us.
We birthed the seeds and roused the reeds to sing.

We trust the luminous scales of justice,
gripped and safe in our hands.
Behold and cherish them as gleaming guiding stars.

Honor the dark days—they remind us
there is no morning without night.

You have the choice: resist, persist, stand tall, find
worth.

6 PROGRAM

Now, you're the wafting silk in golden stalks of corn.
You birth the seeds and rouse the reeds to sing.
You birth the seeds and rouse the reeds to sing.

We summon you to safeguard the field and home
we fought so hard to build.

They are your rightful breath, dignity, sun, and joy.

Zeina Azzam

WIDE OPEN SPACES

SARAH QUARTEL (b. 1982)

There's part of my story, there's part of my song,
There's part of my journey that's yet to be found.
With life all around us and so much to see,
Adventure is calling,
It's calling to me.

Out in the wide open spaces around me.

With big sky above me, I'm on my way,
Scanning the horizon of a brand new day.
Feet to the earth now, there's no turning back.
Into the world now,
Look at me go!

Out in the wide open spaces around me.

But as I journey out I look within and see
The spaces inside of me yet to be filled,
Filled with what I have seen and what I will be.
Oh! I'm filling the wide open spaces inside of me
With something I love, something I would like to be!

Quartel

7 PROGRAM NOTES

How has the feminist transition affected the world of music? The number of women who self-describe their profession as “composer” is still very small when compared with the number of men who do. But here’s a question for you: if you hear a piece of unfamiliar choral music without having been told the name of the composer, would you know whether it was by a man or a woman? We’re here today to honor women composers, so you don’t need to wonder.

Our program opens with the lively ***Gloria in Excelsis Deo*** by Canadian composer **Eleanor Daley**. A graduate of Queens College, she has had a long career as a church musician, which led to her becoming a composer when she needed new music for her choir and wanted something more to her taste for them to sing. She writes in a style that is aptly described as “free”, and shows a particular talent for matching text and music in a way that enhances both. She has also made a name for herself as an accompanist and conductor, and is much in demand as a choral clinician. She is the composer of many commissioned works, worldwide.

This stand-alone anthem includes only the first two lines of the “Gloria” text. The first is set with a time signature of 7/8, and a performance direction of “Joyfully,” which makes this a good piece to catch audience attention as the concert begins. For the middle section, “et in terra pax,” the meter changes to a more solemn even beat, with a series of moving fifths (“parallel organum”) on the words “bonae voluntatis”. The work ends with an extended reprise of the joyful opening motif.

For our second selection we move to Virginia, where ***We Shall Walk Through the Valley*** with **Undine Smith Moore**. This composer’s name may not be familiar, but she has a fascinating history. Born in 1904 in the rural “southside” of the state, the granddaughter of former slaves, she grew up in Petersburg. Her mother was a firm believer in the importance of education and music, and the young Undine learned to read music and even to attempt small composition exercises by the time she was eight or nine.

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Finishing high school, she won a scholarship to Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, a predominantly black college known for its strong musical tradition. She graduated at the top of her class in 1926, received her MA at Columbia University Teachers College in 1931, and also studied at Juilliard, Manhattan School of Music, and Eastman School of Music.

Known as “the Dean of Black Women Composers,” in 1975 Moore was named music laureate of the state of Virginia, and the following year she received an honorary doctorate from Indiana University. She also received many awards for her outstanding work as an educator. She died in 1989. (To learn more about Undine Smith Moore’s life and accomplishments, I refer you to <https://musicianguide.com/biographies/1608003512/Undine-Smith-Moore.html>.)

The talents of two women who lived nine centuries apart are brought together to create the next selection. **Faith Zimmer** was born so close to the end of the 20th century that she is rightly named a 21st century composer. The text for *Laus Trinitati* was written by **Hildegard von Bingen**, a 12th century author, composer, theologian, mystic, naturalist, abbess and more who lived from 1098 to 1179. In her notes to the singers, Zimmer writes, “Hildegard von Bingen has always intrigued me—how she taps into the mysterious qualities of God and leaves her readers marveling. This chant speaks of the Trinity and of God as the source of creativity and life in all of creation. . . . this work explores the idea of being made in the image of a creative God.”

A published choral composer, poet, singer/songwriter and illustrator, Faith Zimmer studied composition and choral music at Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri, where she was a member of the MSU Chorale, Chamber Choir, and Multicultural Ensemble. She has studied composition and arranging with Alice Parker. In addition to composing, she paints commissioned visual art and teaches piano, voice, and songwriting.

Rosephanye Powell’s compositions have appeared in so

9 PROGRAM NOTES

many ACS concerts that by now our audiences should even be able to pronounce her first name! She is certainly one of the more widely performed women composers of the present day, and with good reason. She has become known for re-creating the traditional spiritual in new ways, but tonight we are treated to something different. ***To Sit and Dream*** uses text from a poem by Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes, whose poetry was featured in our March concert. Because this is a wholly original work, not based on a familiar spiritual, the way these phrases grow from one another, combined with the repetitive accompaniment, produces an almost minimalist impression, perfectly suited to the mood and exhortation of the words.

An accomplished singer and voice professor, Dr. Powell travels widely presenting lectures, song demonstrations, and serving as a workshop clinician, conductor, and adjudicator for solo vocal competitions/auditions, honor choirs, choral workshops and festivals.

Alexandria Choral Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting choral music in our community, and one of the ways we do this is by sponsoring our annual Sing-Off competition for school-age choirs. Our winner this year is the Langley High School Madrigals, directed by Caroline Player. They will be performing two selections of their own, and will be joining ACS in the performance of our commissioned work later in the program.

Light of a Clear Blue Morning was originally written by **Dolly Parton** in 1977. The piece was composed in response to the struggles surrounding her split from a longtime musical and business partner. **Craig Hella Johnson's** 2010 a cappella setting opens with a solo soprano and gradually builds to a joyful overflowing of sound and vocal texture, then gently relaxes into a reflective conclusion.

Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord is considered to be one of the most-performed and beloved of **Undine Smith Moore's** settings of traditional spirituals. First transcribed from a song her mother often sang, and composed in

10 PROGRAM NOTES

1952, it was published in 1953 and has remained continually in print ever since. James Bennett once wrote, "'Daniel.' There is no way you could have read that other than 'Dan-yull.' Two syllables. That's it! And yet, when you listen to Undine Smith Moore's 1952 arrangement . . . you find that she has somehow elongated this name by 50%. 'Dan-yull' becomes 'Dan-ee-yull.'" And it sounds just right!

Anyone who has been privileged to attend a musical event where **Alice Parker** is one of the featured guests cannot help being struck by her love of singing as a participatory activity. She has a way of getting the crowd singing enthusiastically and in parts, without printed notes, that clearly shows why Robert Shaw had her do so many arrangements for his Chorale. Born in 1925, she graduated from Smith College and from there went to Juilliard, where she studied with Robert Shaw.

While **Bright Morning Stars** is a traditional hymn tune, this anthem was "commissioned by Leo Stanford Ridgway, in memory of his parents, Carroll and Velma Ridgway, for the choir of First Parish Church, Unitarian Universalist, Lexington, Massachusetts." Parker advises singers to "Begin by reading the text both for meaning and for the way it feels in your throat and sounds in your reading aloud. Then sing the text and tune, unaccompanied, through all the verses, noting the way the melody shifts accentuation and intensity with different words. . . . There is always a conversation taking place between the melody and its supporting lines: listen for the interaction."

The first verse is sung in unison by all voices; the second gives the melody to the altos and adds a kind of descant for the sopranos. In the third the bass takes over the melody, accompanied by the tenor, and the fourth begins with melody heard in the alto, but it soon becomes fragmented and bits of it may appear anywhere. It is amazingly done, and you have now had your Alice Parker listening lesson for today.

All of the women whose music we have heard so far are what might be called "New World" composers, natives and residents of the Americas, but we really should take a

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look on the other side of the Atlantic. First, mid-nineteenth-century Germany.

Fanny Hensel is sometimes referred to by her maiden name, Mendelssohn. The older sister of Felix Mendelssohn, she shared his passion for music. However, although she was a gifted pianist and composer, she did not receive the encouragement and training offered to Felix. In an era when music was not considered a profession for women, some of her early works were in fact published under his name.

She married the artist and poet Wilhelm Hensel after a six-year courtship, when she was twenty-three and he was thirty-four. Her parents had considered it an unsuitable match, but it was Hensel who encouraged her to continue with her composing and performing. Eventually she decided to publish some of her work under her own name. In being among the first female composers to have their works published, she established a precedent for the acceptance of women into a traditionally male-dominated artistic profession.

The poetry of **Josef von Eichendorff** provided the text for many of Hensel's songs and choral works, including ***Abendlich schon rauscht der Wald***. The mood of the poem is pensive as it describes the rustling of evening breezes in the forest and deep valley. The poet speaks of seeking a home, a hermitage in the wood, and finding rest at last.

From Berlin, we move to the Baltic. The music and lyrics of ***Ilus Hääl***, subtitled ***Beautiful Voice***, were written by Estonian composer **Margrit Kits** and arranged by **Laura Jēksone**, from neighboring Latvia, in honor of Estonia's 100th anniversary. Jēksone writes, "A love of song unites both Latvia and Estonia, and both nations have a rich heritage of folk songs, which has left significant traces in contemporary music."

Jēksone is a Latvian composer, conductor, vocal coach, and singer. Born in 1985, she graduated from a Music High School in Riga and received her Bachelor's degree in Music

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Education from the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music in 2009. She has received many awards and prizes, and has led master classes all around the world. She is the assistant conductor and vocal coach of the youth choir Maska, which regularly performs her works in competitions and concerts. In 2009, she and some friends formed the ensemble Latvian Voices, and in 2017 created the Latvian Voices a cappella festival.

The poem is written in four rhyming (in Estonian) couplets, describing the effects of “my beautiful voice” on the forests and huts. The music is written for six parts, SSAATB. The voices, in various groupings, may sometimes be singing the lyrics and at others provide accompaniment or percussion. It all goes by fairly fast, and it’s often not easy for the singers to avoid tongue tangles. Listen for the word “He-le-e-le-le” which occurs frequently, and seems to be an Estonian version of “Hip-hip-hurray!”

Throughout its 53 seasons, Alexandria Choral Society has had a history of commissioning new works for choral performance. This season’s commission, ***You Birth the Seeds***, was composed by **Melissa Dunphy**, with poetry by **Zeina Azzam**. Dunphy is a 2003 immigrant to the United States from Australia. She has been described as “specializing in vocal, political and theatrical music.” The mission statement on her website includes these words: “As a composer, I believe that music is not only a form of expression but a means of communication. . .inspired by and explor[ing] real-world issues of social justice and personal relationships.” Dunphy has a Ph.D. in Music Composition from the University of Pennsylvania and a B.M. in Theory and Composition from West Chester University, and is a lecturer in composition at Rutgers University. She lives in Philadelphia.

This is the second time the work of a Poet Laureate of the City of Alexandria has been featured in an ACS commissioned work. Zeina Azzam is a Palestinian American poet, writer, editor, and community activist who also has a background in music and has been a choral singer for much of her life. Her well-rounded education includes an

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M.A. in Arabic literature from Georgetown University, an M.A. in sociology from George Mason University, and a B.A. in psychology from Vassar College. She actively supports a writing program for youth in Gaza.

Dunphy writes: "My goal as a composer of vocal music is to honor the text and see where it takes me, and Zeina's beautiful poetry gave me fabulous imagery and descriptive words that were a joy to harmonize." The two share an interest in social action which has no doubt contributed to the rapport evident in their collaboration. We predict that many future audiences will benefit from our having commissioned this work, pleasing to both singers and listeners, with its message of responsibility and hope for the future.

The theme of connection to the natural world is clearly audible in our closing selection. **Sarah Quartel** is a Canadian composer and educator known for her fresh and exciting approach to choral music. She celebrates the musical potential of all learners by providing singers access to high quality repertoire and engaging music education. **Wide Open Spaces** was commissioned by the American Choral Directors Association for a middle school choir in Utah, a state that contains plenty of the territory described in the title.

Quartel's music typically focuses on the rhythmic structure of the piece rather than melody, and she is known for the life lessons contained in her words. The sounds easily translate into visual images and create an atmosphere each of us can interpret as we will.

Mimi Stevens

14 SINGERS

SOPRANO

Lucy Bachmeyer
Betsy Ballard
Tamara Boorstein
Cienna Breen *
Samantha Calkins
Sharon Collins
Dot Dannenberg
Jenna Dawkins *
Monique Doussard *
Diane Erbland
Jacquelynne Fontaine-Isaac *
Ankur Garg
Rasneek Gujral *
Catherine Harsono *
Mary Lehrer
Carmen Lodato
Nora Luhning
Margaret McLaughlin
Karen Minatelli *
Ellienne Noonan
Mandi Pratt-Chapman
Katie Rosenthal
Mary Sheets
Andrea Steinacker
Nicole Thompson
Kelly Wildermuth

TENOR

Johnny Beasley *
Tim Goode *
Jonathan Hung
Alan Morris
Jeffrey Nickeson *
Nick Peterson
Brent Schultheis
Mimi Stevens
Troy Tanner

ALTO

Bridget Baker-White *
Anne Buckborough *
Patricia Burson
Kaitlin Costello
Alison Fitzgerald
Rebecca Grisso
Peggy Heiser
Heather Hurley
Janie Lee
Kathryn Lopez
Kerry McGowan
Kristi Meacham
Jacqueline Morgan
Linda Peterson
Anne Simpson
K.C. Sykora
Stacy Tanner
Eleanor Thompson
Melanie Vella
Allison Wickens

BASS

Michael Bianco
Zachary Byers *
Sigfried Hache *
Joshua Heit
Terry Langendoen
David Pritzker *
Brian Schiff
Kevin Simpson *
Richard Simpson *
Wallace B. Wason, Jr.
Ivan Wohner

* *Pro Coro Alexandria member*

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR
2022-23 SING-OFF GRANT RECIPIENTS:

**THE LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL
MADRIGALS**

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Tessa Jones
Catherine Knecht
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Seth Ludlow
Nico Morandi-Zerpa
Vishwa Rakasi
Maya Sachdev

ACS's Sing-Off is an annual grant program awarded to a local youth ensemble. The selected ensemble will have an opportunity to perform with ACS and will earn \$1,000 for their music program!

For more information, visit AlexandriaChoralSociety.org/singoff.

16 ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Founded in 1970, **Alexandria Choral Society** aspires to enhance the cultural life of the city of Alexandria by presenting diverse and engaging musical programs at the highest artistic level. Alexandria Choral Society ensembles consistently offer meaningful and exciting musical experiences to both singers and audiences through diverse repertoire, education, community outreach, and performance excellence.



Brian Fontaine-Isaac is honored to serve as the Artistic Director of the Alexandria Choral Society (Alexandria, Va.). He is also the Artistic Director of Encore Creativity for Older Adults (Annapolis, Md.), the nation's largest nonprofit choral arts organization for older adults, and the Founder/Artistic Director of Church Circle Singers (Annapolis, Md.).

Mr. Fontaine-Isaac was most recently the Managing Director for Arts Laureate, a recording team which delivered over 1,500 virtual performances across the country during the Covid-19 pandemic. Previous appointments include: Artistic Director of the Williamsburg Choral Guild (Williamsburg, Va.), music faculty at Encore University, Interim Director of Choral Music at Thomas Nelson Community College (Hampton, Va.), adjunct music faculty at Tidewater Community College (Portsmouth, Va.) and Old Dominion University (Norfolk, Va.), Assistant Conductor with the Washington Master Chorale (Washington, D.C.), and Director of Choirs at Damascus High School (Damascus, Md.).

Mr. Fontaine-Isaac's ensembles have commissioned and premiered new works by composers such as Tawnie Olson, Lori Laitman, Christopher Hoh, Jonathan Kolm, and Ola Gjeilo. Reviews include: "perfectly brilliant" (composer Dr. William Averitt, Shenandoah Conservatory) and having "fine balance" and "delivering sounds that ranged from sensitively soft to knock your socks off soaring" (*The Virginia Gazette*).

Mr. Fontaine-Isaac holds a Master of Music in music education from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University and a Bachelor of Music Education from Old Dominion University. A former Marine, Mr. Fontaine-Isaac also holds a Bachelor of Science in English from the United States Naval Academy.

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Thomas Pandolfi began his music career early on at The Juilliard School (BM & MM) where the young prodigy caught the influential ears of Vladimir Horowitz, who would become his mentor, and legendary composer Morton Gould. Since then he has been an audience favorite, selling out the world's most prestigious stages, including Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, Strathmore, The Kennedy Center, Kiev Opera House, Bucharest's Romanian Athenaeum, London's Cadogan Hall, and many others. In addition to being hailed as one of the greatest interpreters of Polish masters such as Chopin and Paderewski, this versatile pianist has received accolades for everything from Bach to Gershwin, with Morton Gould saying, "It's the finest performance of Gershwin I have heard since the composer himself." His original and virtuosic transcriptions of works such as *West Side Story* and *The Phantom of the Opera* are one-of-a-kind, jaw-dropping, and dramatic encores that keep audiences of all ages returning to his performances again and again. Maestro Pandolfi is a Steinway Artist and when he is not on tour resides in Northern Virginia.



Caroline Player is the choir director at Langley High School (McLean). During her first year at the school, she was awarded the 2022–23 Teacher of the Year. Her students have been selected for the American Choral Directors Association National Honor Choir, Virginia All-State ensembles, Virginia Honor Choir, and her ensembles have received superior ratings at their District Assessments. Caroline recently graduated with her Masters degree in Choral Conducting from the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. While at Frost, she was the recipient of the Graduate School Association AELS Leadership Award in 2021 and served as the Assistant Conductor for the Miami Children's Chorus. Additionally, she was accepted as a Seraphic Fire Singing Scholar for the 2021–22 season and has taught private voice students and choir through both the MusicReach and Frost Prep organizations on campus. Before moving to Miami, Caroline served as the Choral Director at Warhill High School (Williamsburg, Va.). In 2017, she attended the ACDA Southern Division Conference

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and received the Colleen Kirk Award, which is given to educators in their first through third years of teaching for their contribution to music education. Caroline graduated *magna cum laude* with honors from James Madison University with an undergraduate degree in Music Education. She has actively sung as a core alto with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra Chorus, the Virginia Chorale, and Voce Chamber Singers.



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