2019 Winter Conference

84th Annual Winter Conference
All-State Guest Conductors and Composer in Residence

December 5-8, 2019 – Rochester, NY

2019 NYSSMA® All-State Vocal Jazz Ensemble
Rosana Eckert, Guest Conductor – University of North Texas

NYSSMA® welcomes Rosana Eckert as the 2019 guest conductor of the NYSSMA® Conference All-State Vocal Jazz Ensemble. Rosana Eckert is an internationally renowned jazz vocalist, composer, arranger and educator. She has performed with a long list of jazz luminaries, including Bobby McFerrin, Kenny Wheeler, George Duke, Christian McBride, Jon Faddis, New York Voices, and Lyle Mays.

Her recordings, At the End of the Day and Small Hotel, have received critical recognition, and At the End of the Day was a finalist for Best New Jazz Album in the 2006 Independent Music Awards. Her highly anticipated solo album, Sailing Home, produced by Peter Eldridge (singer/songwriter/New York Voices), was released in June 2019 on Origin Records.

In addition to leading her own band, Eckert sings with the Mike Steinel Quintet, and she co-leads Brasuka, a Brazilian-inspired original music project. She has served on the jazz faculty of the University of North Texas since 1999, and her work teaching jazz voice, song writing, and vocal pedagogy has helped establish UNT as one of the premier jazz vocal programs in the world.

A multifaceted musician, Eckert is in demand as a clinician, festival adjudicator, jazz honor choir conductor, and commissioned choral composer/arranger. Her many published vocal ensemble arrangements have been performed worldwide.

Passionate about sharing jazz with young students, she co-wrote, with Sharon Burch, Freddie the Frog and the Jungle Jazz (a musical for young voices) and Jazz for Kids (a song and classroom activity collection).

A highly respected improviser, Eckert can be heard on Scatability, a vocal improvisation app by Michele Weir, and on the demonstration CD for Darmon Meader’s Vocal Jazz Improvisation: An Instrumental Approach. Eckert’s new book, Singing with Expression: A guide to authentic and adventurous song interpretation, was published by Hal Leonard in June 2018.

In addition to her extensive live performing, writing, and teaching, Eckert works regularly as a studio vocalist, producer, and voice-over actor in Dallas. She has worked on hundreds of commercials, industrial productions, albums, publishing demos, and radio IDs heard around the world. www.rosanaeckert.com

2019 NYSSMA® All-State Instrumental Jazz Ensemble
Michael Davis, Guest Conductor – Trombonist/Composer

NYSSMA® welcomes Michael Davis as the 2019 guest conductor of the NYSSMA® Conference All-State Instrumental Jazz Ensemble. New York-based trombonist/composer Michael Davis has enjoyed a diverse and acclaimed career during the past 35 years.

Widely known as the trombonist for five world tours with the Rolling Stones, he toured and recorded extensively with Frank Sinatra, has released 11 CDs as a solo artist, composed more than 150 works, authored a dozen books for brass players of all levels and appeared on more than 500 CDs, television themes and motion picture soundtracks.

He is the founder, creator and president of Hip-Bone Music, Inc. In 2011, the S.E. Shires Company released the Michael Davis signature model trombone and followed that in 2015 with the release of the Michael Davis+ trombone.

Born to a musical family in San Francisco, CA, on August 13, 1961, Davis’s early musical studies included the piano, drums, tuba, baritone horn and electric bass. Settling on the trombone in high school, he quickly found his stride and received principal chairs in many all-state honors groups. His collegiate career commenced at the Eastman School of Music in the fall of 1979.

In the spring of 1983, Davis received the break he had hoped for when the Buddy Rich Band called and asked him to sign on. His two-year stint with the band forged musical and personal friendships that continue to this day and presented him with “the best graduate degree anyone could possibly hope for.”

Davis’s freelance career in New York City began in earnest in 1986, and before long he was one of the top trombonists around. As testimony to his versatility and wide regard, the list of jazz and pop luminaries he has worked with include James Taylor, Michael Jackson, Bob Dylan, Aerosmith, Tony Bennett, Jay Z, Sarah Vaughan, Sting, Beck, Branford Marsalis, Peter Gabriel, Sheryl Crow, Lyle Lovett, Bob Mintzer, Paul Simon, David Sanborn, Terence Blanchard and scores of others.

In the field of music education, Davis has served as a guest artist and clinician around the world, while also authoring a number of highly esteemed instructional books and arrangements for musicians of all ages and abilities. A multiple recipient of awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, he maintains his own jazz groups and projects through Hip-Bone Music.
Dr. Threinen, who holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Michigan, is a Yamaha Master Educator. She currently serves on the newly created Executive Council of the Composer Diversity Project and is an active member of these organizations: American Bandmasters Association (ABA), World Association for Symphonic Band and Ensembles (WASBE), College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA), National Band Association (NBA), National Association for Music Education (NAfME), and Pi Kappa Lambda and Kappa Kappa Psi as an honorary member.

Dr. Emily Threinen, Guest Conductor – University of Minnesota

NYSSMA® welcomes Dr. Emily Threinen as the 2019 guest conductor of the NYSSMA® Conference All-State Wind Ensemble. Dr. Threinen is an Associate Professor of Music and currently serves as Director of Bands at the University of Minnesota School of Music in Minneapolis-Saint Paul.

In this position, she conducts the acclaimed Wind Ensemble, guides the graduate wind band conducting program, assists undergraduate conducting, and provides administrative leadership for all aspects of the University of Minnesota Bands. Dr. Threinen began this post in August 2016.

Prior to her appointment at Minnesota, Dr. Threinen served as Associate Professor, Director of Bands, and Artistic Director of Winds and Brass at Temple University’s Boyer College of Music and Dance in Philadelphia.

Before her work in Philadelphia, Dr. Threinen served as Assistant Professor, Director of Bands at Shenandoah Conservatory of Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA; Director of the Duke University Wind Symphony in Durham, NC; Director of the Concordia University Wind Ensemble in Ann Arbor, MI; Conductor of the Dodworth Saxhorn Band in Ann Arbor, and Director of Bands and Instrumental Music at Harding High School in St. Paul, MN, where she received the Outstanding Teacher Award.

Dr. Threinen consistently works with composers, arrangers and performing artists of varied disciplines. Residencies and projects with composers and new compositions are integral to her creative work. Dr. Threinen is published in multiple volumes of the GIA Teaching Music Through Performance in Band book series, where she has been recognized as a strong scholarly contributor. She is active, across the nation and abroad, as a guest conductor, clinician, and conference presenter.

Dr. Threinen, who holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Michigan, is a Yamaha Master Educator. She currently serves on the newly created Executive Council of the Composer Diversity Project and is an active member of these organizations: American Bandmasters Association (ABA), World Association for Symphonic Band and Ensembles (WASBE), College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA), National Band Association (NBA), National Association for Music Education (NAfME), and Pi Kappa Lambda and Kappa Kappa Psi as an honorary member.

Dr. James Mick, Guest Conductor – Ithaca College

NYSSMA® welcomes Dr. James Mick as the 2019 guest conductor of the NYSSMA® Conference All-State String Orchestra. Dr. Mick is an Associate Professor of Music Education at Ithaca College. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in string pedagogy, orchestral rehearsal techniques, instrumental conducting, psychology of music teaching, and contemporary ensembles.

A passionate music educator and ardent supporter of public school music programs, Dr. Mick has been invited to work with students in a variety of settings, ranging from individual school and all-district events to all-county and all-state honors festivals.

He has served as music director of the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra since 2015, which performs concerts at various locations across the Rochester community, including an annual side-by-side performance with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra at Eastman Theatre’s Kodak Hall. He is also the past music director of the Ithaca Community Orchestra where he proudly worked with a diverse group of musicians representing a wide range of ages and experiences.

In addition to conducting, Dr. Mick has given professional pedagogical presentations at a number of local, state and national conferences, including recent engagements with the American String Teachers Association National Conference and The Midwest Clinic: An International Band and Orchestra Conference.

Dr. Mick’s research interests include adjudication reliability, performance perceptions, school string program viability, and string instrument vibrato characteristics. His scholarly work has been published in national journals, including Bulletin for the Council of Research in Music Education, Contributions to Music Education, Music Educators Journal, and String Research Journal, along with various regional and state music education journals.

Dr. Mick has contributed pedagogical book chapters to Teaching Music through Performance in Orchestra, Volume 4 and The Oxford Handbook of Preservice Music Teacher Education in the United States. He is currently working as co-author of an instrumental pedagogy textbook for collegiate preservice music teachers, which will be published by Oxford University Press. In addition to his scholarly writing, Dr. Mick serves on the editorial board of the String Research Journal and as past president of the New York State chapter of the American String Teachers Association.
A native of Kansas, Dr. Mick has taught elementary and middle school orchestra in Texas, and high school orchestra and jazz in New York. He holds degrees from Florida State University, Doctor of Philosophy in Music Education; Ithaca College, Master of Music in Music Education, and, Texas Christian University, Bachelor of Music Education.

Outside of his academic pursuits, Dr. Mick is an avid bicyclist who enjoys spending time with his wife, Dr. Elizabeth Moore, DVM, PhD, restoring their c.1883 downtown Ithaca home.

**2019 NYSSMA® All-State Treble Chorus**

Dr. Lori Hetzel, Guest Conductor – University of Kentucky

NYSSMA® welcomes Dr. Lori Hetzel as the 2019 guest conductor of the NYSSMA® Conference All-State Treble Chorus. Dr. Lori Hetzel is the Associate Director of the School of Music, Associate Director of Choral Activities and Full Professor of Choral Music Education at the University of Kentucky where she conducts the UK Women’s Choir and the popular a cappella group, Paws and Listen.

In addition to her conducting duties, Dr. Hetzel supervises student teachers and teaches undergraduate methods and choral conducting courses in which she has pioneered a unique partnership program with area high schools and middle schools allowing undergraduate students to begin classroom teaching early in their curriculum and gain true hands-on experience.

Dr. Hetzel is a contributing author to the new textbook *Conducting Women’s Choirs: Strategies for Success*. Her many academic honors and accomplishments include the University of Kentucky Great Teacher of the Year award in 2000, a finalist for the Provost Awards for Outstanding Teaching in both 2009 and 2010, and the winner of the Robert K. Baar Choral Award in 2011 “given to one choral director in the state who exhibits outstanding leadership in choral music and promotes music education in the state of Kentucky.”

Lori Hetzel received the Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Wisconsin/Green Bay, the Master of Music from the University of Missouri/Kansas City and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Michigan State University.

Outside of the university, Dr. Hetzel serves as Artistic Director of the Lexington Singers Children’s Choir and conducts the LSCC Chamber Choir. The Lexington Singers Children’s Choir was formed to provide specialized choral opportunities for the children of central Kentucky and now offers four select choirs in which children can participate.

The group performs not only in the greater Lexington area but also has presented concerts with the Indianapolis Children’s Choir – Kantorie; Spivey Hall Children’s Choir (Atlanta); Central Illinois Children’s Choir; Vanderbilt Children’s Choir; St. Louis Children’s Choir; Cincinnati Children’s Choir, and at the Kennedy Center as part of the Our Lincoln concert presented by the Kentucky Arts Council. The group also is often seen in collaboration with other area musical groups, including The Lexington Singers, Lexington Philharmonic, UK Opera Theater and the UK Choirs.

In 2014 the Chamber Choir was invited to perform at the American Choral Directors Association Southern Division Convention in Jacksonville, FL, where they premiered the Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission piece by Alice Parker. In 2016, they were invited to perform at Carnegie Hall with the Choirs of America Festival where they had a solo performance. In 2018 they performed for the Kentucky Music Educators Convention. This year the Chamber Choir will be performing in Washington D.C.

**2019 NYSSMA® All-State Mixed Chorus**

Dr. Jerry Blackstone, Guest Conductor – University of Michigan

NYSSMA® welcomes Dr. Jerry Blackstone as the 2019 guest conductor of the NYSSMA® Conference All-State Mixed Chorus. GRAMMY Award winner Jerry Blackstone is a leading conductor and highly respected conducting pedagogue.

Now Emeritus Professor of Conducting, he served on the faculty of the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance for 30 years where as director of choirs he led the graduate program in choral conducting and oversaw the University’s 11 choirs. In February 2006, he received two GRAMMY Awards (Best Choral Performance and Best Classical Album) as chorus master for the critically acclaimed Naxos recording of William Bolcom’s *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*.

The Naxos recording of Milhaud’s monumental L’Oreste d’Eschyle, on which Dr. Blackstone served as chorus master, was nominated for a 2015 GRAMMY Award (Best Opera Recording). *Opera Magazine* reviewer Tim Ashley wrote, “the real stars, though, are the University of Michigan’s multiple choirs, who are faced with what must be some of the most taxing choral writing in the entire operatic repertory. Their singing has tremendous authority and beauty, while the shouts and screams of Choéphores are unnerving in the extreme. Their diction is good too: the occasions when we don’t hear the words are Milhaud’s responsibility, rather than theirs. It’s an extraordinary achievement, and utterly mesmerizing.”

The University of Michigan Chamber Choir, conducted by Dr. Blackstone, performed by special invitation at the inaugural conference in San Antonio of the National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO) and presented three enthusiastically received performances in New York City at the National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA).

As conductor of the University of Michigan Men’s Glee Club from 1988-2002, Dr. Blackstone led the ensemble in performances at ACDA national and division conventions and on extensive concert tours throughout Australia, Eastern and Central Europe, Asia, South America, and the United States.
In 2017, NCCO presented him with its prestigious Lifetime Achievement Membership Award, and in 2006 for "significant contributions to choral music," he received the ACDA-Michigan chapter’s Maynard Klein Lifetime Achievement Award.

From 2003–2015, Dr. Blackstone served as conductor and music director of the University Musical Society (UMS) Choral Union, a large community/university chorus that frequently appears with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) and the Ann Arbor Symphony and presents yearly performances of Handel's Messiah and other major works for chorus and orchestra.

Choirs prepared by Dr. Blackstone have appeared under the batons of Valery Gergiev, Neeme Järvi, Leonard Slatkin, Hans Graf, Michael Tilson Thomas, John Adams, Helmuth Rilling, James Conlon, Nicholas McGegan, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Peter Oundjian, and Yitzak Perlman.

Dr. Blackstone is considered one of the country’s leading conducting teachers, and his students have been first place award winners and finalists in both the graduate and undergraduate divisions of ACDA’s biennial National Choral Conducting competition.

His 2016 rehearsal techniques DVD, Did You Hear That? (GIA Publications) deals with the conductor’s decision-making process during rehearsal. Santa Barbara Music Publishing distributes his acclaimed educational DVD, Working with Male Voices and also publishes the Jerry Blackstone Choral Series.

He is an active guest conductor and workshop presenter and has appeared in 42 states, as well as New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Sicily. In the summer, he leads the Adult Choir Camp and the Choral Conducting Institute at the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

Prior to coming to the University of Michigan in 1988, Dr. Blackstone served on the music faculties of Phillips University in Oklahoma, Westmont College in California, and Huntington University in Indiana.

2019 NYSSMA® All-State Symphonic Band
Prof. Jay S. Gephart, Guest Conductor – Purdue University

NYSSMA® welcomes Prof. Jay Gephart as the 2019 guest conductor of the NYSSMA® Conference All-State Symphonic Band. Prof. Jay S. Gephart joined the faculty of Purdue University in the fall of 1995 after completing 12 years as a public school band director. In July of 2001, he was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure and in 2009 was promoted to Full Professor. In November, 2006, Professor Gephart was appointed Director of University Bands and currently serves as the Al G. Wright Chair of Purdue Bands and Orchestras.

He is the director of the Purdue "All-American" Marching Band the Purdue University Wind Ensemble. He is also coordinator of the concert band program. From 1995-2006, Gephart served as the music director for the Purdue Symphony Orchestra. He also serves as Artistic Director for the Kokomo, IN, Park Band.

Gephart received a Master of Music degree in Tuba Performance with High Distinction from Indiana University in 1988 and a Bachelor of Music Education degree with Distinction from Indiana University in 1983.

Under his direction, the Purdue Wind Ensemble and Symphony Orchestra have shared the stage with some of the nation’s outstanding soloists and have represented Purdue at the Indiana Music Educators Association state convention on two occasions. In February of 2012 the Purdue Wind Ensemble performed a concert at the national convention of the American Bandmasters Association held in Indianapolis. Under his direction, the Wind Ensemble has also performed concerts in Chicago’s Symphony Center and on two occasions in New York’s Carnegie Hall.

Under his direction, the Purdue “All-American” Marching Band has traveled literally around the world. With recent performances in Beijing, the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City, the St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Dublin, and La Feria de las Flores in Medellin, Colombia, the “All-American” Marching Band continues to serve as an ambassador for Purdue, the State of Indiana and the nation.

Gephart has served as a guest conductor, clinician, lecturer and adjudicator both nationally and internationally, having conducted all-state bands in Indiana, Virginia, Colorado, Arkansas and Kentucky. He has served as a clinician at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, at the Western International Band Clinic and at numerous conferences and in-service workshops. In 1997, he was selected to conduct the music camp honor band for the Department of Education in the Northern Region of Queensland, Australia.

He has been the recipient of many awards and honors, including the Indiana Outstanding Bandmaster Award, the Purdue University New Professional Award, and the 2018 James Calvert Outstanding Music Educator Award. In 2018 he also was named Collegiate Educator of the Year by the Indiana Music Educators Association. In 2016, Gephart was named an Honorary Old Master by Purdue University, recognizing work in his profession.

He has commissioned numerous works for wind band, including Anthem by Steven Bryant, which was premiered in 2011 celebrating the 125th anniversary of Purdue Bands. Most recently he has served on the faculty of the American Band College (ABC) in Ashland, OR, and serves on the ABC Board of Directors.

Gephart has been very active in various professional organizations, including National Association for Music Education, National Band Association, College Band Directors National Association, Indiana Bandmasters Association, Indiana Music Educators Association and Phi Beta Mu.

From 2010-12, he served as President of the Big Ten Band Directors Association and currently holds the position of Vice President and Treasurer of the John Philip Sousa Foundation. He is also a member of the NBA Revelli Composition Contest selection committee.

In 2012, he was elected to a position on the board of the National Band Association, serving as the Collegiate Representative. Gephart was elected to membership in the prestigious American Bandmasters Association (ABA) in 2008. He serves on the ABA Board of Directors and was elected Vice President in March, 2018. He and his wife, Jana, have four children and two grandchildren. They reside in Lafayette, IN.
2019 NYSSMA® All-State Symphony Orchestra
Prof. Donald Schleicher, Guest Conductor
– University of Illinois

NYSSMA® welcomes Prof. Donald Schleicher as the 2019 guest conductor of the NYSSMA® Conference All-State Symphony Orchestra. Now celebrating his 23rd season as Music Director and Conductor of the University of Illinois Symphony Orchestra, American conductor Donald Schleicher has also served as Music Director of the Quad City Symphony Orchestra and as Music Director and Principal Conductor/Artistic Director for the Pine Mountain Music Festival (PMMF).

Schleicher has conducted the National Philharmonic of the Ukraine, the Guiyang (China) Symphony, the Gwangju (South Korea) Symphony, the Inchon (South Korea) Philharmonic, the Daegu (South Korea) Symphony Orchestra, the Orquesta Filarmonica de la UNAM of Mexico City, the South Dakota Symphony, and the orchestras of Bridgeport, Tallahassee and Lansing.

He has also appeared as a guest conductor at the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival in Detroit. In 2015, he returned to the PMMF to lead the festival’s 25th anniversary season by conducting their production of The Barber of Seville, as well as leading the PMMF Symphony Orchestra in Beethoven’s monumental Symphony No. 9. In 2016, he guest conducted the Nairobi Orchestra in Kenya.

Schleicher is frequently invited to lead performances or provide conducting master classes at many of the country’s major music schools, such as the University of Colorado, the University of Texas, Oberlin Conservatory, Eastman School of Music, Baylor University, University of Minnesota, Ithaca College, Ohio State University, the University of Missouri, and Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

As an enthusiastic advocate of public school music education, Schleicher has conducted all-state orchestras, festivals and youth orchestras in nearly every state. He is also active as a clinician for public school music educators.

As a conducting professor, Schleicher’s class at Illinois is an international draw for talented young conductors. Many of his former conducting students have gone on to hold prestigious positions with organizations such as the San Francisco Symphony, the Hartford Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, Richmond Philharmonic, and the University of Chicago.

Schleicher has taught conducting in Europe every summer for the past 10 years, having served as the lead teacher for the International Conducting Workshop and Festival in Sofia, Bulgaria. In addition, he has led workshops for the International Conducting Institute in Kromeriz, Czech Republic; the New York Conducting Institute; the Ithaca College International Conducting Workshop, and the Conducting Master Class and Workshop Series in Chicago.

As a dedicated advocate of contemporary music, Schleicher has collaborated with leading composers, including Chen Yi, Michael Daugherty and Frank Ticheli, among many others. In December of 2014, his collaboration with Augusta Read Thomas led to a recording project of her works now available on Nimbus Records.

Schleicher holds a Bachelor’s degree in Music Education from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and a Master’s degree in Music from Northwestern University.
Reaching audiences around the world, his compositions have been heard in thousands of performances from Taiwan to Finland to Argentina to Chicago’s Orchestra Hall, Los Angeles’s Disney Hall, the Sydney Opera House, and New York City’s Carnegie Hall.

*Dreams of the Fallen*, Runestad’s groundbreaking work for solo piano, chorus and orchestra, was commissioned by a group of five orchestras from around the U.S. Since its premiere at the National World War II Museum in 2013, the work has gained national attention in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Huffington Post*, and *Symphony Magazine*.

Incorporating poetry by Brian Turner, award-winning poet and veteran of the War in Iraq, *Dreams of the Fallen* explores the impact war has on an individual, especially after he or she returns from combat. Subsequent performances have been given by the Louisiana Philharmonic, the Philharmonic of Southern New Jersey, the Rockford Symphony, the Dayton Philharmonic, and VocalEssence and the Metropolitan Symphony - all featuring acclaimed pianist and Steinway recording artist Jeffrey Biegel.

A rising star in the national opera scene, Runestad was recently commissioned by Washington National Opera for his third opera, *Daughters of the Bloody Duke*, a collaboration with award-winning librettist David Johnston. *Daughters of the Bloody Duke* premiered in November of 2014 at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. and was met with rave reviews from critics, including Anne Midgette of the *Washington Post*. One of the few comedy operas written in recent years, this new work was “as much fun for the singers as it was for the audience” (*Washington Post*).

As a conductor, Jake Runestad has worked with student, volunteer, and professional ensembles around the world and was the founder and artistic director of the Anima Nova Chamber Choir based in Baltimore, MD. Upcoming engagements include performances at New York City’s famed Carnegie Hall, Los Angeles’s Disney Hall, the Sydney Opera House, as well as residencies with ensembles and institutions across six continents.

Considered “one of the best of the younger American composers” (*Chicago Tribune*), Runestad holds a Master’s degree in Composition from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University where he studied with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Kevin Puts. He has also studied extensively with acclaimed composer Libby Larsen while an undergrad at Winona State University.

Originally from Rockford, IL, Runestad is currently based in Minneapolis, MN, and his music is published by JR Music. For more information and to purchase scores, please visit JakeRunestad.com.