

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

School of Music

with

JMU Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association
(ACDA) and The Madison Chorale

present

"Raise Your Voice"

The 24th Annual JMU ACDA
ChoralFest!

featuring

Dr. McKenna Stenson, *guest conductor*

Sophie Osmani, *student conductor*
2025 JMU ACDA Conducting Competition Winner

Amy Robertson, *collaborative pianist*

Saturday, September 13, 2025
4 pm
Concert Hall



There will be one brief pause.

Program

Listen to the Music Frank Ticheli

Mechanicsville High School Choir
Lydia Fisher-Laskey, *conductor*

God Be in My Head *Richard Waters

Lightridge High School Choir
Helai Rutan, *conductor*

The Road Home Stephen Paulus
Melody and text from Southern Harmony, 1835

Douglas S. Freeman High School Choir
Madison Gilleland, *conductor*

ChoralFest Festival Choir **Dr. McKenna Stenson, *guest conductor*** **Amy Robertson, *collaborative pianist***

Alleluia Elaine Hagenberg

Lunar Lullaby Jacob Narverud
Sophie Osmani
Winner of the 2025 JMU ACDA Choral Conducting Competition

Temporal D. Sáez & Suzzette Ortiz
Olivia Miller and Josh Sheppard, *percussion*

Sicut locutus est J.S. Bach

Apple Tree Katerina Gimon
Radley Hoffman, Zane Johnson, Olivia Miller, Josh Sheppard, *percussion*

Sing Together Nico Rhodes
We invite the audience to join us!

Raise ----- your voice. Open your heart--- and sing together.

Sikirileke/Koloi Trad. SeSotho Folk Songs, arr. Sabelo Mthembu

Program Notes

St. Augustine of Hippo (November 13, 354 - August 28, 430) noted theologian, philosopher and recognized as a saint in the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Lutheran churches, once described the melismatic sound of the word “Alleluia” as *sonus quidam est laetitiae sine verbis* or, “a certain sound of joy without words.” Elaine Hagenberg’s **Alleluia** captures both the essence this quote and the depth of St. Augustine’s text in its structural design and harmonic buoyancy. Large sections set in jubilant, rhythmic 7/8 meter spin the ‘sound of joy’ of repeated Alleluias, while contrasting middle and final sections offer expansive lines and lush harmonies which propel the music through multiple key changes to climactic ending.

Resurrection Prayer (354-430)

All shall be Amen and Alleluia. We shall rest and we shall see. We shall see and we shall know.

We shall know and we shall love. We shall love and we shall praise.

Behold our end, which is no end.

Presented today by our 2025 ACDA Choral Conducting Competition Winner Sophie Osmani, Jake Narverud’s **Lunar Lullaby** is an imaginative setting of a text that tells of the “celestial child” in the stars. Osmani writes, “*While I never had the chance to sing this work in high school myself, I often listen to it and am struck by its celestial textures and emotional depth... Its themes of peace, comfort, and serenity feel especially resonant in today’s world of division and unrest. This piece creates a moment of stillness, community, and emotional connection. Even if it is just for a few minutes, it is both timely and necessary.*”

Sáez and Ortiz’s vibrant choral arrangement of the traditional plena **Temporal** offers an ideal combination of fun, authenticity, and accessibility for performance. *Plena*, an Afro-Puerto Rican musical genre, harmoniously fuses Latin and African musical elements. Describing a rainstorm, this arrangement is enhanced by percussion and optional piano accompaniment.

Allá viene, allá viene el temporal.

Temporal, temporal, allá viene el temporal.

¿Qué será de Puerto Rico,

Cuando llegue el temporal?

There comes, there comes the storm.

Storm, storm, there comes the storm.

What will become of Puerto Rico,

When the storm arrives?

A favorite movement from J.S. Bach’s celebrated “Magnificat,” *Sicut locutus est* is an exciting and accessible five-part work that is an almost textbook example of Baroque counterpoint, antecedent/consequent phrases, standard Baroque chord progressions, and our new favorite, melodic structure in florid, serpentine motion!

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula.

According to the promise He made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to His descendants forever.

Set in with a contemporary a cappella style with both percussion and body percussion, the text for Katerina Gimon’s arrangement of **Apple Tree** is based on the lyrics of the song “Apple Tree” by the singer-songwriter AURORA. The text explores themes of the need to protect the planet from climate change, and the idea that uniting and supporting one another can lead to positive global change. Gimon writes, “*Apple Tree* addresses the urgency of the global climate crisis and serves as a reminder that within each and every one of us lies the power to make a difference.” Key phrases include “All of my life I’ve been hunting,” “Digging my feet into the ground like an apple tree.”

The British Columbia Choral Federation recently unveiled their new multimedia campaign that aims to present a view of an authentic choral community guided by principles of allyship. The cornerstone of **Sing Together!** is the composition by multi-talented Nanaimo-based musician Nico Rhodes, recently commissioned by the BCCF. Rhodes is a genre jumping, multilingual musician who explores music in as many styles as possible! He grew up touring around the globe and is equally comfortable playing jazz, classical, funk or roots music, orchestrating a symphony, writing musicals, conducting choirs, drinking expresso, and practicing his Japanese, the language he is currently embracing!

Both of these energetic songs are cautionary tales! The first song, **Sikirileke**, is a song about a man who fell in a well! Ah! The second song, **Koloi**, is about a car that is moving at a very high speed and needs to be stopped, which is a metaphor for life that moves by so fast and the need to sometimes stop and appreciate the little things.

Sikirileke motho wa wela. Ha re bapala motho wa wela. Re ne re bapala motho wa wela.

Sikirileke, the man fell. When we play, someone falls down. We were playing a game of catch-up.

Koloi hae eme. Koloi ea tsamaya

The car is not stopping! The car is moving away!

Thiba koloi hae eme. Thiba koloi ea tsamaya.

Intercept the car! Let it stop! Intercept, the car is moving away!

FA '25 ChoralFest Personnel

The Madison Chorale

Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy, *director*

Adam Shenk, *collaborative pianist*

Addison Walton, Colin Cossi, *DMA graduate conductors*

Ivan Godoy, *MM graduate conductor*

Leah Brown, Mac Creswick, Alex Dickerson, Kelly Donlan, Emmie Stepp, *managers*

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Abby Spencer	Addison Walton	Anthony Bassett	Alex Dickerson
Allie Ranton	Ciara Theisz	Brian Garmendia	Colin Cossi
Christina Santiago	Grace Hollowell	Jacob Walton	Ian Amos
Emalee Stepp	Isabelle Rhodes	Garrett Gass	Dan Klein
Emma Jones	Jackie Copeland	Jeffrey Ruiz	Habib Jaafar
Helen Albiston	Jaya Waylan	Joshua Nieves-Arbaiza	Ivan Godoy
Izzy Layman	Katy Lange	Luke Brooks	Johnny Park
Kimberly Aikens	Kelly Donlan	Mac Creswick	Kevin Landry
Marlow Lewis	Leah Brown	Thomas Stachelski	Michael Tsougranis
Nancy Walker	Madeleine Parr		Roman Leonard
Natalie Carter	Olive Poole		Takoma Williams
Paige Driver	Rebecca Imbasciani		Will Palestrant
Sophie Osmani	Savannah Whitley		
Sydney Ashworth	Sydney Parow		

ChoralFest High School Liaisons

Alejandra Velez, Allie Ranton, Emma Leudesdorff, Gloria Cox,
Habib Jaafar, Hailey Donithan, Jeffrey Ruiz, Josh Grimes, Kylie Charters,
Leila Slye, Morgan Carney, Mya Garcia, Natalie Gillum, Olive Poole,
Sarah Damon, Sheridan Anthony, Trista Coltellino, Yasmine Akoum

The James Madison University School of Music is proud of its long tradition of choral music excellence, making it a perfect choice for anyone interested in choral music and choral music education! There are three auditioned choirs and two non-auditioned choirs on the JMU campus, all of which are open to university students. **The Madison Singers**, the **JMU Chorale**, and the **Treble Chamber Choir** are our three campus auditioned choirs, while The **University Chorus Treble/Bass** and **University Chorus Soprano/Alto** (these ensembles combine to create the **University Chorus**) are open to all who wish to sing without auditioning. *We would love to welcome your participation in a JMU choral ensemble! Please contact Dr. V. (vanderjx@jmu.edu) or Dr. Hayes (hayeswb@jmu.edu) for more information.*

ChoralFest 2025

Participating High Schools

**denotes JMU alumni*

Douglas S. Freeman HS

***Madison Gilleland, director**

Evie Woody
Gabrielle Betz
Hannah Allen
Jason Roberts
Jocelyn Brown
Lily Addair
Liz Dixon
Reed Jones
Syl Compton
Victor Plata
Vival Weatherford

Mechanicsville HS

Lydia Fisher-Laskey, director

Anthony Montez
Ashley Imbert
Caleb Johnson
Cami Williams
Courtney Tartini
Grady Cornwell
Hayden Garcia
Jordan Gadoury
Keagan White
Kenlee Reynolds
Lauryn Benson
Rasheeda Diong
Sarah Harkins
Travis Steele
Viviana Wells
Zia Wigfall

John Champe HS

***Melanie Black, director**

Adivi Domakonda
Akshaya Shrinivasan
Anshika Nair
Anvita Venkat
Caroline Chatman
Caroline Quinlivan
Chase Maxwell
Chase Mulholland
Ethan Luberecki
Gio Leon
Isla Legaspi
Jackson Knoell
Kevin Daniel
Lauren Garcia
Leah Hattery
Lexi Wilson
Lilly Carde
Lincoln Smith
Luke Dollery
Lys Baldwin
Maya Sokolowski
Meena Hayman
Nick Pedicone
Ozzie Smith
Rachel Lenderman
Radha Kanagasabapathy
Sreeram Bethanabhotla
T.J. Jones

Lightridge High School

***Helai Rutan, director**

Alanna Jackson
Andreas Christopoulos
Anisha Prabhu
Caden Spalding
Caleb McConnell
Caleb Morton
Chloe Steverson
Cooper Gaull
Daniela Lilly
Ethan Strasburg
Gavin Melanson
Hasini Wilson
Inaaya Rasul
Jayem Averion
Jordan Brooks
Jyotsna Gopianand
Keira Kavulic
Kimya Afshar
Layla Jackson
Laurie Mikaer
Logan Griffin-Lopes
Luke Cabral
Matts Bouldin
Maxwell St. Andre
Mihira Nagireddy
Nikki Chima-Orji
Nisha Gupta
Penny Ehrling
Renny Donnelly
RJ Rolan
Zalan Bangash

Dominion High School
My-Van Nguyen, *director*

AJ Fedak
Aleena Ahmed
Alexa Elkari
Alyssa Hombach
Anthony Parrish
Cain Mason
Cait Hale
Callie Banks
Daniel Fuentes Salamanca
Duke Guyton
Eli Quinones
Elizabeth Leu
Evie Whitehead
Jacob Blevins
Jayden Olsen
Jemima Stephen
John Economou
Joshua Clifton
Justin Hernandez
Kaleel Clinch
Kate Ecker
Kayleigh Keegan
Kiki Riggle
Kyle Parrish
Lazaros Allred
Libby Kronman
Mina Walker
Nivedita Krishnan
Omar Garcia
Sam Davis
Sofia Lupas

Rock Ridge High School
Jordan Markwood, *director*

Ajay Nayak
Amelie Waas
Angel Labosette
Ansh Shah
Arjun Jayendran
Arjun Nair
Avery McCarty
Carol Jung
David Cheong
Derrick Forney
Dust McCready
Ela Gupta
Emersyn Moskal
Hasini Kotinadhuni
Izzy Scienski
Lance De Leon
Mar Amos
Marco Monroy
Marian Lindsey
Meenakshi Dev
Neil Bhawnani
Raine Surla
RJ Richardson
Sanjana Chandok
SarahGrace Gruessing
Taylor Esguerra
Xavier van Es

Hanover High School
Grayson Parker, *director

Ava Reynold
Briana Borel
Cayden Keller
James Lawson
Joel Major
Kahlia Lewis
Kendri Ayers
Korben Fulcher
Logan McClanahan
Madie Nuckols
Mallory Hughes
Matthew Warley
Noah Hindley
Traylor Fabricant

John R. Lewis HS
Cara Ainge, *director

Addison Dunlap
Allison Harris
Arianna Gross
Bethany Sanborn
Bev Ta
Cecelia Waddington
Gelela Wube
Hans Harrer
Isabella Apodaca
Laila Sabry
Nile Courtney
Noah Smith
Reyzah Gajudo
Sadie Rice
Skylar Shatto

Stafford High School
Joe Eveler, *director*

Abigail Mann
Alanna Grisham
Annabelle Marschall
Caralyne Washington
Carlton Smith
Collin Buchanan
Elise Richardson
Elizabeth George
Ella Hensel
Gerardo Rubio
Isabelle McGaha
Jayden Hilliard
Jayden Wetherbee
Joshua Chocojay Hernandez
Layla Davis
Leah Luttrell
Madison Mears
Malisa Nguyen
Maxwell Powell
Nicole Richard
Penelope Brianas
Quinn ONeill
Rory Irish
Sade Barbieri
Silas Iem

Biography

As an innovative conductor, teacher, and vocalist, McKenna Stenson has built a career inspiring students to sing confidently and motivating communities to create lasting change through song. Her energetic demeanor permeates positivity throughout the ensemble, creating a community of compassion, trust, and resilience.



Stenson currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education on the faculty at Florida State University. Stenson conducts Levana, an advanced treble choir, and teaches undergraduate choral methods, graduate conducting, and graduate seminars. Stenson enjoys serving as a guest conductor, clinician, presenter, and adjudicator for choirs throughout the United States and abroad. Prior to her appointment at Florida State University, Stenson served as Assistant Professor on faculty at the University of Kansas (KU) where she served as Associate Director of Choral Activities where she conducted the KU Glee Club and Oread Singers. Stenson enjoys serving as a guest conductor, clinician, presenter, and adjudicator for choirs throughout the United States and abroad. Recent engagements include teaching internationally with The Cornish-American Song Institute “Music Across the Pond”, where she taught seminars in choral conducting and choral masterclasses, adjudicating the Canadian Cantando Choral Festivals, and directing the KU Glee Club at the Kansas Music Educators Association State Conference. She has served in state leadership roles and presented sessions at state, regional, and international conferences including the World Symposium on Choral Music (Istanbul, 2023.)

Stenson was nationally recognized as a Country Music Award Foundation Music Teacher of Excellence for 2020. She was recently named a National Finalist for the 2023 American Prize Conducting Competition and Choral Performance Competition. Stenson earned her Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting at the University of North Texas, Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Michigan State University, and Bachelor of Music in Music Education and Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Ohio State University. Stenson enjoyed serving as a public-school teacher as the Choral Director and CFPA Vocal Director at Charles J. Colgan High School. In her free time, she enjoys running, traveling with her son Luka and husband Bryan, and amplifying the voices of women conductors on her podcast *conduct(her)* with co-founder (and sister) Kyra Stahr. **It is an honor to have Dr. Stenson as our guest conductor** as we join forces within the Commonwealth of Virginia for this exciting ‘side-by-side’ collegiate/high school choral Festival!

FA '25 JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY CHORAL AREA

Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy
Director of Choral Activities, Co-Coordinator of the Ensemble Area
Professor of Choirs, Conducting, and Choral Music Education

Dr. W. Bryce Hayes
Associate Director of Choral Activities
Professor of Choirs, Choral Music Education

Colin Cossi, *DMA Choral Conducting Graduate Student*
Addison Walton, *DMA Choral Conducting Graduate Student*
Ivan Godoy, *MM Choral Conducting Student*
Marlow Lewis, *Choral Librarian*
Rebecca Imbasciani, *Poster & T-shirt Design*

JMU CHORAL COLLABORATIVE PIANISTS

Adam Shenk, *The Madison Chorale*
Elizabeth Williams, *TCC and UCSA*
Linlin Uta, *UCTB*

UNDERGRADUATE ENSEMBLE MANAGERS/CONDUCTING INTERNS*

Leah Brown, Mac Creswick, Alex Dickerson, Kelly Donlan, Emmie Stepp, *TMC*
Leah Brown*, Jackie Copeland, Allie Ranton, *Treble Chamber Choir*
Hailey Donithan, Brigit Downs, Lauren Motter, Christina Santiago*, *UCSA*
Josh Grimes, Kevin Landry, *UCTB*

EXECUTIVE BOARD: JMU CHAPTER OF THE ACDA

Sophie Osmani, *president*; Christina Santiago, *vice-president*;
Helen Albiston, *secretary*; Alex Dickerson, *treasurer*;
Rebecca Imbasciani, *historian & public relations, poster & t-shirt design*

CHECK OUT THE JMU CHORAL AREA YOUTUBE CHANNEL AND INSTAGRAM

JMU VOICE AREA

Dr. Sonya Baker, *soprano*
Dr. Kirsten Blair, *soprano*
Dr. Bridgid Eversole, *soprano*
Professor Brenda Witmer, *soprano*
Dr. Jamison Walker, *tenor, Voice Area Coordinator*
Professor Michael Hadary, *baritone*
Professor David Newman, *baritone*
Professor Joshua Borths, *Director of Opera Theatre*
Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy, *Director of Choral Activities*
Dr. W. Bryce Hayes, *Associate Director of Choral Activities*