



VOCALLESSENCE

50TH

ANNIVERSARY
SEASON

[2018-2019]

SPRING CONCERTS

VOCALLESSENCE WITNESS:
YET THEY PERSIST

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

VOCALESSENCE

1900 Nicollet Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403
612-547-1451

vocalessence.org

VocalEssence is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



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- Concerts will be recorded for possible broadcast—please help us keep the performance space quiet. Take a moment now to check that all cell phones, paging devices, wristwatch alarms, and the like are turned off before the concert begins. Thank you.
- Out of respect for the performers and the music creators, please refrain from using cameras or other recording devices during the performance.
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- Children of all ages are welcome at all of our Family Series events.
- Visit www.vocalessence.org/welcomefamily for more information and a list of events. Tickets for children ages 0-17 are free.
- Accessible seating is available at all of our concert venues. However, some of our facilities do not have elevator access to the balcony level. Please make your needs known when you order tickets.
- You may return VocalEssence single concert tickets for resale up to 48 hours prior to a performance. No refunds or exchanges can be given; however, you will be sent a receipt for your tax-deductible contribution. (VocalEssence subscribers may call 612-371-5642 to request free ticket exchanges and lost ticket replacement.)
- Latecomers will be seated at appropriate pauses in the concert according to the conductor's wishes. Please plan plenty of time for locating the concert venue and parking. Or, better yet, allow an extra hour and join us for Concert Conversations with the composers and artists, held one hour before most concerts.

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**In remembrance*

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VOCALESSENCE

BE A WITNESS

{2019-2020}

*Celebrating 30 years of
VocalEssence WITNESS
in our community.*



Tales & Tunes

Sat, Sept 28, 2019

Divine Light

Sun, Oct 13, 2019

What a Mighty God,

a VocalEssence WITNESS Concert

Sun, Nov 17, 2019

Welcome Christmas

Dec 7-15, 2019

Winter Wonder

Sat, Dec 14, 2019

Together We Sing Festival

Sat, Jan 18, 2020

Moana Movie Sing-Along

Sat, Feb 1, 2020

Deep Roots,

a VocalEssence WITNESS Concert

Sun, Feb 23, 2020

The Mendelssohns

Sat, Apr 4, 2020

Get Minnesota Singing Tour – Worthington

Sat, Apr 25, 2020

Get Minnesota Singing Tour – Morris

Sat, May 2, 2020

Get Minnesota Singing Tour – St. Cloud

Sat, May 9, 2020

VocalEssence Gala

Sun, May 17, 2020

VocalEssence ¡Cantaré!

Community Concert

Thurs, May 21, 2020

Voices Calling Pre-Tour Concert

Sat, May 30, 2020



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2018-2019

50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON



SPECIAL THANKS
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OF THIS CONCERT



Katherine B. Andersen Fund of
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This activity is made possible by the voters
of Minnesota through a grant from the
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Walt McCarthy and Clara Ueland
Summit Academy OIC

**In remembrance*

VOCALESSENCE WITNESS: YET THEY PERSIST

Sunday, February 24, 2019 at 4 PM

Orchestra Hall
1111 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN

Spelman College Glee Club
VocalEssence Chorus
VocalEssence Singers Of This Age
G. Phillip Shoultz, III, *conductor*
Kevin Johnson, *conductor*
Gavin Berg, *accompanist*
Brittney Boykin, *accompanist*

SPECIAL THANKS

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This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota
through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating
Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation
from the arts and cultural heritage fund.



WELCOME



VocalEssence WITNESS: Yet They Persist honors past, present, and future trailblazing African and African American women who persist against

all odds to change their communities and the world. VocalEssence WITNESS began as a single concert with a single school partner in 1991. Now in its twenty-ninth year, the program celebrates the outstanding contributions of African Americans in the arts through concerts, conversations, recitals, workshops, and programming in over fifty schools throughout the metropolitan region. Each year, with the help of our phenomenal Teaching Artists, we use a theme to highlight past achievements and illuminate our role in making today's society more equitable for all.

Using songs of protest and progress as our guide, this afternoon's concert features music selected to honor four trailblazing women in our Twin Cities community, beginning with the life and legacy of Hallie Quinn Brown and then moving to focus on former Minneapolis mayor Sharon Sayles Belton, Minneapolis City Council Vice President Andrea Jenkins, and U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar. **VocalEssence WITNESS: Yet They Persist** celebrates entrepreneurship, highlights the importance of education, and advocates for the equality of all.

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome Dr. Kevin Johnson and the women of the Spelman College Glee Club as our featured guest artists. Spelman College Glee Club is an historically black institution for higher learning in Atlanta, Georgia known for nurturing the minds and hearts of many prominent African American female leaders throughout the United States, and the world. If this is your first occasion to hear them, you will be mesmerized by their performance. They are FANTASTIC!

Now, I encourage you to sit back and prepare to bask in the glory of our community at its finest—people of all ages and backgrounds coming together in song!

—G. Phillip Shoultz, III,
Associate Conductor |
Director of Learning and Engagement

THE PROGRAM

VocalEssence Singers Of This Age
Shosholoza

Traditional

Spelman College Glee Club
Don't You Let Nobody

arr. Kevin Johnson
(2003)

VocalEssence Chorus
Hold On

Margaret Bonds
(1962)

VocalEssence Chorus & Singers Of This Age
Ella's Song

Bernice Johnson Reagon
(1991)

VocalEssence Chorus & Spelman College Glee Club
Lift Every Voice and Sing

arr. Roland Carter
(1979)

Spelman College Glee Club
America the Beautiful

arr. Kevin Johnson
(2018)

Cantate Domino

Ambrož Čopi
(2016)

A Jubilant Song

Norman Dello Joio
(1946)

Psalm 23

Franz Schubert
(1832)

Glory to God

arr. Kevin Johnson
(2004)

INTERMISSION

VocalEssence Singers Of This Age

Resilience

Abbie Betinis
(2017)

I Need You to Survive

David Frazier
(2003)

VocalEssence Chorus & Singers Of This Age

No Mirrors in My Nana's House

Ysaÿe Barnwell
(1992)

VocalEssence Chorus

Spiritual (Cain't No One Know)

Ysaÿe Barnwell
(1994)

Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord

Undine Smith Moore
(1953)

VocalEssence Singers Of This Age

This is Me

Benj Pasek and Justin Paul
(2017)

Combined Choirs

We Are the Ones

Bernice Johnson Reagon
(1995)

Spelman College Glee Club

Steal Away

arr. Kevin Johnson
(2005)

As the Deer Pants

Rosephanye Powell
(2006)

Wade in the Water

arr. Kevin Johnson
(2018)

A Choice to Change the World

Kevin Johnson & Sarah Stephens
(2007)

Combined Choirs

Still I Rise

Rosephanye & William Powell
(2018)



TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

SHOSHOLOZA

Traditional

Sung in Zulu & Ndebele

Move fast,
On those mountains
Train from South Africa

You are running away
On those mountains
Train from South Africa

—Traditional South African work song

DON'T YOU LET NOBODY

arr. Kevin Johnson

Don't you let nobody turn you 'round!
Don't you let nobody turn you 'round!
Keep the straight and narrow way!

'Twas at the river of Jordan
Baptism was first begun
John baptized the multitude
But he sprinkled not a one

The Baptists they go by water.
The Methodists they go by land.
When they get to heaven, Lord,
They're gonna shake other's hand

You may be a good Christian,
Or a good Muslim as well,
If you ain't the pure of heart,
You're gonna rock the gates of hell!
—Traditional Spiritual

HOLD ON

Margaret Bonds

Noah, let me come in,
Door's all fastened and the window's pinned,
Keep your hand on the plow,
Hold on, hold on.

Noah said "You done los' your track,
Can't plow straight and keep a-lookin' back,
Keep you hand on the plow,
Hold on, hold on.

Mary had a golden chain,
Ev'ry link was in my Jesus' name
Keep your hand on the plow,
Hold on, hold on.

Keep on a-plowin' an' don't you tire,
Ev'ry round goes higher and hi'er
Keep your hand on the plow,
Hold on, hold on.

Wanna go to heav'n,
I'll tell you how,
Keep your hand on the gospel plow,
Keep your hand on-a that plow, Hold on.

I was blind and could not see,
Jesus opened my eyes for me,
Keep you hand on-a that plow,
Hold on, hold on.
—Traditional Spiritual

ELLA'S SONG

Bernice Johnson Reagon

We who believe in freedom cannot rest,
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.

Until the killing of black men, black mother's sons,
Is as important as the killing of white men, white mother's sons.

That which touches me most
Is that I had a chance to work with people
Passing on to others that which was passed on to me.

To me young people come first,
They have the courage where we failed
And if I can but shed some light as they carry us through the gale.

The older I get, the better I know that the secret of my going on
Is when the reins are in the hands of the young who dare to run
against the storm.

Not needing to clutch for power,
Not needing the light just to shine on me,
I need to be one in the number as we stand against tyranny.

Struggling myself don't mean a whole lot, I've come to realize
That teaching others to stand up and fight is the only way our
struggle survives,

I'm a woman who speaks in a voice, and I must be heard;
Sometimes I can be quite difficult, I'll bow to no man's word.

We who believe in freedom cannot rest,
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.
*—Bernice Johnson Reagon, based on statements made
by Ella Baker*

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

arr. Roland Carter

Lift every voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
 Bitter the chast'ning rod,
 Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
 Yet with a steady beat,
 Have not our weary feet
 Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
 We have come over a way that with tears has been watered.
 We have come, treading our path through the blood of the
 slaughtered,
 Out from the gloomy past, Till now we stand at last
 Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
 God of our silent tears,
 Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
 Thou who hast by Thy might,
 Led us into the light,
 Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
 Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
 Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
 Shadowed beneath Thy hand, May we forever stand,
 True to our God, True to our native land.

—James Weldon Johnson

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

arr. Kevin Johnson

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,
 For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain
 America, America, God shed His grace on thee,
 And crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for heroes proved, in liberating strife,
 Who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life!
 America, America, God shed His grace on thee,
 And crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for patriot dream, that sees beyond the years
 Thine alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears!
 America, America, God shed His grace on thee,
 And crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea.

—Katharine Lee Bates

CANTATE DOMINO

Ambrož Čopi

Sung in Latin

Sing to the Lord, a new song,
 sing to the Lord, all the earth.
 Sing to the Lord and bless God's name:
 because God hath done wonderful things.
 Make melody, rejoice and sing on the harp,
 and with the voice of a psalm.
 Sing to the Lord a new song,
 sing to the Lord, all the earth.
 —Psalm 95: 1ab, 2a & Psalm 97: 1b, 4b, 5b

A JUBILANT SONG

Norman Dello Joio

O! Listen to a jubilant song!

The joy of our spirit—it is uncaged, it darts like lightning!
 My soul it darts like lightning!

Listen to a jubilant song,
 For we sing to the joys of youth, and the joy of a glad light-beaming day.
 For we sing to the joy of life, and youth, and the joy of a glad light-
 beaming day. O!

O! Our spirit sings O! Our spirit sings a jubilant song that is to a life
 full of concord, of music, a life full of harmony.

We sing prophetic joys of lofty ideals.
 We sing a universal love awaking in the hearts of men.
 We sing prophetic joys, we sing of lofty ideals—
 we sing of love,—of love—awaking in the hearts of men,—of men—a
 universal love.

O! to have life, a poem of new joys,
 to shout! shout! shout! shout! shout! shout! shout!
 to dance and exult, shout and leap.
 O! to realize space and flying clouds, O! to realize space, the sun
 and moon,
 O! to be rulers of life, O! to be rulers of destiny, of life, of destiny,
 and of life.

O! O! la la la la la...
 Listen, listen, O! Listen to a song, a jubilant song.
 Listen to our song, the joy of our spirit, the joy of our spirit it is
 uncaged.
 Listen, listen to a song. We dance, exult, we shout and leap.
 O! O! O! Listen to our song. O!

—Adapted from words by Walt Whitman

PSALM 23

Franz Schubert

Sung in German

God is my Shepherd, I will lack nothing.
 God keeps me in a green pasture and leads me by quiet streams;
 God refreshes my fainting courage.
 God leads me on the right paths to the honor of His Name.
 And although I wander in the valley of the shadow of death,
 Yet I wander without fear, for You protect me,
 Your rod and staff are always my comfort.
 You prepare a joyous meal for me in front of my enemies;
 You anoint my head with oil, and give me an overflowing cup,
 Blessing and happiness will follow me in this life,
 And one day I will rest forever in the house of the Eternal.

—Psalm 23, paraphrased by Moses Mendelssohn

GLORY TO GOD

Kevin Johnson

Peace on Earth!
Glory to God in the highest!

Praise the Father and the Son!
You alone are the holy one
Lord. God, heavenly King
Glory to your name we sing!
Glory, glory!

Father God we worship you,
Mother God we worship you.
Take my sin and make me whole.
Glorify my aching soul!
Glory, glory!

Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis
(Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to all of good will.)

Peace on Earth!
Glory to God in the highest!
Peace to God's people on Earth.
—*adapted from the Latin Mass*

RESILIENCE

Abbie Betinis

Resilience, we are strong!
Shoulder to shoulder, keep movin' on.
Resilience, make a new plan!
Stand up again and say yes we can.

Oh! We are strong, hold on
I wanna make it and I know we will
Because it's hard to keep goin'
But it's worse to stand still.
—*Abbie Betinis*

I NEED YOU TO SURVIVE

David Frazier

I need you. You need me.
We're all a part of one body.
Stand with me, agree with me
We're all a part of one body.
We do believe that every need will be supplied.
You are important to me.
I need you to survive.

I stand with you.
You stand with me.
I love you. I need you to survive.
I won't harm you with words from my mouth.
I love you. I need you to survive.
—*David Frazier, adapted by VocalEssence Singers Of This Age*

NO MIRRORS IN MY NANA'S HOUSE

Ysaye Barnwell

There were no mirrors in my Nana's house,
And the beauty that I saw in everything
Was in her eyes.

I never knew that my skin was too black.
I never knew that my nose was too flat.
I never knew that my clothes didn't fit.
I never knew there were things that I'd missed,
'Cause the beauty in everything
Was in her eyes.

I was intrigued by the cracks in the walls.
The dust in the sun looked like snow that would fall.
The noise in the hallway was music to me.
The trash and the rubbish just cushioned my feet.
And the beauty in everything
Was in her eyes.

The world outside was a magical place.
I only knew love and I didn't know hate,
And the beauty in everything
Was in her eyes.

"Child, look deep into my eyes."
"Child, look deep into my eyes."
"Child..."

—*Ysaye Barnwell*

SPIRITUAL (CAIN'T NO ONE KNOW)

Ysaye Barnwell

Cain't no one know at sunrise
How this day is gonna end.
Cain't no one know at sunset
If the next day will begin.

In this world of trouble and woe,
A person had better be ready to go.
We look for things to stay the same,
But in the twinkling of an eye, everything can be changed.

The troubles of this world fill our hearts with rage
From Soweto, to Stonewall, Birmingham, and LA.
We are searching for hope that lies within ourselves
As we fight against misogyny, race, hatred, and AIDS.
—*Ysaye Barnwell*

DANIEL, DANIEL, SERVANT OF THE LORD

Undine Smith Moore

Oh, the King cried, "Oh, Daniel, oh!
A-that-a Hebrew Daniel,
Servant of the Lord!"

Among the Hebrew nation,
One Hebrew, Daniel was found.
They put him in a-the lion's den
He stayed there all night long.

Oh, the King cried, "Oh, Daniel, oh!
A-that-a Hebrew Daniel,
Servant of the Lord!"

Now the king in his sleep was troubled,
And early in the morning he rose,
To find God had sent-a His angel down
To lock the lion's jaws.

Oh, the King cried, "Oh, Daniel, oh!
A-that-a Hebrew Daniel,
Servant of the Lord!"
-Traditional Spiritual

THIS IS ME – FROM "THE GREATEST SHOWMAN"

Benj Pasek and Justin Paul

I am not a stranger to the dark
Hide away, they say
'Cause we don't want your broken parts
I've learned to be ashamed of all my scars
Run away, they say
No one'll love you as you are

But I won't let them break me down to dust
I know that there's a place for us
For we are glorious

When the sharpest words wanna cut me down
I'm gonna send a flood, gonna drown them out
I am brave, I am bruised
I am who I'm meant to be, this is me
Look out 'cause here I come
And I'm marching on to the beat I drum
I'm not scared to be seen
I make no apologies, this is me

Another round of bullets hits my skin
Well, fire away 'cause today, I won't let the shame sink in
We are bursting through the barricades and
Reaching for the sun
We are warriors
Yeah, that's what we've become

I won't let them break me down to dust.
I know that there's a place for us.
For we are glorious.

When the sharpest words wanna cut me down
I'm gonna send a flood, gonna drown them out
This is me

-Benj Pasek and Justin Paul

WE ARE THE ONES WE BEEN WAITING FOR

Bernice Johnson Reagon

We are the ones, we are the ones we been waitin' for
-June Jordan

STEAL AWAY

arr. Kevin Johnson

Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus
Steal away, steal away home
I ain't got long to stay here

My Lord, He calls me
He calls me by the thunder
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul
I ain't got long to stay here

Green trees are bending
Poor sinner stand a-trembling
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul
I ain't got long to stay here

-Traditional Spiritual

AS THE DEER PANTS

Rosephanye Powell

As the deer pants for streams of water,
So my soul pants for you, oh God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?

My tears have been my food day and night,
While they say to me all day long,
"Where is your God?"

These things I remember as I pour out my soul:
How I used to go to the multitude
With shouts of joy and with thanksgiving,
Leading the procession to the house of God.

-Psalm 42:1-4

WADE IN THE WATER

arr. Kevin Johnson

Wade in the water,
Wade in the water children,
Wade in the water,
God's a-gonna trouble the water.

Wade in the water children,
Wade in the water children,
God's a-gonna trouble the water.

Who's that band all dressed in red,
God's a-gonna trouble the water.
Looks like the ban' that Moses led,
God's a-gonna trouble the water.

See that host all dressed in white,
God's-gonna trouble the water.
The leader looks like the Israelite,
God's a-gonna trouble the water.

Wade in the water children,
Wade in the water children,
God's a-gonna trouble the water.

-Traditional Spiritual

A CHOICE TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Dr. Kevin Johnson and Sarah Stephens

It's my choice
And I choose to change the world
It's my voice
And I'll speak with pride and courage
I'll be the change I wanna see
I'll scream out loud and say
It's my choice
And I choose to change the world

Why put off for tomorrow
What I can do today
Why wait for another
When I can pave the way
No matter how young or old
I hold the power of change
Rather large or small, few or all
My choice remains the same

Within this institution
We are women of change
The shoulders that we stand upon
Never received applause or fame
But in their honor I will live
Each day better than before
And show just how it takes a choice
To change yourself and so much more

The change begins today
With every choice that I make
Spelman look around and see
Where the changes need to be
End poverty
Fighting overseas
Another dies from a disease
End hypocrisy
Starving on the streets
And no one does a single thing
-Sarah Stephens

STILL I RISE

Rosephanye and William Powell

Though I have been wounded, aching heart full of pain. Still I rise,
yes, still I rise.
Jus' like a budding rose, my bloom is nourished by rain.
Haven't time to wonder why, though fearful I strive.
My prayer and faith uphold me 'til my courage arrives.
Still I rise as an eagle, soaring above every fear.
With each day I succeed, I grow strong an' believe
That it's all within my reach; I'm reaching for the skies,
Bolstered by courage, yes, still I rise.
Yes, it's all within my reach; I'm reaching for the skies, Yes, still I rise.
Gentle as a woman; tender sweet are my sighs. Still I rise, yes, still
I rise.
Strength is in my tears and healing rains in my cries.
Plunging depths of anguish, I determine to strive.
My prayer and faith uphold me 'til my courage arrives.
Though you see me slump with heartache; Heart so heavy that it
breaks.
Be not deceived I fly on bird's wings, rising sun, its healing rays.
Look at me, you see a woman; Gentle as a butterfly.
But don't you think, not for one moment, that I'm not strong
because I cry.

-Rosephanye Powell

BIOGRAPHIES

SHARON SAYLES BELTON



An activist, politician, and leader of her community, **Sharon Sayles Belton** was the first African American and first woman to be mayor of the city

of Minneapolis. For most of her life she fought for racial equality, women, family and child care issues, youth development, and neighborhood development. She is the recipient of the Gertrude E. Rush Distinguished Service Award, presented by the National Bar Association, and the Rosa Parks Award, presented by the American Association for Affirmative Action, among many other honors.

ANDREA JENKINS



Andrea Jenkins is an American policy aide, politician, writer, performance artist, poet, and transgender activist. She is known for being the first African-

American openly transgender woman elected to public office in the United States, serving since January 2018 on the Minneapolis City Council as the Vice President. In addition to her public service, Andrea participates in the Trans Lives Matter movement, and in 2015, she was grand marshal of the Twin Cities Pride Parade.

ILHAN OMAR



Ilhan Omar is a Somali American politician serving as the U.S. Representative for Minnesota's 5th congressional district and was the first of two Muslim women

ever elected to Congress. Born in Somalia, Ilhan and her family fled the country's civil war when she was eight years old. Before running for office, Ilhan worked as a community educator at the University of Minnesota, was a Humphrey Policy Fellow, and served as a senior policy aide for a Minneapolis City Council Member.

HALLIE QUINN BROWN



Hallie Quinn Brown was an educator, public speaker, writer, and women's activist during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Brown

was active in the Civil Rights and Temperance Movements and presented speeches across the U. S. and overseas including speaking for Great Britain's Queen Victoria. She helped establish the National Association of Colored Women and served as president of this group for several years before being appointed as its honorary president for the remainder of her life. Brown was the author of several books, many of which detailed the plight of African Americans.

VOCAL ESSENCE WITNESS ADVISORY COUNCIL

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SPELMAN COLLEGE GLEE CLUB



The **Spelman College Glee Club** has maintained a reputation for choral excellence since 1925. Their repertoire consists of sacred and secular choral literature for women's voices, with a particular focus on traditional spirituals, music by African American composers, music from many cultures and commissioned works. Performing at such prestigious venues and with world renowned artists such as singer Jessye Norman, a highlight of the Glee Club's history was performing at the White House in 2016 for President Barack Obama.

Bria Adams	Stephanie Crawford	Riayn Mack
Ariel Alvarado	Nina Danley	Shelby Marcee
Alyssa Armstrong	Imani Diggs	Kennedy Mebane
Desirae Banks	Adleesa Edwards	Shelby Richardson
Lauryn Banks	Jasmine Euell	Dianna Sanders
Delvona Beckles	Jessica Hansberry	Faith Shannon
Elaina Blake	Bahi Iboaya	Kalia Simms
Brittney Boykin	Tyler Jennings	Kennedy Starkey
Clarke Brown	Brooke Joynes	Terri Wright
Mikaela Brown	Christian Kenney	I'reyon Wright
Lexcia Carr	Shekinah Kinlow	
Shalyn Carthan	Christian Knox	



Dr. Kevin Johnson, associate professor, is a musician, composer, and an active clinician. The director of the Spelman College Glee Club has traveled through the United States providing choral workshops and retreats for music educators and churches. He is the minister of music at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Atlanta. He is also one of the most highly in demand and prominent musicians in the Archdiocese of Atlanta and the Catholic Archdiocese nationwide.



Brittney Boykin, instructor and Glee Club accompanist, is known as a versatile pianist, composer, and conductor. Boykin was featured as the conductor/composer-in-residence for the 2017 Harry T. Burleigh Commemorative Spiritual Festival at Tennessee State. Her instrumental and choral works are published and distributed through her own publishing company, Klavia Press. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. with an emphasis in Music Education at Georgia State University.

VOCALESSENCE SINGERS OF THIS AGE



VocalEssence Singers Of This Age is a dynamic group of 50 young people from Minneapolis and Saint Paul high schools who sing, dance, write their own music, rap, and—most importantly—reflect the diversity of our community in its membership.

- Sing a wide range of music—from classical to hip-hop and everything in between
- Perform in world-class venues—Orchestra Hall, The Ordway Center for Performing Arts
- Awaken your creativity by studying voice, dance, theatre, and spoken word
- Travel throughout the state and region
- Rehearse at Augsburg University to provide exposure to life in college
- Belong to an accepting community of your peers from all walks of life

Acacia Johnstone	Euan Lim	Malcolm Kinard
Aishat Daud	Hta Soe	Margaret Feng
Alexander Refuerzo	Htee moo hser Ku k	Muhsin Aidid
Alise Moore	paw ne	Pan Myine
Amae Pierson	Isaiah Bates	Sally Petersohn
Amaya Fokuo	Jade Shionoya	Sar Wait
Andreina Rodriguez	Jaydon Gilkes	Sierra Trejo
Aria Martinez	John Nguyen	Simone Meyer
Arrianna Stallman	Joshua Hoffman	Soliyana Woldu
Ashley Tapia Martinez	Joshua Sabin	Stephon Marcus
Austin Vang	Kayla Gibson	Thaw Paw
Breanna Prudhomme	Keon Miller	Voravij Vang
Brian Baltazar	Lila Insook	Wah Htoo
Chiashee Vue	Lucas Plaman	Yee Xiong
Claudia Lo Cascio	Maifa Vang	



Gavin Berg joined VocalEssence in 2017 as Collaborative Artist for the inaugural year of VocalEssence Singers Of This Age, where he works as accompanist and assistant conductor. As a pianist and organist, Gavin is currently the Artist-in-Residence at Good Samaritan United Methodist Church. He has recorded several solo piano albums, and is a featured performer throughout the region. As a choir director, Gavin focuses on working with children and youth in an effort to make music accessible to all.

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Sisterhood

Sister Spokesman is a monthly gathering of African American women of all ages and walks of life, with the goal of providing an informative and fun environment for learning and networking.



From pertinent health and fitness to finance, relationship, and beauty and fashion advice — you name it, Sister Spokesman covers it!

For more info go to
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**VOCALESSENCE
iCantaré!**

**COMMUNITY
CONCERT 2019**

5•21•19

**TICKETS:
available March 18, 2019**

TUES, MAY 21, 2019 AT 7 PM
Ordway Concert Hall, Saint Paul

Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion School,
New Hope
Field Community School, Minneapolis
Harding High School, St. Paul
VocalEssence Singers Of This Age
G. Phillip Shoultz, III, *conductor*
Pablo Mendoza Halliday, *visiting composer*



VOCALESSENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

VOCALESSENCE  WITNESS

A BRIEF HISTORY

In 1991, VocalEssence WITNESS was created to celebrate the contributions of African Americans to the fine arts and to our common cultural heritage. By commissioning and programming rarely heard works by African American composers, and featuring African American guest artists, we help broaden ideas about African American musical expression and introduce new voices to our audiences through concerts, recordings, and broadcasts. Past VocalEssence WITNESS concert guest artists and composers have included James Earl Jones, Bobby McFerrin, Billy Taylor, Moore by Four, Sounds of Blackness, Morehouse College Glee Club, Sweet Honey In The Rock®, and many more.

SCHOOL PROGRAM

Consisting of three components—Artist Workshops, Teacher Resources, and a Young People’s Concert—the **VocalEssence WITNESS School Program** is geared toward students in grades 4-12, and has reached more than 130,000 students since its inception.

- **Young People’s Concert (YPC):** An abbreviated version of the VocalEssence WITNESS public concert, the YPCs reach more than 4,000 students through three performances at Orchestra Hall.
- **Artist Workshops:** VocalEssence offers WITNESS partner schools two free days of workshops that allow students to work with a VocalEssence Teaching Artist. Teaching Artists explore the annual program theme through their artistic discipline, creating an integrative academic experience that combines the study of African American culture with art, music, social studies, literature, theater, character building, and other areas of school curriculum.
- **Teacher Resources:** Teachers at participating schools attend a half-day orientation seminar that engages them with professionally-written, culturally relevant lesson plans that fulfill Minnesota Academic Standards and introduces them to the VocalEssence Teaching Artists.

VocalEssence WITNESS is critical for many students who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend a professional event at a major concert hall. We believe that an education and performance experience like VocalEssence WITNESS gives students an opportunity to learn from exceptional role models, increasing their self-esteem, and creating a desire to continue exploring ways to express themselves through the arts.

For more information or to sign up for the **2019-2020 VocalEssence WITNESS School Program**, contact Rob Graham at robert@vocalessence.org or 612-547-1458.



2018-2019 PARTNER SCHOOLS

Alice Smith Elementary School
Anoka Middle School for the Arts
Arcadia Charter School
Ascension Catholic School
Brooklyn Middles STEAM
Magnet School
Como Park Senior High School
Creative Arts Secondary School
Evergreen Park World Cultures
Community School
Folwell Performing Arts
Magnet School
Harambee Elementary School
Hazel Park Preparatory Academy
Highland Elementary School
Irondale High School
Jefferson Community School
Linwood Monroe Arts Plus
Upper School
LoveWorks Academy
Minnesota Waldorf School
Oak Ridge Elementary School
Osseo Senior High School
Parkway Montessori Middle School
Pilgrim Lutheran School
Rockford Elementary
Arts Magnet School
Shannon Park Elementary School
Sheridan Arts Spanish Dual
Immersion School
Sonnesyn Elementary School
Southside Family Charter School
St. Peter Claver School
Thomas Edison High School
Westview Elementary
Windom Dual Immersion School
Woodland Elementary School

VOCAL ESSENCE WITNESS

2018-2019 TEACHING ARTISTS

TIMOTHY BERRY:

Vocalist, Composer, Percussionist

- Eclectic performances include appearances with The Urban Flavor band, and Grammy Award Winner Larnelle Harris, and Robert Robinson
- Composing awards include: the Live Music for Dance award from the American Composer's Forum, the Cultural Community Partnership grant, and winner in the Essentially Choral Competition for emerging American composers sponsored by VocalEssence and the American Composers Forum



PATRICIA BROWN:

Dance Instructor, Choreographer, Performer

- African-based movement styles
- Primary and secondary schools, detention facilities, and organizations
- Choreographs for dance groups, choirs, and theaters such as Penumbra, Pillsbury House, SteppingStone, and In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theaters
- Adjunct faculty at Macalester College, and the University of Minnesota where she received the College of Continuing Education Distinguished Teaching Award, and the Century Council Diverse Community Award
- 2013 Sage Award nominee for Outstanding Dance Educator
- 2015 Art-Us Legacy Arts Recognition Award recipient



BRANDON COMMODORE:

Musician, Producer, Educator

- Touring drummer with Mint Condition and Stokely Williams
- Founder of the band #MPLS
- Songwriter and Music producer
- Attended McNally Smith College of Music
- Has taught drum and percussion at Walker West Music Academy and served as a mentor to many students



GINGER COMMODORE:

Singer, Songwriter, Actress

- Performs jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, contemporary, and gospel
- Actress and singer with Penumbra Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, Minnesota Opera, Hey City Theater, Chanhassen Dinner Theater, The Capri Theater
- Instructor with Penumbra Theatre Company's Summer Institute
- Joining the cast of The Color Purple at Park Square Theater is one of her career highlights



KARLA NWEJE:

Arts Educator, Choreographer, Performer, Literary Artist

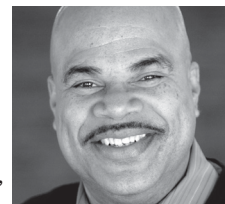
- BFA in Dance Performance & Composition from Brooklyn College/CUNY
- Performed and toured with several dance and theater companies NYC, Atlanta, and the Twin Cities
- Former K-12 academic school teacher, published author, anthology editor
- Creates and performs her work with her group, *The Samimejon Movement*
- 2013 recipient of Ordway's Excellence in Educational Service Award
- Regular presenter at arts and education conferences and summits



T. MYCHAEAL RAMBO:

Actor, Vocalist

- Actor, vocalist, arts educator and community organizer
- Performer with Penumbra Theatre, the Guthrie, Ordway, Illusion Theatre, MixedBlood, Park Square, Children's Theatre, Ten Thousand Things Theater and Minnesota Opera
- Affiliate professor in the College of Theatre Arts and Dance at the University of Minnesota
- Honors and awards: singing National Anthem for President Obama, 2008
- Regional Emmy Award, 2009 Sally Award, 2010 Minnesota Black Music Award,
- Young Audience Artist of the Year, McKnight Theatre Artist Fellowship, Minnesota
- State Arts Board Artist Fellowship, Bush Finalist, the U of M Century Council
- Community Award and Outstanding Community Service Award



ANITA RUTH:

Musician, Educator

- Has worked for thirty years with young actors and musicians
- Resident Music Director for Artistry Theater
- Co-presents with T. Mychael Rambo



ROXANE WALLACE:

Performer, Instructor, Choreographer

- McKnight Artist Fellow in Dance
- Minnesota Sage Award for Outstanding Performer
- Teaching Artist- Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts
- Dance Instructor- Zenon Dance Studio and School
- Dance Artist with over 20 years of professional and teaching experience



VOCAL ESSENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

VOCAL ESSENCE ¡Cantaré!



Now in its 11th year, VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! has engaged singers of all ages in the celebration of Mexican culture by connecting composers from Mexico with school choirs and community choruses. Each year, visiting composers work directly with Minnesota students and community members for four weeks, becoming familiar with the ensembles and writing a new song specifically for each.

In May of each year, all singers come together to present world premieres of the new music in concert at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. More than 5,500 singers have participated in VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! since its inception. Over 180 new Mexican songs have been created, and many are published by VocalEssence Music Press making them accessible to choirs around the world.

This season, composer Pablo Mendoza Halliday is working with VocalEssence Singers Of This Age, who represent 17 different metro area schools, and the following Twin Cities schools: Field Community School, Minneapolis; Harding Senior High School, Saint Paul; and Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion School, New Hope. The culminating concert will be at the Ordway Music Theater on Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 7 pm. Tickets are available at vocalessence.org.

In addition, for the third year VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! is extending to Chicago, IL. VocalEssence is supporting Chicago *a capella* as they implement ¡Cantaré! Chicago with Julio César Morales Pineda in the Chicago metro area, which will premiere new choral works at the ¡Cantaré! Chicago Community Concert at Northeastern Illinois University on Friday, May 3, 2019 at 7 pm.

“I have found VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! to be the perfect way to bring families and students of different backgrounds together, as I believe that is the key in the development of any community.”

—Ana Luisa Fajer Flores, former Consul of Mexico, St. Paul, MN
and now Mexico Ambassador to South Africa

For more information, please contact VocalEssence at info@vocalessence.org or 612-547-1451.



REATHA CLARK KING AWARD WINNER HALLIE Q. BROWN COMMUNITY CENTER

The Reatha Clark King Award for Excellence and Youth Motivation through the Cultural Arts was established by VocalEssence in 2007 to celebrate and recognize leaders and organizations that provide the resources to empower youth through direct contact, making a way for them to be as successful as they can be.

For thirteen years, VocalEssence has given out an award named after pioneering African American scientist, educator, and philanthropist Reatha Clark King. We're pleased to recognize the vital work of the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, located in St Paul's historic Rondo neighborhood, as the 2019 Reatha Clark King Award recipient.

The Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, named after the prominent African American educator, activist, and author, improves the quality of life in its community by providing access to critical human services, fostering and promoting personal growth, and developing community leadership. Executive Director Jonathan Palmer has led the organization through a period of renewal as it enters its 90th year serving the community in more ways than ever: with senior programs, an early learning center (ELC), services for low-income families, food security, after-school programs, and more.

"I'm only the sixth executive director in our history," says Jonathan, who started at the Center more than a decade ago. "My uncle, Gleason Glover, was once president of the Minneapolis Urban League, and shadowing him during a break in my college years taught me to love nonprofit community work."

"I'm especially proud of how we've strengthened our programs to empower young people," Jonathan says. "Our Youth Enrichment Program provides care both before and after school. We help kids develop and sharpen skills through our teen tutoring program. We seek out partners who can connect our students with valuable opportunities and support our Center—we have Breck School students visiting to read and engage with our ELC children, JJ Hill Montessori students who host a month-long food drive as part of our annual March campaign, Project Cheer which has partnered with us for over 50 years to provide music lessons to low income students, and we've been partnering with Saint Paul Parks and Rec since we opened the Martin Luther King Center together in 1972 to provide a more robust physical exercise and extracurricular experience."

"VocalEssence has played its part, as well," said Jonathan. "We've partnered with the WITNESS program for several years, hosting mini-concerts for our seniors with the Morehouse and Spelman Glee Clubs. In the last year, we added a program for one of the VocalEssence Vintage Voices choirs, connecting seniors with the social and mental health benefits of group singing."

"Receiving the Reatha Clark King Award from VocalEssence means a lot," says Jonathan. "It affirms the work we've done in the last decade to restore and reinvigorate our organization. It is a testament to the efforts of the people who make our organization successful. And it holds personal significance for me because I have known Reatha's family for over 30 years. Her son Scott and I were in school at Morehouse College together and sang in the Glee Club with each other. I have extremely high regard for her; she is someone I strive to emulate in the work that I do. I am deeply moved for us to be receiving this honor."

Congratulations, Jonathan Palmer and the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, for your long history of anchoring, nurturing, and transforming the Rondo community.



Hallie Q. Brown Community Center



PAST REATHA CLARK KING AWARD WINNERS

- 2018: Dr. Jacob A. Gayle, Jr. and the Medtronic Foundation
- 2017: T. Mychael Rambo
- 2016: Dr. Josie Robinson Johnson
- 2015: Sanford Moore
- 2014: General Mills
- 2013: Phyllis Wheatley Community Center
- 2012: Theresa Neal
- 2011: Sharon Sayles Belton
- 2010: Laysha Ward
- 2009: Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan C. Page and Diane Sims Page
- 2008: Patricia A. Harvey
- 2007: Ms. Ossie Brooks James

VOCAL ESSENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

VOCAL ESSENCE Singers Of This Age



Under the visionary leadership of Associate Conductor, G. Phillip Shoultz, III, VocalEssence launched a high school choral arts program that revolutionizes the concept of choir and reflects the diversity of our community in its membership.

Last year, members of VocalEssence Singers Of This Age had workshops with 14 different artists representing a variety of artistic disciplines including: acting, choreography, composing, dance, hip-hop, spoken word, singing, music theory, and aural skills.

Through this choir, VocalEssence is awakening artistic expression and creativity in young people, championing the community-building power of group singing, and encouraging a wider circle of participation in the choral art form.

Assessment of the inaugural impact of this program found that participating students:

- Gained confidence
- Found a place of belonging
- Realized the power music has to bring people together

VocalEssence Singers Of This Age (VESOTA) have been busy! Highlights include performing with Josh Groban at the Xcel Energy Center, their inaugural solo performance, **Identity**, on November 8, 2018 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, and serving as performing participants at the third annual **Together We Sing Festival** at the Minnesota History Center. VESOTA will honor past, present, and future trailblazing African and African American women at the February **VocalEssence WITNESS: Yet They Persist** concert at Orchestra Hall, celebrate Mexican music at the May **VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Community Concert** at the Ordway, and take part in world premiere performances of the opera, *Tienda*, sponsored by the Schubert Club.

“Choir was just an interest and something I deeply liked; but after hearing stories of many who rely on music for life I realized music is actually life-giving.”

– VESOTA Singer

“This program is amazing and I want it to continue.”

– VESOTA Singer

“I’ve always wanted to, and now I feel I can truly express my feelings through song.”

– VESOTA Singer





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MINNESOTA CITIZENS FOR THE ARTS INVITES YOU TO ARTS ADVOCACY DAY!

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AT THE MINNESOTA HISTORY CENTER & STATE CAPITOL COMPLEX

JOIN YOUR FELLOW ARTS ADVOCATES FROM ACROSS MINNESOTA FOR THE ARTS COMMUNITY'S ANNUAL DAY OF ACTION. ARTS ADVOCACY DAY IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EDUCATE AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS OF THE ARTS AT THE STATE CAPITOL. DO YOU TRUST THAT ARTS FUNDING WILL STAY SAFE? MAKE SURE LEGISLATORS UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARTS.

OTHER STATES LOOK TO MINNESOTA AS THE NATIONAL LEADER IN ARTS ADVOCACY. THEY SEE OUR LEGACY AMENDMENT AND THE UNPRECEDENTED ACHIEVEMENT OF CONSTITUTIONALLY GUARANTEED ARTS FUNDING. BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY THEY SEE YOU AND ALL THE ARTS ADVOCATES WHO FIGHT EVERY YEAR FOR OUR MANY VICTORIES. WORKING TOGETHER WE PROVE THE STRENGTH OF MINNESOTA'S ARTS COMMUNITY. ATTEND ARTS ADVOCACY DAY AND HELP PROTECT THE ARTS FUNDING YOU LOVE. PLUS, IT'S FUN!

ARTS ADVOCACY DAY SCHEDULE, MARCH 12, 2019:

7:30 AM
DOORS OPEN AT THE MINNESOTA
HISTORY CENTER, ST. PAUL

8:00 AM
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8:00 AM
REGISTRATION & COFFEE
(IF NOT ATTENDING RELEASE)

8:30 AM
FIRST TIME ADVOCATE TRAINING

9 - 10 AM
RALLY & JOIN YOUR TEAM
WALK/RIDE TO CAPITOL

10 AM - 2 PM
LEGISLATOR APPOINTMENTS
WITH YOUR TEAM. CAPITOL,
SENATE & STATE OFFICE BUILDING



**PRE-REGISTER ONLINE: WWW.ARTSMN.ORG
BY MARCH 8TH**



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CANDIDE

MAR 21-24, 2019

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FEATURING

Phinehas Bynum
Michael Fairbairn
Bradley Greenwald
Elizabeth Hawkinson
Susan Hofflander
Rodolfo Nieto
Liv Redpath
G. Phillip Shoultz, III

*This production is in partnership
with Theater Latté Da.*

WITH

VocalEssence Chamber Chorus &
Ensemble Singers
Chamber Orchestra
Philip Brunelle, *music director*
Peter Rothstein, *stage director*

The Royal National Theatre Version
Music by Leonard Bernstein
Book adapted from Voltaire by Hugh Wheeler
In a New Version by John Caird
Lyrics by Richard Wilbur
Additional Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim,
John Latouche, Lillian Hellman, and
Leonard Bernstein

TICKETS: \$35-\$45
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2018-2019

50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON



**SPECIAL THANKS
FOR THE SUPPORT
OF THIS CONCERT**

Ronald and Nicolai Lewis

SPECIAL THANKS

*Paul Gerike
Becky Hoffman
Valerie Kahler
Matthew Mehaffey*

**THE TIMES THEY ARE
A-CHANGIN'**

Saturday, April 27, 2019 at 8 PM

Palace Theatre

17 West 7th Place

Saint Paul, MN 55102

VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers

Philip Brunelle, conductor

G. Phillip Shoultz, III, conductor

Ashley DuBose

Jeremy Messersmith

Nation

2018-2019 SEASON SPONSORS



PiperJaffray



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund, and a grant from the Wells Fargo Foundation Minnesota.



WELCOME



For 50 years VocalEssence has embraced the music of Minnesota composers and poets, proud of the creativity this state has produced, not

to forget we are the only state with a 25-year Legacy Amendment to fund the arts! So it is fitting that we conclude this 50th season with the timeless music of Bob Dylan. We are pleased to present the Midwest premiere of Bob Dylan's music arranged for chorus by Steve Hackman, making our debut in the venerable Palace Theatre in St. Paul.

But we don't want to have just one Minnesotan on the program — why not a bunch of them? This state is filled with great musical talent in many forms and the first half of the program celebrates a few of our many composers from the classical to the folk to the pop worlds. Sit back and enjoy the marvelous wealth of Minnesota music we proudly present!

—Philip Brunelle,
Artistic Director and Founder

THE PROGRAM

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

The Uncertainty of the Poet from *With a Poet's Eye*

Cary John Franklin
(1985)

VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers

The Water Is Wide

Stephen Paulus
(1996)

Be You

Ashley DuBose
(2015)

Ashley DuBose, soloist

Hands

Jocelyn Hagen
(2017)

Nation, soloists

She Gave Her Angels

Prince
arr. G. Phillip Shoultz, III
(2019)

Violet!

Jeremy Messersmith
arr. by Val Kahler and Paul Gerike
(2017)

Closing Time

Dan Wilson
arr. Paul Gerike
(2018)

INTERMISSION

The Times, They are A-Changin':
The Words and Music of Bob Dylan

Steve Hackman
(2018)

1. The Times, They are A-Changin'
2. Like a Rolling Stone
3. Mr. Tambourine Man
4. All Along the Watchtower
5. The Times, They are A-Changin' II
6. Tangled Up in Blue
7. Subterranean Homesick Blues
8. Don't Think Twice, It's Alright
9. It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)
10. I Shall Be Released
11. Knockin' on Heaven's Door
12. The Times, They are A-Changin' III
13. Make You Feel My Love
14. A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall
15. Blowin' in the Wind

BIOGRAPHIES

ASHLEY DUBOSE



Singer-songwriter **Ashley DuBose** is probably most widely known for her hit single, “Intoxicated,” and for her participation in Season 5 of NBC’s *The Voice*. Her two albums—*Somethin’ More* and *Be You*—have fans in more than 37 countries, with 5 million streams to date. In 2014, Ashley was chosen as “Best Vocalist (Female)” by City Pages. In addition to writing and

performing music, Ashley works as an instructor for the Twin Cities Mobile Jazz Project.

BOB DYLAN



Bob Dylan is one of the most influential singer-songwriters of the 20th century, known for songs that chronicle social and political issues. Much of his most celebrated work dates from the 1960s, when songs such as “Blowin’ in the Wind” (1963) and “The Times They Are a-Changin’” (1964) became anthems for the Civil Rights Movement and anti-war movement.

His lyrics incorporated a wide range of political, social, philosophical, and literary influences, defied existing conventions of popular music, and appealed to the burgeoning counterculture.

STEVE HACKMAN



A musical visionary, **Steve Hackman** is a daring voice leading the charge among a new generation of classical musicians intent on redefining the genre. Equally adept in classical and popular forms, his breadth of musical fluency and technique is uncanny—he is at once a composer, conductor, producer, DJ, arranger, songwriter, singer, pianist, and even rapper. He uses those wide-

ranging abilities to create ingenious hybrid compositions that blur the lines between high and pop art and challenge our very definitions thereof.

CHAMBER MUSICIANS

Lee Blaske, *piano*

Pat Donohue, *guitar*

Greg Hippen, *bass*

Roger Frisch, *violin*

Claire Loudon, *violin*

Tamás Strasser, *viola*

Darin Anderson, *cello*

Chris Volpe, *contractor*

JEREMY MESSERSMITH



Hailed as a “Minnesota music hero” by the *Star Tribune*, singer-songwriter **Jeremy Messersmith** got his start like most musicians: performing in coffee shops. His first record (*Alcatraz Kid*) drew the attention of Dan Wilson (Trip Shakespeare, Semisonic), who then produced Jeremy’s follow-up album. His reputation continued to build nationally with acclaim from

NPR, Time Magazine, and an appearance on *Late Night with David Letterman*. His newest effort, the orchestral pop record *Late Stage Capitalism*, was released in March of 2018.

<http://www.jeremymessersmith.com>

NATION



Founders of the a cappella band **Nation**, and expanding on their composing successes, **Jocelyn Hagen** and **Timothy C. Takach** are quickly becoming known for reshaping the choral experience with singers around the globe. Pioneers in their field of composing, entrepreneurship, coaching

youth and adults, and leading ensembles in the spirit of collaboration, Jocelyn and Tim guide participants through a collective and creative journey, modeling healthy, accessible and honest pedagogy for developing singers.

PROUD TO SUPPORT VOCALESSENCE

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ABOUT VOCALESSENCE

VocalEssence, called “one of the irreplaceable music ensembles of our time” by Dana Gioia, past chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts—and the choir that Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones says “sings magnificently”—impacts thousands of students, singers, and composers each year through its initiative programs, contests, and support for innovative art. VocalEssence was founded in 1969 and has debuted more than 300 commissions and world premieres. For more information, visit www.vocalescence.org.



PHILIP BRUNELLE

Artistic Director and Founder

Philip Brunelle, artistic director and founder of VocalEssence, is an internationally-renowned conductor, choral scholar, and visionary. Philip has conducted symphonies, choral festivals, and operas on six continents. He recently completed 9 years as Vice President of IFCM (International Federation for Choral Music), holds five honorary degrees, and has been recognized for his commitment to choral music by the governments of Norway, Hungary, Sweden, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. His thoughts on music are at RenaissanceManpodcast.com. vocalescence.org/philipbrunelle.



G. PHILLIP SHOULTZ, III

Associate Conductor | Director of Learning and Engagement

Known for his innovative pedagogy and ability to inspire singers, **G. Phillip Shoultz, III**, serves as the Associate Conductor and Director of Learning and Engagement at VocalEssence. Phillip completed doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota and also earned degrees from the University of Georgia and Georgia State University. The winner of the 2015 American Choral Directors Association Graduate Student Conducting Competition, Phillip appeared as a Conducting Fellow with the Oregon Bach Festival. www.vocalescence.org/gps.



MARY JO GOTHMANN

Accompanist

Mary Jo Gothmann joined VocalEssence as staff accompanist in 2015. She enjoys a varied career as a chamber musician, soloist, opera coach, and organist. Mary Jo performs frequently with the Minnesota Orchestra and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and is a graduate of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Program, University of Minnesota, New England Conservatory, and St. Olaf College. Mary Jo is the founder and Artistic Director of the Joya Chamber Music Series at Zion Lutheran Church in Anoka.

Celebrate Philip Brunelle's 50th year as Organist and Choirmaster at Plymouth Church

Sun, Apr. 7, 2019 at 4:30 PM
Recital by Plymouth Soloists
Maria Jette and Jenny French, *soprano*
Lisa Drew, *alto*
Dan Dressen, *tenor*
James Bohn, *bass*
Philip Brunelle and Sonja Thompson,
piano

Sun, May 12, 2019 at 11 AM
Sunday Service World Premiere
Debut of hymn commissioned in honor
of Philip Brunelle with text by James
Gertmenian and music by David Evan
Thomas. The service will be followed by
a celebration of Philip and his 50 years
at Plymouth with friends, colleagues,
and the congregation.

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VOCALESSENCE CHORUS



The VocalEssence Chorus is an exceptional group of talented, committed singers from many walks of life. A staple on the VocalEssence season, the Chorus also performs at community events including the VocalEssence WITNESS Young People's Concerts at Orchestra Hall and the VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Concert at the Ordway. The VocalEssence Chorus was selected to perform at the 2017 Fall Convention for the American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota.

www.vocalessence.org/what-we-do/performing-ensembles/vocalessence-chorus/

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VOCALESSENCE ENSEMBLE SINGERS



Minnesota is home to an international choral music gem—the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers. Declared by the Oxford Times (UK) as having “a blend that could—and should—be the envy of every choir in the business,” this 32-voice professional chorus is enjoyed by millions from Duluth, Minnesota to Shanghai, China. The VocalEssence Ensemble Singers are equally at ease premiering music by Pulitzer Prize winning composers as well as teen moms in our Lullaby Project. www.vocalessence.org/what-we-do/performing-ensembles/vocalessence-ensemble-singers/

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MINING THE NEVER-ENDING IMPACTS OF THE ARTIST FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY

Can choral music reinvent the music of Bob Dylan the way Bob Dylan reinvented the American pop song and revolutionized rock music? Given the vibrant strengths of the VocalEssence Chorus and Ensemble Singers—combined with the hip sensibilities of composer, conductor, producer, and songwriter Steve Hackman—tonight’s concert will answer that question in many surprising ways.

Hackman has successfully bridged the realm between classical and popular music before by fusing the works of Radiohead, Coldplay, Bon Iver, and others with orchestral heavies like Brahms, Beethoven, and Copland respectively. But in Dylan, he meets a singular, master songwriter who covers an array of themes and musical styles. They range from simple love songs to sophisticated, sometimes epic, storytelling, often shaped by a stinging moral authority, a subtle sense of humor, and the antics and pathos all on display in the passing parade of the human experience.

Hackman’s Dylan arrangements, however, will get more than the usual scrutiny. As a native son raised on the Iron Range in Hibbing, Robert Allen Zimmerman remains a legendary “export” that most Minnesotans still hold in the highest regard. We value his geographic roots—the blue-eyed “Boy” from the North Country—and his enigmatic persona as much as his monumental accomplishments, including all those Dylan records, 36 studio albums alone at last count!

The Times They Are A-Changin’: *The Words and Music of Bob Dylan* surveys 15 select songs from Dylan’s massive artistic output that has won him every music award ever given. In 2016, he even received a Nobel Prize for Literature for radically changing the substance, structure, and spirit of the American popular song.

“How could it be!?” screeched detractors.

It really wasn’t a stretch. Dylan’s artistic strengths often lie in fiercely imbuing lyrics with a poetic and an authentic literary voice, while firmly embracing—and often rewriting in his own hand—elements from the nation’s enduring musical traditions, from folk and blues to gospel, spirituals, and rock ‘n roll. Well-crafted allusions also abound: images, ideas, lines, and landmarks that can be found in everything from the theater to the Bible to French, Italian and Beat poets to hallowed blues and folksong lyrics to the headlines of American history, and the back pages of his own journey. Should it be any surprise that his lifetime of songwriting has spurred a new class of Dylan scholarship and studies at universities and publishing houses?

In performance, fans have come to expect the unexpected. During his “Never Ending Tour,” the Rock Bard of the western world is certain to re-arrange even his more familiar work like “Tangled Up in Blue” and “All Along the Watchtower”—two trademark tunes in tonight’s program. Such a canny strategy keeps them fresh, sure, but it also ensures that they remain, well, “Dylanesque.”

Although his impact is worldwide, one way to measure Dylan’s influence is to scan the hundreds of other artists—across genres, gender, and races—that have covered in concert or recorded Dylan songs (you know you have arrived again and again when unlikely luminaries of varying brightness such as Sebastian Cabot and William Shatner have performed your work!).

For a time, you couldn’t pick up a Byrds album without it featuring a feast of Dylan songs, such as “Mr. Tambourine Man,” which became a hit for the now legendary folk-rockers. Reigning contemporary pop artists like Adele, along with grizzled industry vets Garth Brooks, Billy Joel, and others all recorded “Make You Feel My Love,” introducing new generations and other fans to his handiwork. Even in Bluegrass music, having a Dylan arrangement in your repertoire has been a standard for decades now.

Meanwhile, whole albums of Dylan material that occasionally defy description warrant hearing – including Joan Baez’s essential double disc set from 1968 to soul singer Betty Levette’s five-star *Things Have Changed* masterpiece in 2018. A personal favorite, though, is the collection of songs called *Dylan’s Gospel* by The Brothers and Sisters, featuring some of the back-up singers Dylan would deploy during his controversial and so-called “Gospel period” of the early ’80s, including Clydie King and Carolyn Willis. Merry Clayton, who sang the blood-curdling back up parts on the Rolling Stones’ classic, “Gimme Shelter,” is also in that choir.

Just as the singers will do tonight, The Brothers and Sisters explore Dylan’s “The Times They Are A-Changin’” and “I Shall Be Released” with a fervor that only truly timeless songs can inspire. While these and other selections might reflect the specific time periods in which they were written, ultimately, they remain a testament to the transcendent words and music that pour from the hand, heart, and spirit of one of the greatest artists America—or the wider world—will ever produce.

Martin Keller is a Minneapolis-based writer and publicist who interviewed Bob Dylan in 1983 upon the release of the album “Infidels.” In 1994, he spent a week on The Never-Ending Tour for concerts dates in Midwest. Details from that adventure, along with many others, is published in Scenester Stories from Minnesota’s Pop Life: Hijinx and Hearsay by the Minnesota Historical Society Press.





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DONOR SPOTLIGHT: Advocacy, music, and mentorship harmonize in the life of VocalEssence board member Traci Bransford



Her extraordinary legal career provided Traci Bransford with an insider's view into some amazing historical moments. As an attorney, she worked at a Beverly Hills practice specializing in police misconduct during the era of the Rodney King verdict, as Prince's General Counsel for his Paisley Park Enterprises during his high profile, pre and post "1999" era, and on Wall Street during the financial sector's scandals at the beginning of the new millennium.

Now the Spelman College and New York University School of Law graduate is in a position to help shape the future of her profession. Like the world of choral music, the legal industry is challenged with evolving to reflect our society's diversity. Traci is a vocal advocate in the legal profession regarding the need to improve the retention of people of color, particularly in large law firms, and she helps the younger generation of high achievers find a voice in a profession where most faces do not look like theirs. These experiences inform her role on the VocalEssence Board of Directors, where she chairs the VocalEssence WITNESS Advisory Council, and helps the organization identify a clearer path toward equity and inclusion.

With two children in junior high school, Traci is investing in the Twin Cities community where she herself grew up, and where she can see the impact VocalEssence makes. "Vintage Voices, the program for creating choirs at senior centers, is very touching to me personally because my mother sang at one point with them at Wilder Community Center for Aging in Saint Paul," she says. "Seeing firsthand how much she loved singing really brought home the program's benefits."

The work ahead is to ensure the organization's vitality by building strong ties with the younger generation. "We are outward-looking, searching for new communities to touch, which is crucial for an organization in its 50th year," says Traci.

As an entertainment lawyer, Traci watches artists fight to break into the business and to stay relevant. It gives her an extra appreciation for successes like the VocalEssence Super Bowl moment. "Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis were hosting a week of free concerts on Nicollet Mall," she remembers, "and VocalEssence was right there! VocalEssence, performing outside, warming things up for Idina Menzel."

Her work with VocalEssence has led the organization to new partnerships. "I was so extremely impressed with Phillip Shoultz's accomplishment with VocalEssence Singers Of This Age," she said of the diversity-focused high school choir, which provides transportation and rehearsal night meals for its singers. "I was able to connect VocalEssence with local urban entertainers like Chadwick 'Niles' Phillips and Ashley DuBose and bring them in as teaching artists and role models to VESOTA."

"The breadth and depth of VocalEssence never fails to impress me," she says of the organization's reach. Historical shifts favor institutions in close alignment with their communities, and Traci has watched VocalEssence actively cultivate the constituencies it will need to thrive. "I love the fact that we continue to become chameleons attempting to keep our finger on the pulse of our diverse communities," she says, "adapting to all the different environments where people gather to sing."



AUDITION FOR THE VOCALESSENCE CHORUS AND ENSEMBLE SINGERS 2019-2020 SEASON CONCERTS

Please visit vocalessence.org/audition to schedule your audition online.

THANK YOU, VOCALESSENCE DONORS

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VocalEssence salutes the individuals and corporate and private foundations whose generosity and leadership sparked the creation of the Endowment Fund. This permanent fund was established in 1987 and is now valued at \$3.5 million. Its interest income provides ongoing support to VocalEssence. We welcome new contributions to the Endowment Fund and extend our deepest appreciation to the following for their generous gifts.

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The Philip Brunelle Founder's Society recognizes those who make a provision for VocalEssence in their will or estate plans. The society is names in honor of our visionary founder, Philip Brunelle, who every day inspires the community to open their ears to new music from diverse cultures.

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