

2021 WINTER CONFERENCE

December 2-5, 2021 – Rochester, NY



85th Annual Winter Conference Keynote, Guest Speakers, Performing Groups & Concert Hour Schedule



2021 NYSSMA® WINTER CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Mackie V. Spradley, Ph.D., 2020-2022
NafME National President**

Credit: Mackie Spradley. Photo by Steven Noreyko.

NYSSMA® proudly welcomes Dr. Mackie V. Spradley, 2020-2022 NAFME National President, as the 2021 NYSSMA® Winter Conference guest speaker.

Spradley is the President of the National Association for Music Education (NAFME) and serves as the Director of Curriculum Programs at the Texas Education Agency in Austin, TX. She received a B.M. degree in Voice from University of North Texas (UNT) and an M.A. in Vocal Pedagogy from Texas Women's University, Denton. She received her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, with an emphasis in Anthropology from UNT.

Spradley has published in academic journals and books, such as the *National Forum of Multicultural Issues Journal*, *Texas Music Educators Conference Connections*, and a book chapter in *Educational Leadership and Music*. She is a national speaker on music education, culturally responsive pedagogy and critical theory.

As a presenter, Spradley has shared her expertise throughout the United States and abroad. She has presented at various state, national and international conferences, including Texas Music Educators Association, Colorado Music Educators Association, the Society for Music Teachers Association, the National Association for Multicultural Education Texas Conference, and the Gospel Music Workshop of America, Inc.

Spradley is a published author with research interests in music teacher effectiveness, critical discourse, culturally responsive teaching, and critical theory. She continues to focus her work and efforts on issues related to equity and music education



Guest Speaker: Susan B. Barre, NAFME Eastern Division President

NYSSMA® Proudly welcomes Susan B. Barre, NafME Eastern Division President as a guest speaker at the 2021 NYSSMA® Winter Conference.

Susan B. Barre is currently the President of the NAFME Eastern Division and is the band director in Waterville, ME, for grades 5-12. Barre has 30 years of experience teaching instrumental and choral music and has owned a pre-school music program, taught French horn at Bowdoin College and is currently in her 16th year as band director for grades 5-12 in Waterville. Barre is Chair of the Visual and Performing Arts Department in Waterville and holds a B.S. degree in Music Education and Horn Performance from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and an M.S. degree in Instructional Leadership from the University of Southern Maine.

Barre is a Past President of the Maine Music Educators Association. Her term in office was marked by a National Association for Music Education (NAFME) state membership award. She spearheaded structural changes for the Maine Music Educators Association to include hiring an accountant and adding a position for a part-time paid executive director.

Highly respected as a skilled conductor and clinician, Barre has presented band and modern band workshops for regional, state, and NAFME Eastern Division conferences. She is an active member of the Kennebec Valley Music Educators Association, American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), Maine Arts Leadership Initiative and the Maine Music Educators Association.

During her tenure as Chair of the Music Department, the Waterville High School music program has been recognized for outstanding performances on the national level. Barre is a strong advocate for collaborative teaching across the music department, encouraging the exchange of ideas and successful practices on a day-to-day basis.

Among Barre's professional awards are inclusion in *School Band and Orchestra* magazine's 2017 "50 Directors Who Make a Difference" list; 2015 GRAMMY Community Award; 2016 Waterville Board of Education Community Award; 2014 and 2012 Waterville Board of Education Faculty Award; *Teaching Music* magazine's 2000 "Outstanding Educator," and 1996 Maine Music Educator of the Year.

Thursday, December 2, 2021 8:15 PM

NEW YORK VOICES

Peter Eldridge, Darmon Meader, Kim Nazarian, Lauren Kinhan



NYSSMA® is proud to welcome the New York Voices (NYV) as the headline performing group for the 2021 Winter Conference!

"It's certainly not something that occurred to us when we were thinking about starting a band in 1988," says Darmon Meader, musical director and tenor singer of New York Voices, about the seminal vocal ensemble's 30th anniversary. "But the band has a momentum of its own — it has a life now."

Indeed, that momentum and life force have a firm grip on Meader and his bandmates, baritone Peter Eldridge and dual sopranos Lauren Kinhan and Kim Nazarian. Each has a separate and busy career of his or her own, working as a soloist and educator in the jazz vocal world, but each makes New York Voices the top priority. "We're like a four-headed, old married couple; we're just a big family at this point," Meader says.

New York Voices was born in the mid-1980s at upstate New York's Ithaca College. Peter Eldridge, an aspiring jazz pianist who came late to singing; Kim Nazarian, who dreamed of a life on Broadway, and Darmon Meader, a saxophonist and self-described "choral geek," came together in the school's vocal jazz ensemble. Director Dave Reilly included all three of them, as well as Caprice Fox, in an ensemble he'd been invited to bring on a tour of European jazz festivals. "It seemed to go over so well that Darmon and I decided to keep it going, try to make something happen professionally," Eldridge recalls. "Kim and Caprice were part of that original band, and we slowly but surely made the transition to New York City in 1988." There they met Sara Krieger, who became the fifth member of the band Reilly had named "New York Voices."

One of their debut performances as a quintet was at Preacher's, a Greenwich Village club, which launched the beginning of a sizable following and generated noise enough to

start attracting the interest of record labels. They signed with GRP in 1989 and quickly made their first recording, *New York Voices*, a mix of acoustic and electric, traditional and crossover jazz. They then hit the road, touring America in a motor home and making their first international excursions as they worked to build a worldwide audience.

Krieger left the band after their second album (1991's *Hearts of Fire*), which began a long, arduous search for a new fifth voice. While that process was under way, Eldridge had what was intended as a one-off songwriting session with Lauren Kinhan. Impressed with her soprano vocal, he suggested she audition. "We'd heard maybe 70 auditions and hadn't found the right fit," says Eldridge. "Lauren came in and sang *God Bless the Child* for us, and I remember looking at Darmon and going, 'Oh. Okay.'"

After two more years as a quintet, Fox moved on to other things in 1994. The band had hoped that featuring five voices would stave off comparisons to vocal jazz powerhouse Manhattan Transfer (it didn't), but their increasing self-confidence — and their difficulty in finding Kinhan — led them to decide to continue on as a foursome. They declared their new identity with 1997's *New York Voices Sing the Songs of Paul Simon*. With the dawn of the 21st century, NYV increased its currency in the jazz world via collaborations with institutions such as the Count Basie Orchestra, Paquito d'Rivera, and the Dizzy Gillespie All-Star Big Band. They also launched a jazz education initiative, inaugurating its Vocal Jazz Camp for aspiring jazz singers in 2008. (A European version of the Camp began in 2017.)

Each of its members has also established a career as an educator: Eldridge is a voice professor at Berklee College of Music; Nazarian is a vocal jazz instructor at Ithaca College and artist-in-residence at both Bowling Green State University and Tri-C Community College in Cleveland; Kinhan is an adjunct faculty member at the New School, and Meader is an artist-in-residence at Indiana University.

The geographical distance that these jobs require, along with each member's active solo pursuits, is partly responsible for the long gap between New York Voices albums. Yet *Reminiscing in Tempo* finds both their individual chops and their collective chemistry to be as powerful as ever and kicks off what NYV hopes will be another long stretch of work together. "The things that I'm really proud of are our longevity, which just surprises and shocks all of us: the fact that our music has grown and gotten better, and the fact that we all still want to make music together," says Nazarian. "We're not done. We all have a little something more to say together."

GUEST PERFORMING GROUPS - CONCERT HOURS

Friday, December 3, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

East Islip High School Wind Ensemble
Christopher Neske, Director



The East Islip High School Wind Ensemble is a select group of 43 10th-12th grade wind and percussion players from a school district on the south shore of Long Island. Originally formed as an extracurricular ensemble that met one night a week, the wind ensemble is now in its ninth year as a curricular, in-school ensemble that meets five days a week. In addition to performing as a wind ensemble, each musician of this group is also a member of the school's Symphony Orchestra, learning a full concert program with that ensemble each semester as well. The wind ensemble prides itself on performing a wide variety of repertoire, focusing on newer works by composers of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Christopher Neske has been teaching music in East Islip for 16 years, having taught 6th grade band, music theory and AP music theory, in addition to high school band. He actively performs with the Atlantic Wind Symphony on Long Island, was on staff at the Ithaca College Summer Music Academy for nine years, and most recently was appointed as the Wind and Percussion Director for the NYSSSA School of Orchestral Studies. Neske was also president of the Suffolk County Music Educators Association from 2018-2020. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education and Oboe Performance from Ithaca College, as well as a master's degree from Stony Brook University.

Webster Thomas High School Select Choir

Brenda Nitsch, Director



Webster Thomas High School Select Choir, under the direction of Brenda Nitsch, is an auditioned, curricular a cappella vocal ensemble. The 19-member 10th-12th grade choir performs regularly at school-, community-, NYSSMA- and

NAFME-sponsored events. Past performance highlights include NYSSMA® Major Organization (gold with distinction), NAFME All-Eastern Conference (Rhode Island), New York State Board of Education Convention, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine (NYC), Riverside Church (NYC), Salem United Methodist Church (NYC), and St. Patrick's Cathedral (NYC).

Select Choir also has performed/collaborated with several collegial ensembles and directors, including Eastman School of Music, Houghton College, SUNY Fredonia and Nazareth College. Select Choir members are consistently chosen to represent Thomas High School in NYSSMA® Area All-State and Conference All-State choirs, as well as in NAFME All-Eastern and All-National ensembles.

Brenda Nitsch is the director of the Thomas High School Concert Choir, Chorale, Select Choir, and Barrel of Monkeys Men's Choir. She teaches four sections of voice class, and is the artistic director/producer of the annual spring musical. She also serves as Lead Teacher for the HS Music Department.

Nitsch has served as guest clinician/presenter at regional college workshops and NYSSMA® conferences, guest conducted several senior high and junior high all-county choirs, and, up until this past year, co-taught the Eastman School of Music Secondary Choral Methods class with Dr. Philip Silvey.

In 2008 Nitsch was awarded RPO Musician of the Year for Outstanding Music Educator in Choral Music. She is the alto soloist at Asbury United Methodist Church and sings in the Rochester vocal chamber ensemble, Madrigalia. Nitsch holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Marywood University, a Master of Science in Music Education from Mansfield University, and a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the Eastman School of Music.

Friday, December 3, 2021 @ 8:15 p.m.

Ward Melville HS Chamber Orchestra
Philip Gelfer, Director



The Ward Melville Chamber Orchestra comprises 40 talented and unique musicians who share a diverse musical and cultural background. The strength of the group is in its dedication to precision and excellence while exploring many different styles and genres. The group regularly attends competitions, NYSSMA, festivals, as well as performs six to eight major concerts per school year. During the pandemic, with its perfor-

mance limitations, the group began flash mob appearances around the school, a tradition that has continued on faithfully every Friday.

The Chamber Orchestra partners with the Wind Ensemble twice a week for symphonic works and often features student soloists and local area musicians. The love and care from the entire string department, as well as support from the Three Village School District and community has greatly contributed to the group's honors and accomplishments.

The Roberts Chorale - Roberts Wesleyan College

Adam Potter, Ph.D., Director



The Roberts Chorale is the premier vocal ensemble at Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, NY, devoted to the study and performance of high-quality choral music from diverse styles, musical eras, languages, and cultures. Bonded by a passion for compelling musical performance and a desire for meaningful Christian fellowship, the Chorale is an ensemble of talented singer-artists who combine their gifts to cultivate excellence in choral singing, affirming the ensemble's mission statement to "express ourselves humbly and honestly through song" and "find joy in all we do."

The Chorale took its first international tour and released its first recordings on LP under director Gregory Goida. During the 33-year tenure of his successor, Robert Shewan, the Chorale released multiple recordings on the Albany label and performed frequently with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra.

The proud heritage of choral singing at Roberts Wesleyan College was further fostered by subsequent Chorale directors Nelson Hill, Stephen Caracciolo, Jeffery McGhee, Jamie Spillane, and David Chin. Under its current director, Adam Potter, the Chorale continues to serve the college and community through frequent on- and off-campus performances, recording projects, collaborations with the Roberts Wesleyan College—Community Orchestra, joint concerts with other ensembles in

the region, biennial domestic performance tours, quadrennial international performance tours, and innovative programming and partnerships.

The Chorale's recent repertoire has included *Choral Fantasy* (Beethoven), *Polovetsian Dance and Chorus* (Borodin), *Et in Terra Pax* (Finzi), *Messiah* and *Zadok the Priest* (Handel), *Mass in C* (Mozart), *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* (Vaughan Williams), and the New York State premiere of *LUX: The Dawn from On High* (Forrest). In addition to major works and classical music, the Chorale delights in inviting its audiences into a spirit of worship through the singing of new music, well-crafted hymn settings, music from the Global South, gospel music, and spirituals.

Conductor Adam Potter is Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Music at Roberts Wesleyan College. At RWC, he conducts the Roberts Chorale, administers the college choral program, mentors choral music education majors, and teaches coursework in conducting and aural skills.

He earned a Ph.D. in Choral Conducting and Music Education from the Florida State University College of Music and Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in Music Education and Choral Conducting, respectively, from the Greatbatch School of Music, Houghton College, where he was a Presser and Presidential Scholar. His choral music mentors include Judy Bowers, Kevin Fenton, Brandon Johnson, and André Thomas.

Prior to his appointment at Roberts, Potter enjoyed positions as Director of Choral Activities at Delta State University in Cleveland, MS, and Director of Vocal Music at Dansville High School (N.Y.), overseeing thriving and growing vocal music curricula. He is also an active church musician, having previously served Presbyterian congregations in Florida and Mississippi. During the summers, he conducts choirs and teaches voice at the Csehy Summer School of Music. He has also taught at the Interlochen Arts Camp and Houghton College.

Potter is a sought-after guest conductor and clinician for honor choirs, choral-orchestral performances, and high schools and colleges, as well as an active adjudicator of choral performance festivals. He has guest conducted and presented on program building for new teachers, group vocal technique, teaching holistic music literacy in the choral setting, and the joys and challenges of teaching music in rural school communities at colleges, community chorus retreats, and music education conferences in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. He has also been a guest lecturer at the Kenya Conservatoire of Music and a guest artist with the Nairobi Chamber Chorus in conjunction with the "AVoice4Peace" worldwide peace awareness project. His research interests include sight-singing pedagogy and applications of the servant-leadership model to conducting music ensembles.

GUEST PERFORMING GROUPS - CONCERT HOURS

Saturday, December 4, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

**Denzel Washington School of the Arts Orchestra /
DWSA Jazz Band**
Normearleasa Thomas, Director



In 2015 our school began as the Performing and Visual Arts Magnet Program founded by Dr. Evelyn Collins, principal. We are located in the Mount Vernon City School District in Westchester County, lower Hudson Valley Region. Our program did not have an orchestra in the beginning. Normearleasa Thomas joined the staff in 2016 and launched the strings program with the goal of creating a predominantly African-American orchestra.

Thomas is an accomplished cellist and strings teacher, and has nurtured the growth of the program from beginning violin, viola, cello and bass students to advanced level musicians. Her philosophy of teaching strings was founded in the Suzuki method, and expanded into advanced technique. In 2018 the orchestra participated in the Orlando Music Festival competition. The school orchestra won first place and Grand Champion for middle and high school orchestras.

In 2020, the school was renamed the Denzel Washington School of the Arts after the award-winning actor and Mount Vernon native. The Denzel Washington School of the Arts Orchestra members are currently in residence at Juilliard Music Advancement Program, Manhattan School of Music Pre-College, Concordia Conservatory of Music, Area-All State Orchestra, New York State Summer School of the Arts, Charleston International Music Competition, and the Greater Westchester Youth Symphony Orchestra. We are honored to perform at the New York State School Music Association 2021 Winter Conference in Rochester, N.Y.

Half Hollow Hills High School East Contemporary Guitar Ensemble
Felicya Schwarzman, Director



The Half Hollow Hills High School East Contemporary Guitar Ensemble provides students with small ensemble music-making opportunities using progressive methods. In the ensemble, students are empowered to make all creative decisions, including repertoire selection, arranging, rehearsing, and performance.

In conjunction with our studio production classes, the ensemble records its pieces utilizing our state-of-the-art recording studio. Once the recordings are finalized, the students edit the audio and create music videos. In keeping with the current trend of artists releasing music through social media, the final product is released on the group's YouTube channel. Since its inception in 2016, the ensemble has grown from six students to more than 20, and the ensemble was inducted into the Long Island Music Hall of Fame High School Recognition Program in 2021.

Felicya Schwarzman is the Orchestra and Guitar Director at Half Hollow Hills High School East where she founded the 3rd grade string program, the Guitar Program, and Cello Choir. She holds degrees in music education from Ithaca College and Teachers College, Columbia University, as well as a certificate in Bilingual Education. She volunteers for Musicians for the World, teaching students abroad who cannot afford lessons, and is a music director with the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra. Felicya received the SCMEA Innovator's Award for her teaching during the 2020-2021 school year and is passionate about non-traditional approaches to music education.