



**The South County Singers
Present**

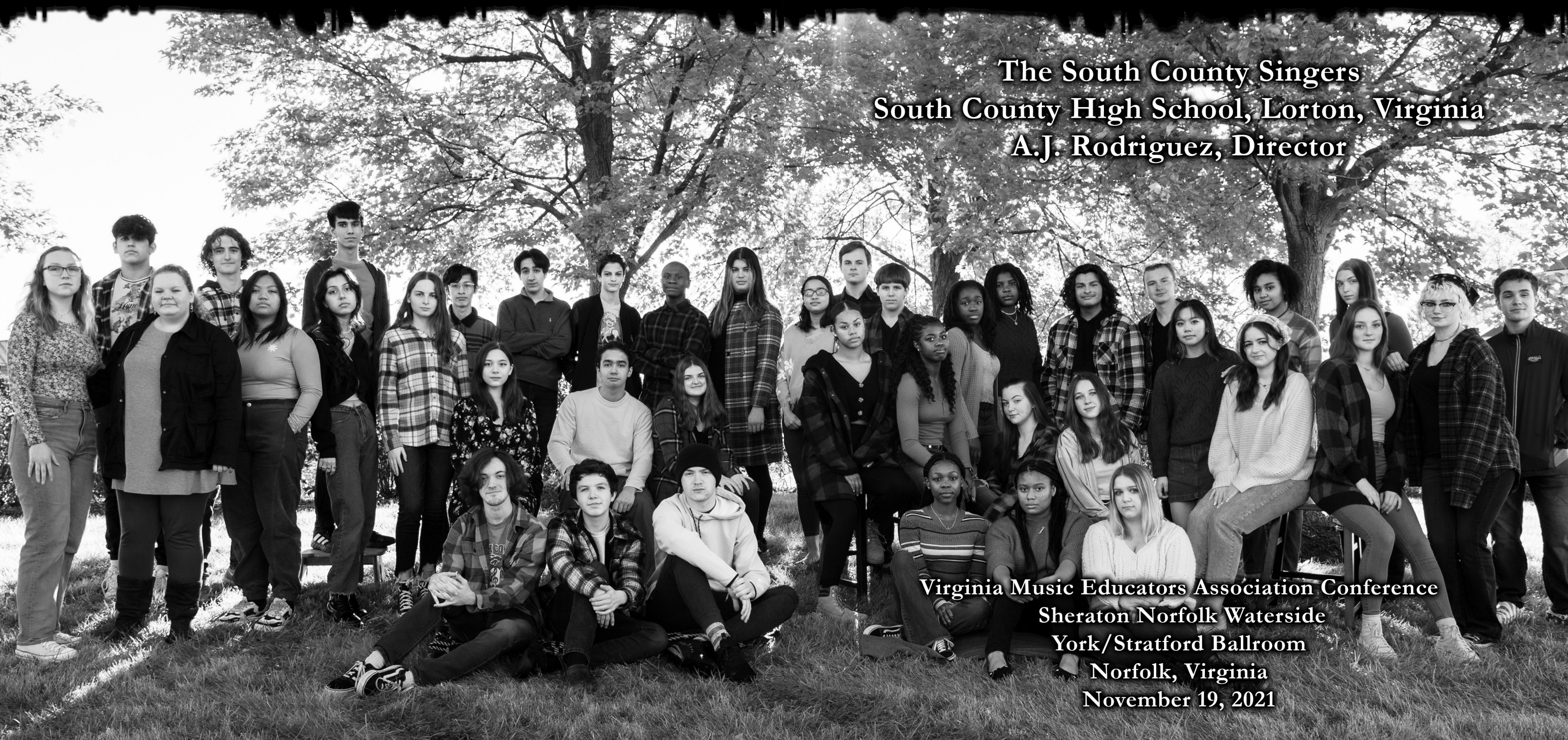
Hear Our Voices

**South County High School, Lorton, Virginia
A.J. Rodriguez, Director**

**Virginia Music Educators Association Conference
Sheraton Norfolk Waterside
York/Stratford Ballroom
Norfolk, Virginia
November 19, 2021**

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Norfolk, Virginia
November 19, 2021

October 14, 2021

Dear VMEA Participants and Guests:

Fairfax County Public Schools is very proud to have the Advanced Mixed Chorus, The South County Singers featured at this year's 2021 Virginia Music Educators Association Conference. The fine singers who make up the choir have earned their invitation to participate in this year's event through individual and group effort.

Members of the choir are to be commended for their dedication and hard work, which led to the invitation to perform at this prestigious event. We admire the talents of the Advanced Mixed Chorus, The South County Singers locally and are pleased to now place this fine group in the state spotlight. Their experiences at this event will help these students continue to develop as singers and reinforce skills that will benefit them throughout their lives. Music is an integral part of a complete 21st century education preparing our students to be leaders, risk-takers, collaborators, and creative thinkers.

My thanks to everyone involved for creating this opportunity for the Advanced Mixed Chorus, The South County Singers and for student groups from across the Commonwealth. Fairfax County is proud to be a part of the VMEA State Conference this year.

Sincerely,

Scott S. Brabrand, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools**To the Members of the Virginia Music Educators Association,**

It is an honor and privilege to welcome you to the Virginia Music Educators Association Conference performance by the South County Singers under the direction of A.J. Rodriguez. The South County choral programs exhibit an outstanding level of musicianship through hard work, dedication, and teamwork. The school, community, and county are excited to have such a talented group of students represent us at this event.

The South County choral program offers four levels of choral instruction. The groups consistently receive Excellent and Superior ratings at the Virginia District X Concert Assessments and have a long tradition of musical excellence. Students actively participate in Honor Choirs, All-VA Choral Events, and numerous youth groups.

On behalf of Fairfax County Public Schools, I am proud to have such a fine group of students and their director represent our ongoing passion for music in the schools. The students at South County are an inspiration to their community, school, and classmates.

I commend VMEA for providing this prestigious opportunity to the musicians and director of the South County Singers. I hope you enjoy the performance!

Sincerely,



Katrina D. Chaney

Music Educational Specialist, FCPS

Greetings VMEA Participants and Friends,


It is with great pride that I bring salutations from South County High School in Lorton, VA where we are absolutely thrilled about having the honor to participate in this year's Virginia Music Educators Association Concert! Our students have been working tremendously hard in preparation for this phenomenal experience under the direction of Mx. A.J. Rodriguez. The time and effort they all have been putting in over the course not only this year, but to include last year has them ready to share their talents with the world!

I have served as the principal of South County High School since 2018 and each year, our choral program has grown exponentially. The numbers of students as well as the depth of their work has experienced new heights and this year has been no different. Even through the virtual school year, our students and staff have remained focused on their craft and continue to produce outstanding performance one after another. This is why I am so excited they will have this opportunity to share the work they are so passionate about with you!

Each of our students is committed to bring their very best to the stage and to represent South County High School, Region IV, and Fairfax County Public Schools at the highest levels. Understanding that we will be sharing the stage with some of the best talent in Virginia, the South County Singers are thrilled to not only perform with, but also learn from these extraordinary groups.

I wish you and every other participant the greatest of experiences during this concert event. I know that it will be one to remember. Please take care of yourselves and one another, and continue to be safe!
#OneStallion

Warmest Regards,


Gary Morris
Principal
South County High School

Note from the Director

Hear Our Voices is a culminating project...

involving the South County Singers navigating the world around them and finding ways to articulate the emotions of our new day to day lives. After such an intense cultural pause and therefore “reset” that was last year, it seems like “normalcy” has become traumatizing. Returning from a year of virtual learning, I find that my students have a new intuitive awareness and a deeper appreciation of being together. All the words spoken, and poetry created you will hear during the transitions were all written by them. These are the words they want and need to say to the world. Our program is centered around the piece “Say Her Name”. The importance of this piece and its purpose as the focal point is explained in the program notes. All the soloists and special groups within our program made the deliberate choice to send a message to our audience today. We hope that it resonates, causes reflection, and therefore discussion.

History of the South County Singers

The South County Singers is the Advanced Mixed Choir at South County High School in Lorton, Virginia. The South County Singers are comprised of sophomore, junior, and senior year students. South County High School was first a secondary school that opened in 2005. Mx. Rodriguez was an original member as a student of the group along with the current South County High School Band Director, Kevin Engdahl, and Theater Director Molly Rumberger under the direction of Mrs. Sherlee Glomb (Huang).

Students from this group have represented our school at District Chorus, All Virginia State Chorus, National & Regional ACDA Honor Choirs, and NAFME National Honor Choirs. South County Singers has also been asked to sing at Carnegie Hall in New York City and has performed for Walt Disney World's Candlelight Processional in Orlando, Florida.

This group has been invited to VMEA in the past, but this will be the first time they have performed at the event. The South County Singers are incredibly humbled and grateful to have the opportunity to be here. It is with great pride, honor, and joy that they present this performance here at the Sheraton, in Norfolk Virginia for the 2021 VMEA Conference.

Artistic Direction

A.J. Rodriguez-Director



A.J. Rodriguez (she/they) has been teaching high school choral ensembles since 2014 and taught middle school ensembles from 2016-2020. A.J. is a graduate of Florida State University with a Bachelor's in Choral Music Education where they sang and studied under Dr. Andre Thomas, Dr. Judy Bowers, and Dr. Kevin Fenton. A.J. began their career in Osceola County, Kissimmee, Florida teaching at Poinciana High School.

Mx. Rodriguez's choirs have received superior ratings at the District and State level in Florida. In 2016, they moved back to teach at their alma mater, South County Middle & High School. Mx. Rodriguez is also a tenor that sings professionally in the Northern Virginia area. In 2018, they traveled to Nairobi, Kenya in collaboration with the Festival Singers of Florida and the Nairobi Chamber Choir. They are also a private voice teacher. Mx. Rodriguez is an active member of the following professional music education associations: NAFME, VCDA, and ACDA.

Currently, they are excited to be sharing their program, "Hear Our Voices" for the 2021 Virginia Music Educators Association's Conference. A.J. has become passionate about their activism in ensuring equity towards transgender and gender expansive students as well as ensuring representation of Black, Indigenous, and all people of color in the choral classroom and community.

Mariana Romero Serra-Composer/Arranger



A native of Caracas, Venezuela, Mariana Romero Serra is a music educator and choral conductor with a strong multicultural background. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Choral Music Education from Florida State University and is currently undergoing a Master's in Choral Conducting at Michigan State University. Ms. Romero has taught and conducted students at the Elementary, Middle, and High School level, as well as adults and graduate students in different countries including Colombia, the United States, and Japan.

Currently, Ms. Romero works at St. Mary's International School in Tokyo, where she teaches general music and choir at the Elementary School and serves as the associate director for the school's Show Choir. She has also been an adjudicator for the KPASS Solo and Ensemble Festival since her arrival in Japan, and a clinician for choral festivals and community choirs in the Kanto Plain.

Hear Our Voices Program

Asopao' Parrandero, Medley Puertorriqueño
Arranged by Mariana Romero Serra
Commissioned for the 2021 VMEA Conference

El Cumbanchero
Arranged by Guarionex Morales Matos

Even When He is Silent
By Kim André Arnesen

Fire
By Katerina Gimon

Say Her Name
By Alysia Lee

Soloists: Josie Springer, Breona Brogan, Jordyn Packer, and Michaela O'Neal

Keep Your Lamps
Arranged by Andre Thomas

Kanaval
By Sydney Guillaume
Soloists: Jordyn Packer, Breona Brogan, and Javier Quiroz-Rubi

END OF PROGRAM

Recessional: Vámonos que la Parranda se Acabó- alternate ending of the commissioned piece.
Arranged by Mariana Romero Serra

Percussion Accompanists: Sarah Murray, Dylan Jiron, Adelaide Hofmann, and Alex Kowalski

Guitar Accompanist: Joseph Thibodeau

Program Notes

Keep Your Lamps - Arranged by Dr. Andre Thomas

A note from the composer, Andre Thomas: “As with many slave songs, this song’s impetus came from hearing a sermon based upon the parable found in the book of Matthew, Chapter 25, verses 1-13. In this passage of scripture, Jesus tells the story of the wise and foolish virgins. They had been told that the bridegroom would be coming, thus they got their Lamps, trimmed them, and set them burning and went to the appointed place. However, the bridegroom came while they were away. Jesus then said to his disciples, you know not the day nor the hour of my return. Be ye ready! As a response to this, one can only imagine the song stirring from the soul of one slave listener. Jesus was indeed a deliverer and a hope for the slave. One can only speculate that this song was sung often, when there was a possibility of deliverance”. Even when we fight every day knowing we could dangerously fall, we continue to do so. When we all wake up the next day, we push through one foot after the other and we keep going. This piece is our resilience since we have no other choice but to keep going.

Kanaval - By Sydney Guillaume

After discussing the topics of what we brought together today with these raw, honest, and beautiful pieces, we are met with one last party before we go with this exciting piece written in Haitian Creole. Sydney Guillaume wrote this because of his kaleidoscopic experience with Mardi Gras, the island of Haiti’s “greatest treasure”. “The decorations, the music, the joy of the people, the Rara bands, the costumes, the floats... they all inspired me to write [this choral piece]”. There is a line of text that influenced me to pick this piece which was “Men nan men san prejije, se konsa pou nou fete, se konsa n’a va rive”, meaning, “Hand in hand without prejudice, that is how we should celebrate, that is how we will make it”. There is so much truth to that, and in speaking with my students they have found that the only way this can truly happen is with transparent accountability. Only when forgiveness is created through ownership and not absolution can we achieve this.

Vámonos que la Parranda se Acabó - Arranged by Mariana Romero Serra

This is an optional recessional ending to the original medley. In a traditional “parranda”, this is sung on the way out when the event has ended! The translation is “Let us go because the parranda is now over”. You are supposed to sing this on the way out.

Program Notes

This past year, our world has been tested and pushed to our resilience limits. “I believe in the sun even when its not shining, I believe in love even when I feel it not, I believe in God even when he is Silent”. As a class we spoke about how much reverence is given to the community of people who went through such a horrific event. However, the same respect and attention is not given to other marginalized groups of people who may have a family history of slavery, for example. We want to convey to the world that there is so much work to be done, and those who are marginalized, specifically Black and Indigenous people, deserve the same reverence, respect, acknowledgment, and accountability.

Fire - By Katerina Gimon

Canadian composer, Katerina Gimon, wrote a cycle of pieces entitled, “Elements”. Fire is one of those pieces and we chose it for its freedom of expression. You will hear nonsense syllables, entrances, swells, screaming, shouting, yelling, and protesting that metaphorizes a fire. We wanted a piece that would mimic the societal anger that erupted because of the seemingly sudden awareness to police brutality towards Black people in June 2020. We wanted an opportunity to let the voices be heard of all those that belong to marginalized groups who have seen people that look like them be hurt, bullied, assaulted, attacked, or killed. You will see protest signs go up as a flashback to all the protests that emerged all throughout this year, giving voices to who needs to be heard.

Say Her Name - By Alysia Lee

After the “Fire” of it all and when one’s energy to that anger is no more, what can we do? We say their name. We make it known who these people were and that they mattered. So often Black women are neglected to even be acknowledged for their lives even in death. Saying Breonna Taylor’s name and repeating it keeps her story and the urgent need for change, alive. Saying the names of all Black lives who have died this past year, keeps call to change at the forefront. A note from Alysia Lee: “My family began celebrating Kwanzaa over 30 years ago. Every winter, my extended family gathers on December 26, the first day of Kwanzaa, for a celebration that is part ceremony, part reunion, and part feast. We open the celebration with a libation ceremony. After a moment of silence, individual voices call out the names of our familial and historical ancestors. After each name resounds in the room, everyone responds “ashe”. Names are powerful. As the names are called, memories and stories fill the room. Love fills the room. I wrote this piece to bring this powerful ceremony to the concert stage with a call to action. The #SayHerName movement resists police brutality against Black women. Kimberlé Crenshaw, a central leader of the movement shares, ‘If you say the name, you’re prompted to learn the story, and if you know the story, then you have a broader sense of all the ways Black bodies are made vulnerable to police violence’”.

Program Notes

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Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my first choir teacher, former teacher at this school, and now friend and mentor, **Sherlee Glomb (Huang)**! She has helped mold me into the musician I am today, and I would not be anywhere without her guidance and mentorship. She opened South County when it was a secondary school, and I am proud to continue what she started and creating something amazing together as she takes over South County Middle School!

I would like to thank one of my dearest friends, **Mariana Romero Serra**, for graciously offering her time and commissioning our piece!

Thank you to **Joamel González** for helping us access the music for *El Cumbanchero*.

Thank you to my dear friend **Isiah Maxey** for listening to me as I manifested this concert program in real time and helped me with suggestions.

Special thanks to our Fairfax County Choral Resource Teacher, **Luke Frels**, for giving my students such positive feedback after their concert.

Special thanks to past voice professors who have inspired me and helped build my sense of skill in building vocal technique for singers: **Dr. Albert Lee, Professor Joyce Guyer, and Professor David Okerlund**.

Thank you to **Joel Shapiro** and **Sherlee Glomb** for lending me their program format and for your never-ending friendship and patience!

Thank you to **Michael Ehrlich** for guiding us through the process of getting ready for this event in a logistically sound manner!

Thank you to **Mike Horanski** for being our VMEA guide today!

Special thanks to **Daniel Jackson, Laura Lazarevich, and Helai Karim** for attending our pre-VMEA performance and for supporting me and my group!

Many thanks to our **South County Choral Booster Board** for ALWAYS supporting us and for ALWAYS finding a way!

President: Kim Keller
Vice President: Renee Flynn
Treasurer: Angela Benson
Secretary: Barbara Skog
Publicity Chair: Teresa Smith

Thank you to **Mr. Kevin Engdahl** and all parent chaperones for bringing our students to the event!

Special thanks to **Dr. Alicia Williams** for connecting us to a vendor and designer for our programs, acting as a liaison between the two, and for partially funding them!

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to **Mrs. Dulcie Larsen** for graciously offering to take our photographs for our program. Thank you for being incredibly easy to work with and for being patient with me!

South County High School Performing Arts Department:
Orchestra Director, Department Chair- Marci Swift
Band Director- Kevin Engdahl
Theater Director- Molly Rumberger
Guitar Director- Schuyler Kieley
Thank you for always being a support, I would not survive without you! We truly are a remarkable team!

Thank you to **Mr. David Bandman** for video and audio recording our performance today!

Thank you to principal **Mr. Gary Morris** for supplying us the funds to transport our students to the conference and for constantly supporting our program!

Thank you to our **percussion ensemble** and any last-minute accompanists who answered the call to action!

Thank you to all my brilliant **District X Choral Director Colleagues:** Theodore Thorpe, Anna Cooper, Justin Hartsell, Pat Vaughn, Miranda Lansberry, Linda Campbell, Jamie Sample, CJ Redden-Liotta, Dan Kosko, Elisha Miller, Kevin Lackie, Dallis Bryne, Bonny Tynch, Sherlee Glomb, Karli Eddinger, Margie Woods, Lauren Carpel, Sara Martin, Purev Arslan, Catherine Tolpa, Emily Dohse, Shawn Thorpe, Lucia Schaefer and Katelyn Hannel. Thank you for always inspiring me and supporting me.

Thank you to all our current and former Elementary School Teachers who have played a role in the education of those who come through our South County Choral Program:

South County Elementary School Pyramid
Laurel Hill Elementary- Kathie D’Alelio, Shaun Rodgers, Christine Nguyen, Emily Barr, Dwight Fontenot, and Smith Waylett
Silverbrook Elementary-Melissa McCay, Alecia Cardell, Janette Corcelius, and Lee Larsen
Halley Elementary- Dr. Gwen Ward, Carol Poblete, and Sabrina Carpenter
Newington Forest Elementary- Carrie Kuberski and Nicki Shawn
Gunston Elementary- Randy Benton

South County High School Administration
Principal- Gary Morris
Director of Student Activities- Marvin Wooten
Assistant Director of Student Activities- Angela Bashore
Assistant Principal- Claudia Pirouzan-Jones
Assistant Principal- Warren Carrington
Assistant Principal- Jeremiah Caven
Assistant Principal- Samantha Tolan
Director of Student Services- Marci Norem

Acknowledgements

Leadership Team of the South County Choral Community

Division Superintendent- Dr. Scott Brabrand

Deputy Superintendent- Frances Ivey

Assistant Superintendent, Region 4- Penny Gros

Music Education Specialist-Katrina Chaney

Choral Resource Teacher- Luke Frels

School Board Members

Member-at-Large- Karen Keys-Gamarra

Member-at-Large- Abrar Omeish

Vice-Chair, Member-at-Large- Rachna Sizemore Heizer

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Hunter Mill District Representative- Melanie K. Meren

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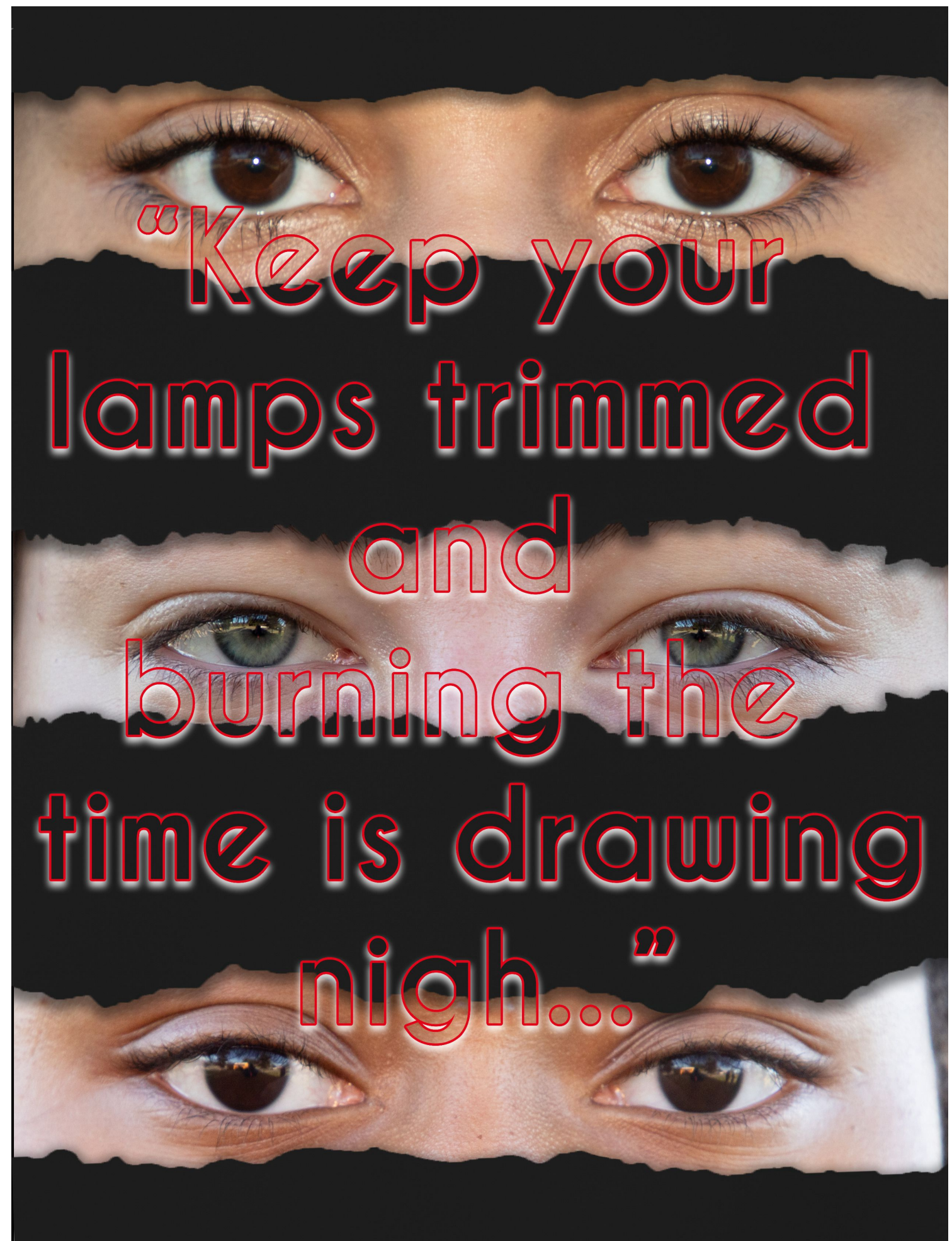
Springfield District Representative- Laura Jane Cohen

Sully District Representative- Stella Pekarsky

Student Representative- Pranav Choudhary



“Say their names,
they cannot be forgotten”





Soprano I
Natalie Beasley
Olivia Smith
Josie Springer
Caelan Wommack

Soprano II
Kristine Flores
Marjon Jaghory
Janea Kinder
Emily Lehrer
Aria Rahman
Emma Skog

Alto I
Andi Evans
Hannah Griffin
Eyowyn Masangkay
Alexa Smith
Megan Smith
Kyrie Thibodeau

Alto II
Cortney Alvarado
Breona Brogan
Jordyn Packer
Emma Shields



Tenor I
Jacob Butts
Cali Frank
Michaela O'Neal
Olivia Woodham

Tenor II
Aiden Evans
Ranen Larsen
Robert Powell
Javier Quiroz-Rubi

Baritone
Aza Akrawi
Samuel Hanrahan
Christopher Ramirez
Connor Walsh
David Warner

Bass II
Mateen Akrami
Eric Bach
John Bornmann
Theodore Jones III
Joseph Thibodeau
Matheaulah Tokhi



