

DARK SKIES AND DISTANT WORLDS Program

(First half performed without pause)

Solar Flurries (2020)* by Matthew Coley

HMQ

Video created by Sandy Nordahl

Interlude 1: Jupiter by Gustav Holst/arr. Coley

HM Artists/HM Guests

Ice Breaks (2026)* † by Marco Schirripa

HMQ

Video created by Sandy Nordahl

Interlude 2: Moon's Earthrise

HM Artists/HM Guests

Deep Red Regolith (2026)* † by Matthew Coley

II. Oceanus Borealis

III. Valles Marineris

HMQ and Grayson Rushing

Video created by Sandy Nordahl

~intermission~

Death Valley Symphony by Jenni Brandon

I. Badwater Basin (2022)

II. Clay Pipes and Spiral Shells (2023)

III. Erosion's Grotto† (2025)

Soloists: Elizabeth Nelson (Soprano), Chris Hale (Baritone)

IV. Dark Sky (2024)

Soloist: Elizabeth Nelson (Soprano)

Jenni Brandon, conductor • HMQ, HM Artists, and HM Guests • Bel Canto Cedar Valley and Metropolitan Chorale

Videos created by Dale Parson

*Available through Heartland Marimba Publications

† World Premiere

PROGRAM NOTES

Solar Flurries by Matthew Coley was written in 2020 for the International Marimba Orchestra, conducted by Gordon Stout. As I sat gazing out the window and starting to compose this work on a sunny spring day, it began to lightly snow. For HM's *Dark Skies and Distant Worlds* production, a solar flurry also becomes the dancing sunlight off ice and snow, or the whipping and twisting of solar gases and flames off the surface of the sun. This work is available through Heartland Marimba Publications in the 8-part marimba orchestra version or the smaller ensemble version for 4 or 5 players. – Matthew Coley

Ice Breaks by Marco Schirripa is a work for marimba quartet inspired by a large ice mass crumbling apart, and the additional environmental damage that might ensue - specifically A23a, the world's largest iceberg which has up:

<https://www.cnn.com/2025/09/03/climate/worlds-biggest-iceberg-a23a-broken-scli-intl>

The piece itself starts very open and sprawling, like a vast expanse of ice, and eventually becomes groovier and forward moving (like the rapid breaking up of the ice). The rhythmic and harmonic material borrows from both modern classical idioms and popular genres like EDM and video game music. The “wispy” sprawling sections are more gestural, using non-tonal pitch collections to create atmosphere, while the more rhythmic sections include pounding bass, metal-style breakdowns, and fast technical passages in parallel intervals. – Marco Schirripa

Deep Red Regolith by Matthew Coley is a new keyboard percussion quartet work by Matthew Coley in three movements. Regolith, a loose blanket of dust, broken rock, and other related materials covering solid rock, is present on the surface of Earth, but it is ubiquitous on Mars. In this epoch, dust, sand, and rock cover the entire planet; the dust is extremely fine and combined with planet-wide dust storms it gives the orb its visible reddish hue. The regolith can be quite deep in places. Each movement celebrates the mystery and haunting beauty of our neighboring world, utilizing marimbas, vibraphones, and crotales, played with a variety of methods to transport you to the carmine realm. Movement 1 is called "Mesospheric Arrival" for a specific type of cloud found only on Mars, high in the atmosphere. Movement 2, "Oceanus Borealis," captures the primordial ocean that is believed to once have covered a third of the planet's surface. And, the final movement, entitled "Valles Marineris," explores the massive system of canyons on the Martian surface (the largest canyon in the solar system)!

– Matthew Coley

Death Valley Symphony by Jenni Brandon gives voice to the stories of Death Valley National Park in California. Offered in a spirit of reverence and care, the work reflects our shared responsibility to protect our National Parks and preserve access to their enduring beauty. It also honors the Timbisha Shoshone People, whose deep presence, knowledge, and relationship with this land long predate its designation as a national park and continue to shape its living history. This work is available at jennibrandon.com. – Jenni Brandon

I. Badwater Basin for Marimba Quartet is the first movement from *Death Valley Symphony*. It seemed like an appropriate place to start telling of the fascinating topography and history of this area as Badwater Basin is the lowest point in North America at 282 feet (86 meters) below sea level. This wide expanse of salt flats covers almost 200 square miles and contains a white sea of mostly sodium chloride, or table salt. Once an ancient inland lake, because the water had nowhere to go, sediment and salt accumulated over time, leaving behind the miles of an otherworldly landscape in the middle of the desert. There are several unique mallet techniques in this work that represent the sounds and space of Badwater Basin. The work begins and ends with the performers playing with mallets wrapped in cellophane to create a crunching sound, much like what it sounds like to walk across the salt flats in the basin. Other colors explored in this movement include the sound of the salt crystals expanding and popping in the desert heat by using slap mallets. A slap mallet is a mallet that is wrapped in a leather material and is somewhat flat like a spatula. At other times the performers use the shafts of their mallets to play, and this represents the delicate formations of these salt structures, as if you are crouching down to get a closer look. There's also a joyful, rhythmic motion in this piece that represents the waves of the ancient lake that once filled this basin. This movement was commissioned by Heartland Marimba and a consortium of performers.

II. Clay Pipes and Spiral Shells: Duo Lin-Lynn (Weichen Lin and Lynn Vartan) commissioned and recorded “Clay Pipes and Spiral Shells,” for two marimbas with narration on their album STARS ABOVE. This movement celebrates the intertwining of Earth and sky, the tangible and the mystical, while acknowledging the Timbisha Shoshone Indians, the original stewards of the land long before European settlers arrived. The performance by the marimba duo alternates between a fluid and watery representation of Death Valley's ancient, evaporated lakebed — which left behind fossilized spiral shells and the now endangered pupfish in isolated park areas — and more bell-like and tumultuous movement that signals a struggle, serving as a reminder that our actions reverberate through time and space. The narration uses the emotive poetry of Brandon Krieg which highlights the deep bond between humanity and the Earth, underscoring the belief that the essence of the planet exists within each of us, linking us all through its shared legacy.

III. *Erosion's Grotto* for SATB Choir and Marimba Quartet evokes the vivid, mineral-rich landscape of Artist's Palette in Death Valley National Park. The hills along Artist's Palette Drive shimmer with a rainbow of colors including red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and pink created by volcanic deposits rich in iron oxides and chlorite. This ever shifting, erosion-carved terrain forms the visual and emotional foundation of the work. Setting the text of the original poem written by Brandon Krieg for this work, the opening lines "*Rain-carved foothills, oxidized / mineral piles pooling shadows*" immediately immerse us in this elemental world. The choir and marimba quartet function as equal partners throughout, together painting a world of water, sand, stone, and mineral rainbows of color. The marimba quartet opens with gestures that suggest rain striking sand and rock, then gather momentum like a car winding through the hills on Artists Palette Drive, as the choir gives voice to the unfolding landscape. As the music progresses, the boundary between observer and environment dissolves. Landscape and body reflect one another, culminating in a moment of heightened awareness in an ecstatic crossing, in the poem's words, of the "blood-god barrier"—where all becomes one: to "be held in this beholding." This movement flows into the next movement of *Dark Sky* as daylight shifts to darkness. *Erosion's Grotto* was commissioned by the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center, Bel Canto Cedar Valley, directed by Alice Reid Pruisner, and Heartland Marimba. It receives its world premiere on April 11 at the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center.

IV. *Dark Sky*, the final movement of *Death Valley Symphony*, explores the beauty of Death Valley National Park's pristine dark skies. For SATB Choir, Marimba Quartet, Percussion Ensemble, and Piano, this work sets the poem "The Stars Beyond the Stars" by Brandon Krieg created expressly for this work. With some of the darkest night skies in the United States, Death Valley National Park is designated a "Dark Sky Park" by the Dark Sky International organization. Death Valley has been given the "Gold Tier" designation meaning that "astronomical objects seen there are available only to some of the darkest locations across the globe." Using the colors of the ensemble, this work will take the listener on a journey through the world's hottest place on Earth illuminated by the light of stars to see the park's many animals, badlands, sand dunes, multi-hued hills and volcanic craters illuminated by the light of the night sky, and to gaze into the vastness of the universe. *Dark Sky* was commissioned by Heartland Marimba, Dr. Lynn Vartan and the Southern Utah University Percussion Ensemble, Dr. Frank Kumor and the Kutztown University Percussion Ensemble, and the Wells-Rapp Center for Mallet Percussion Research to celebrate the inaugural year of the Wells-Rapp Center for Mallet Percussion Research at Kutztown University. *Dark Sky* was premiered on April 8 & 9, 2024 at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania. Coincidentally, the Total Solar Eclipse took place on April 8, turning the skies dark across the United States just hours before the World Premiere of *Dark Sky*!

Performers

Heartland Marimba (founded in 2014) has appeared in many concerts across the country since its creation by soloist Matthew Coley. 2025-2026 is their Eleventh Season, "Echoes and Evolutions," and HM has impressively organized eleven tours. The "Eventide Tour" in April is the ninth. The season culminates with two uniquely structured national workshops, the fourth Composer LabFest and the first Coley Artist Practicum held in HM's home state of Iowa. Through its one-of-a-kind business model and programming choices, HM offers a platform for the music of American composers and continues to expand its repertoire with works from composers worldwide. The distinctly creative members of Heartland Marimba combine to create virtuosic and electrifying ensembles; HM artists for the "Eventide Tour" include Jenni Brandon, Matthew Coley, Hunter Gross, Eri Isomura, Sophia Lo, Ryan Pearson, and Marco Schirripa, as well as a roster of wonderful guest performers: Korey Barrett, Grayson Rushing, Luke Helker, Olivia Sletteland, and Staci Toma. With its mission of reaching a wider audience and increasing appreciation for marimba music, HM enthusiastically develops and disseminates the classical marimba art form in both academic and community contexts.

Selected performance highlights include:

- Guest Artists for the 2022 World Marimba Competition in Stuttgart, Germany
- Soloists with the Reading Pops Orchestra and Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra
- Concerts at three Percussive Arts Society International Conventions
- World premiere performances of Kevin Romanski's Concerto for Marimba Quartet and Orchestra and HM's own adaptation of Ravel's Carnival of the Animals with the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra, Dubuque, IA
- Headline artists for the 2023 Crossroads Music Festival in Cedar City, UT
- Released an album in 2026 of the percussion music by Matthew Coley with the Kent State University Percussion Ensemble
- Co-hosts of the first-ever Musser Marimba Festival and Orchestra in Manheim, PA, 2025

HM was awarded a grant from New Music USA in 2020 and launched the New Quartets Project Consortium in 2021 to continue its ongoing effort to support women composers. In collaboration with its co-artistic director and composer, Jenni Brandon, HM will perform Brandon's *Death Valley Symphony* in April of 2026 with 100 singers on the "Eventide Tour." This grandiose work is a one-hour exploration of fascinating places in Death Valley and our ongoing troubled relationship with nature. Many of the works that HM tours with are published by HM Publications, completing HM's cyclical support for the classical marimba art form. For more about the organization, please visit: www.HeartlandMarimba.com.

Heartland Marimba Quartet (HMQ)

Matthew Coley (HM Executive/Co-Artistic Director) is an internationally acclaimed percussion performer and the founder and executive/co-artistic director of Heartland Marimba (HM). He has performed in most of the US states and several countries, and he has been a soloist with organizations throughout the US and abroad including the Philadelphia Baroque Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Pittsburgh, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, HBO/Giant Spoon's Game of Thrones Experience at South by Southwest, American Ballet Theatre, University of Edmonton-Alberta Wind Ensemble, Sudar Percussion of Croatia, San Francisco Sinfonietta, Kurpfälzisches Kammerorchester Mannheim, and the Moldavian Philharmonic and Teleradio Symphony Orchestras. He is the "multi-dulcimerist" with The Way Out, a mixed quintet performing the cross-over music of Bjorn Berkhout, and the Ataraxia Duo with harpist Jennifer Ruggieri. Matthew was the first executive director and curator at the Center for Mallet Percussion Research in Kutztown, PA, from 2023-2024.

Matthew's work with the multi-faceted Heartland Marimba has brought the marimba art form in front of audiences around the country since 2014. HM has hosted several large-scale festivals and marimba orchestra concerts (8 or more marimbists). HM publishes more than 100 titles and leads the field in effectively building a pathway for working marimba players. Matthew has several critically acclaimed albums available. In 2026, HM will be releasing an album of Matthew's compositions performed with the Kent State University Percussion Ensemble. Matthew has won prizes from national and international competitions and holds performance degrees from Northwestern University and the University of North Texas. He is a signature artist with Salyers Percussion and a concert artist with Marimba One. Please visit www.hearMatthewColey.com.

Taiwanese American percussionist **Chin-Li Sophia Lo** brings the marimba's rich voice to audiences worldwide through new commissions and collaborations with composers and musicians across the globe. Lo joined Heartland Marimba in 2021. Her chamber music collaborations extend beyond percussion. Notable performances include *Four Dialogues* with Justin Weis, euphonium, and *Divertimento* with Dr. Mike Nguyen, saxophonist. She also performs with her percussion duo, MouSai Percussion, at international events in DrumFest and Cortona Sessions in Europe. Her global performance credits span Dvorak Hall, Béla Bartók National Concert Hall in Budapest to the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Indianapolis.

Hunter Gross is an American percussionist, chamber musician, and educator based in DFW, Texas. As a prominent member of Heartland Marimba, Hunter maintains an active performance and touring schedule while pursuing his doctoral studies at the University of North Texas. He has performed internationally across Spain, Portugal, the UK, Canada, and Hong Kong, with notable showcase concerts at PASIC, the Royal College of Music and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. His recordings include works by Matthew Coley, Von Hansen, Brian Mark, Marco Schirripa, and others. Hunter is an artist with Marimba One, Sabian Cymbals and Gon Bops Percussion, Salyers Percussion, and Black Swamp Percussion.

Marco Schirripa holds degrees in Percussion Performance and Music Theory from Ithaca College, along with graduate degrees in Percussion from Indiana University, where he was awarded the prestigious Performer's Certificate during his first year of study. He currently serves as Assistant Professor and Director of Percussion at Central Michigan University. Dr. Schirripa has performed on international stages, including the World Marimba Competition, the North American Conference on Video Game Music, and six Percussive Arts Society International Conventions. He took first place in both the Great Plains and Southern California International Marimba Competitions.

Marco is a member of Heartland Marimba, a group dedicated to the creation and performance of new chamber repertoire for keyboard percussion. Deeply passionate about new music and supporting artists of all backgrounds, he has premiered over 50 solo and small chamber works. His recent PIXEL MASTERWORKS consortium, completed in 2025, funded the creation of seven new works for marimba by video game composers. Marco's own compositions have been performed throughout the world, and his work is available through C. Alan Publications and KPP. His debut solo album, Digital Dances, released in 2023, features his video game-inspired compositions for marimba.

Marco Schirripa is an Artist/Endorser for Sabian cymbals, Pearl/Adams instruments, and Salyers/Encore percussion.

Heartland Marimba Artists (HM Artists)

Jenni Brandon (HM Co-Artistic Director) stands out as a distinguished composer and conductor, weaving memorable melodies inspired by collaborator stories, nature, and poetry. Her extensive catalogue of over 100 works spans solo pieces, chamber music, concertos, operas, and orchestral compositions, and two dozen albums across prestigious labels like Navona Records, Delos and MSR Classics feature her music. Brandon's artistry has earned her top accolades, such as the Sorel Medallion and the American Prize, reflecting her music's influence

on the global stage. Her compositions are required repertoire for leading music competitions and auditions at premier institutions like Juilliard, UT Austin, UMKC Conservatory, and Manhattan School of Music among others.

She oversees the global publication and distribution of her works through Jenni Brandon Music, collaborating with top publishers like Boosey & Hawkes, Imagine Music and others. As a conductor, she's led performances of her works and others, notably her opera "3 PADEREWSKIS" at the Kennedy Center.

Beyond her compositions, Brandon champions music education and collaboration, holding workshops nationwide and is co-artistic director of Heartland Marimba. With degrees from West Chester University and the University of Texas at Austin, plus doctoral studies at the University of Southern California, Brandon's academic and professional footprint is significant. Discover more at jennibrandon.com.

Eri Isomura joined Heartland Marimba in 2019, and is also the Artistic Director of 10th Wave, a Minneapolis-based ensemble featuring creative classical chamber music. Recent performances include the NFL Christmas Halftime show with Snoop Dogg; Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra, Theater Mu's "Blended 和 Harmony" and "AGAIN", Joffrey Ballet, Minnesota Chorale, Cantus, Zeitgeist New Music and others. Recording projects include the album "Twelve Months in Minnesota" (2023), "Musical Moments for Cello and Marimba" (2021), "Champagne Confetti" self-titled pop album (2023), among others. Eri is endorsed by Koide Cymbals and Innovative Percussion. erisomura.com and 10thwave.org.

Dr. Ryan Pearson is a percussionist and educator dedicated to the exploration and creation of exciting, diverse, and artistic percussion music. A prolific performer, Ryan has played throughout the continental United States and Europe, including tours through Florence, Rome, London, and Amsterdam. As a Heartland Marimba Concert Artist, he has toured throughout the U.S. performing numerous world premieres and collaborating with a diverse group of composers. He was also a member of the International Marimba Orchestra for their tour in 2021. Ryan teaches at Simpson College in Indianola, IA and is a proud Marimba One and Salyers Percussion Artist.

Heartland Marimba Guests

Dr. Korey Barrett is Professor and Vocal Coach at the University of Northern Iowa. Dr. Barrett's background includes training as a vocal coach, accompanist, pedagogue, and singer. Barrett is the co-founder and head vocal coach of Opera Neo, a company specializing in Baroque and Classical opera in San Diego, CA that is about to embark upon its fifteenth season with productions of *Arsilda (Vivaldi)*, *Il turco in Italia (Rossini)*, and the American premiere of *Lousie Bertin's Fausto*. The company returned to Budapest in May of 2025 to mount a second production with the Hungarian State Opera (Haydn's *Armida*), after previously collaborating on a production of Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* in 2023. Barrett has also served as coach and pianist for several seasons of the Des Moines Metro Opera, as Resident Artist coach for the Minnesota Opera, and as vocal coach at the University of Oklahoma's School of Music. Other artistic venues and organizations have included Opera North, The Ohio Light Opera, the Columbus Academy of Vocal Arts, as well as projects with the Herzen Pedagogical Institute in St. Petersburg, Russia, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Eastman School of Music Summer Institute, the Heartland Marimba Ensemble, and the Cedar Valley Chamber Music Festival. He recently gave masterclasses and recitals in Taipei and Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Barrett received his Doctoral degree in piano accompanying and chamber music from the Eastman School of Music under the tutelage of Jean Barr.

Dr. Lucas Helker is a percussionist and educator, located in Hays, Kansas. He currently serves as the assistant professor of percussion at Fort Hays State University. He regularly presents/performs at conferences including the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC), the National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy (NCPD), the Kansas Music Educators Association (KMEA) In-Service Workshop, and, most recently, the Transplanted Roots Percussion Symposium in Porto, Portugal. His research often focuses on the performance practice around found objects in the percussion repertoire and music that engages with the natural world. Luke also serves as the Vice President of the Kansas chapter of the Percussive Arts Society and is a member of the New Music/Research Committee. He received his D.M.A. and M.M. from the University of Kansas and his B.A. from Millersville University. His primary teachers included Dr. Michael Compitello and Dr. Sam Um.

Brandon Krieg (*Poems for Death Valley Symphony*) is the author of *Users with Access: New and Selected Poems* (Cornerstone, 2025) and three other collections of poetry. Two of his collections have been finalists for the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) Book Award in Environmental Creative Writing. His work appears in *Attached to the Living World: A New Ecopoetry Anthology* (Trinity University Press, 2025) and has appeared in many literary journals in the United States, including: *AGNI*, *Conjunctions*, *The Iowa Review*,

North American Review, and New England Review. He lives in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, and is an Associate Professor of English at Kutztown University.

Grayson Rushing is an American percussionist, educator, and composer currently residing in Oklahoma. Grayson has collaborated with dynamic performers and composers such as Erico Daimo and Frank Ticheli as well as Grammy-nominated artists Andy Akiho, Patrick Conlon, Christina Giacona, and Sō Percussion. The Prism Duo, of which Grayson is a founding member, was awarded first place at the Great Plains International Marimba Competition in 2021 and his piece, *Drop of Consciousness*, was selected as a compulsory piece for the competition in 2025. In 2024, Grayson was selected to go on tour with the World Percussion Group through Scandinavia and the United Kingdom. Currently, Grayson serves as an adjunct instructor of percussion at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma.

Olivia Sletteland is a versatile freelance percussionist, arts administrator, and music educator based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Recent and upcoming performances include La Crosse Symphony Orchestra, Mississippi Valley Orchestra, Heartland Marimba, Opera Reading Project, St. Paul Civic Orchestra, and several other ensembles and projects. Additionally, Olivia is a founding member of Left/Right Percussion, a Minneapolis-based percussion duo performing the music of living/recent composers. Olivia received her MM in Percussion Performance from the University of Missouri-Columbia and her BM in Percussion Performance from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Olivia is a proud endorser of Artifact Percussion.

An advocate for global musical traditions, **Staci Toma** is dedicated to expanding the percussion repertoire through multicultural education and performance. She been fortunate enough to study with renowned teachers such as Gordon Stout, Kevin Bobo, Dr. Eric Hollenbeck, Fara Tolno, and the late Bernard Woma. As a soloist and ensemble performer, Toma has appeared in concerts across the United States, including a solo presentation at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC). Toma currently serves as Assistant Adjunct Professor of Percussion at the University of Northern Iowa, offering courses on world music, applied percussion lesson instruction, and percussion pedagogy.

Choirs

Bel Canto Cedar Valley

Alice Reid Pruisner (b. 1982) is the Founder and Artistic Director of Bel Canto Cedar Valley. A long-time resident of Cedar Falls, Ms. Pruisner is dedicated to building community through music, which she does as a frequent guest director, clinician, and through her work with BCCV. Ms. Pruisner graduated with honors from Augustana College in Rock Island, IL with an undergraduate degree in Vocal Music Education and from The University of Northern Iowa with a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting. Ms. Pruisner founded Bel Canto Cedar Valley in the fall of 2012. Over the past 13 years, BCCV has grown from 24 to 52 members, and has become a vibrant and integral part of the greater music community in the Cedar Valley. BCCV members come from a variety of professions, represent seven Cedar Valley communities, and range from new high school graduates to the comfortably retired. To find out more visit www.belcantocedarvalley.org. Ms. Pruisner lives in Cedar Falls with her husband, two daughters, and two mini dachshunds.

Bel Canto Cedar Valley Members

Sopranos

Sara Blessing
Amanda Bridges-Kramme
Charis Crozier
Patty Foster
Jennifer Jacobsen
Lexy Kraayenbrink
Lucinda Lear
Kayla Mahler
Elizabeth Nelson
Tiffany Peterson Rasmussen
Megan Schwickerath
Meg Stineman
Ellen Waterman

Altos

Christine Anderson
Kimberly Camarata
Kinsey Collins
Melanie Drake
Kim Erisman
Kate Hahn
Alexis Klug
Megan Lien
Kennedy Mossman
Natalie Takes Preston
Sarah Rueber
Calista Webber

Tenors

Bill Atkins
Joel Haack
Darwin Johnson
Stephen Krcma
James Mossman
Noah Reardon
Matt Rector
Mitchell Stover
Daniel Veenstra
Devin Wipperman

Basses

Jonathan Bridges
Alex Chittenden
Chris Hale
Brook Jacobsen
Kevin Lam
Noah McLaughlin
Ryan Occeña
Micah Pruisner
Noah Rouw
Ben Stineman
Ashton Veenstra
Kolton Webber

Bel Canto Cedar Valley Leadership

Bethany Brooks, pianist

Bel Canto Cedar Valley Board of Directors:

Jon Bridges, President
Tiffany Peterson Rasmussen, Treasurer
Kevin Lam, Secretary
Christine Anderson, Choir Manager
Bill Atkins, Grants and Fundraising
Charis Crozier, Marketing
Patty Foster, Member-at-Large
Matt Rector, Member-at-Large

Metropolitan Chorale

Ryan Occeña is the Artistic Director of both the Metropolitan Chorale and the UNI Children's Choir, and serves as the secondary chorus instructor for the Cedar Valley Catholic Schools in Waterloo, IA. In his career as a music educator and choral conductor, he taught and directed students in every age group from preK through graduate school at public, private, and parochial programs in Kansas, New York, Pennsylvania, and Iowa.

Occeña maintains an active schedule as a baritone as well as a conductor. He held community and professional chorister positions in Kansas City and New York City, and currently sings with Bel Canto Cedar Valley. Occeña is a frequent music director for musical theatre productions, including an acclaimed Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

A native of Columbia, Missouri, Occeña holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City; a post-baccalaureate diploma in choral conducting from the Zoltán Kodály Pedagogical Institute in Kecskemét, Hungary; and a Master of Music degree in choral conducting from Messiah University.

When not performing and teaching, Occeña and his wife, Hannah, enjoy spending time with their four children, training for endurance races, and traveling to visit family and friends.

Metropolitan Chorale Members

Soprano

Anna Berns
Dot Clausen
Suzanne Earley
Emily Eisenman
Karla Koch
Christy Moore
Linda Morgan
Chelsea O'Donnell
Abby Perry
Alice Reid Pruisner
Faith Sonksen
Aja Stallman
Claire Thoma
Courtney Thomas
Sonya Thrall
Carolyn Wolff

Alto

Megan Bancroft
Jane Bloodworth
Sherry Crowley
Brenda Eilers
Priscilla Franken
Kathryn Gilbery
Joanne Hartman
Sammone Jones

Prudy Klinger
VickiJolene Lindley
Mary Kay Madsen
Donna Mallin
Kristi Paxton
Calista Webber

Tenor

Matthew Aronson
Seth Butler
Nathan Callahan
David Kabel
John Rich, Jr.

Bass

Sam Anderson
Hugh Brown
Seth Chronister
Paul Greene
James Jurgenson
David Nation
James Ralston
Timothy Sprengeler
Everett Wilson

Met Chorale staff

Nathaniel Parrish – Rehearsal Accompanist
Calista Webber – Executive Assistant

Additional Credits

- Dale Parson (Video Artist): Creator of videos for *Death Valley Symphony*
- Sandy Nordahl (Video Artist): Creator of videos for *Solar Flurries*, *Ice Breaks*, and *Deep Red Regolith*
- Thank you to the University of Northern Iowa and the Waterloo Cedar Falls Symphony for the use of their instruments.
- Thank you to Waterloo West High School for rehearsal space.