# **The New South Festival Singers**

Lynn Swanson, MME, Music Director & Conductor Scott Smith, Choral Associate & Administrator Jamea J. Sale, MME, WBCF Executive Associate Director Ed Frazier Davis, MM, Director, Institute for Choral Creativity Dr. Sean Sweeden, Composer in Residence Emily Fish, Choral Intern

# Tribute to the American Black Composer

# With Fusion JAZZ

Sunday Afternoon, 19 February 2023 St. John United Methodist Church, Atlanta, Georgia



Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us, Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us; Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, Let us march on, till victory is won!

SOLI DEO GLORIA

What wondrous love is this, O my soul?

# The New South Festival Singers

### Lynn Swanson, MME

Director, New South Festival Singers Director, Cobb Summer Singers Creator, Institute for Healthy Singing

# William O. Baker, DMA Creator & Director of the Choral Foundation

Jamea J. Sale, Ph.D. WBCF Executive Associate Director Director, Institute for Healthy Singing

Andrew Phillip Schmidt, MM Music Director, Summer Singers of Atlanta

Amy Thropp, MM Music Director, Zimria Festivale Atlanta

Jennifer Lahasky, MM Director, Summer Singers of Lee's Summit

Leilani Velasco Vaughn Music Director, Voces Festivas

### Ed Frazier Davis, MM

Director, Institute for Choral Creativity Music Director, Vox Venti Chicago

# Christine M. Freeman, MME Associate Music Director/Kansas City

Scott C. Smith Choral Associate & Administrator, Atlanta

# Sean Sweeden, DMA Composer in Residence

### Emily Fish Choral Intern

Niccole Williams Administrative Assistant

Leanne Elmer Herrmann, MM, Staff Accompanist Ivy Belk Pirl, MM, Staff Accompanist Michelle Reed, MM, Staff Accompanist Geoffrey Wilcken, DMA, Staff Accompanist

# The William Baker Choral Foundation, Inc.

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# Lynn Swanson, Music Director & Conductor



**Lynn Swanson**, Director of the Cobb Summer Singers and The New South Festival Singers, is a native of the Atlanta suburb of Marietta, Georgia. She holds the Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance from Shorter College, and the Master of Music Education in Choral Pedagogy from the University of Kansas.

Ms. Swanson is one of the most consequential leaders in the nearly four-decade history of the Choral Foundation in Atlanta. She is, unmistakably, one of the most significant music leaders of our time in the Atlanta community.

She has enjoyed an accomplished international career, serving church positions in Germany that included a performance in the iconic Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Significant church positions where she has served as Music Director and as Organist/Choirmaster, include All Saints Cathedral in Milwaukee, St. Benedict's Episcopal Church in Smyrna, Georgia, Due West United Methodist Church in

Marietta and, presently, Grace Episcopal Church in Gainesville.

From 2017-2018 she served as Assistant Director of the Zhuhai Classical Children's Choir in Zhuhai, China, near Hong Kong. During her lauded tenure there she conducted the chorus at Central Conservatory in Beijing where the performance was viewed on Chinese National Television. She also led the first-ever Buddhist Monastery Choir in a classical performance at the Beijing International Music Festival. From 2018-2020 she served as Executive Artistic Director of the Milwaukee Children's Choir.

Ms. Swanson served a number of leading positions with the Choral Foundation from 2006-2018. She founded the Cobb Summer Singers in 2006, the Northside Young Singers in 2008, the Cobb Festival Singers in 2009, the Institute for Healthy Singing in 2015. She served as associate director of the Choral Foundation's original ensemble, now called The New South Festival Singers, from 2010 to 2015, before her appointment as the second music director of the ensemble in 2015, a position she held from 2015-2017 and resumed in 2021. Lynn Swanson co-created the Summer Singers of Lee's Summit in 2014, and served as Executive Associate Music Director of the Choral Foundation from 2011-2017.

Ms. Swanson's conducting portfolio of choral-orchestral masterworks is extensive, including Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Bach: *Mass in B Minor*, *Christ lag in todesbanden*, and *Wachet auf*, Handel: *Messiah*, *Israel in Egypt*, *Dettingen Te Deum* and *Coronation Anthems*, Mozart: *Coronation Mass*, *Solemn Vespers*, and *Missa Brevis in D*, Beethoven: *Mass in C* and Mendelssohn: *Elijah*, along with many other works. Collaborations have involved musicians from the Kansas City Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and the Kazinetti Quartet.

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# The New South Festival Singers Music of Timeless Beauty and Worth from Atlanta Since 1985



The New South Festival Singers traces its history to the 1985 creation of Gwinnett Festival Singers by founder William Baker and his long-time associate, Janis Lane. The choir was known as The William Baker Festival Singers from 1998-2015. The Festival Singers was led by its founder through its 30<sup>th</sup> concert season. The ensemble is now "The New South Festival Singers" in homage to Henry W. Grady's description of Atlanta's historic legacy of tolerance, justice, opportunity and enterprise. The Choral Foundation's original choral ensemble is now in its fourth season under the leadership of Music Director &

Conductor Lynn Swanson.

The Festival Singers specializes in short-form sacred a cappella classics and spirituals, in addition to annual performances of masterworks for chorus and chamber orchestra. Major concerts have included a performance of Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem* with the Gwinnett Symphony Orchestra, and a performance in Spivey Hall of Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. John Passion* and *Mass in B Minor*. Other masterworks over the years have included Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Mozart's *Requiem*, *Solemn Vespers*, *Missa Brevis in D*, and *Mass in C minor*; Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri*, and Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* and *Ceremony of Carols*, along with dozens of works from Palestrina to Kodaly. The Festival Singers performed the Ernest Bloch *Avodath Hakodesh* for the rededication of the magnificent pipe organ at The Temple on Peachtree, and at the historic Community Christian Church in Kansas City, a performance broadcast in its entirety by Kansas Public Radio on the eve of Passover 2012. The Festival Singers' recording of the *Requiem* of John Rutter and *Songs of the Holocaust* by William Dreyfoos was reviewed graciously in the December 2020 edition of *American Record Guide*.

The ensemble is known for its expressive memorized performances of signature a cappella concerts demonstrating a striking diversity and depth of repertoire. The sound of the Festival Singers has been hailed by music critics and the general public, including The Atlanta Journal-Constitution "Sensuous tonal beauty ...a level of balance, blend, intonation and expressiveness that puts the average community chorus to shame..." The Charleston Post & Courier, "...the South's premier a cappella choir...exceptional tone and ferocious emotion..." and the New Orleans Times-Picayune, "...inspiring and exhilarating."

The Festival Singers has produced 25 nationally released recordings hailed in reviews by *The Atlanta Constitution* and *The American Record Guide*. The choir has been featured in local television programs across the South, and on national radio programs that include *The Sounds of Majesty*, *The First Art* and National Public Radio's *Performance Today*. They have toured throughout the South and Midwest in the United States and Great Britain,



having appeared in Birmingham's Divinity Chapel, Atlanta's Spivey Hall, the DeKalb International Choral Festival, Canterbury Cathedral, and the Bristol (England) Festival, in addition to annual performances before capacity audiences at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, since 1989.

The Festival Singers has become a model for professional-level volunteer choruses that have inspired the creation of similar organizations in the Atlanta area and across the nation. Indeed, the ambitious chorus that met

for a first rehearsal in the basement of a Norcross church in 1985 is now the flagship ensemble of the William Baker Choral Foundation, a national arts organization that through the years has created over a dozen choirs involving hundreds of men, women and youth in Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, and Missouri.

# www.NewSouthFestivalSingers.org

# Fusion JAZZ

Fusion Founder and Director, **KARIN R BANKS** served as the Music Director of the Absalom Jones Student Center of Atlanta University System for two and a half years. Her collaborations include arts organizations such as Ballethnic Dance Company where she served as music consultant, composer and performer for the Company's production of Flying West, (2011 & 2015) a ballet adaptation of the Pearl Cleage play. She then founded Fusion Chamber Ensemble in 2016 whose mission is to blend musical styles of jazz, classical and world music, featuring a combination of traditional and non-traditional composers from around the world as well as new works by living composers. Karin has composed music for all Fusion concerts and recently was featured on "Colors of Classical Music" an Instagram page dedicated to showcasing artists of color in classical music. In addition, her compositions have been featured on programs with the Lynn Swanson Festival Singers and the Metro Atlanta Philharmonic Orchestra. Other collaborative projects include composing for local playwright Bradley Candie and arranging music for special projects in collaboration with violinist Christopher Mosley of MPA Productions.

**CHRISTOPHER "MR PERFORMING ARTS" MOSLEY** (Fusion Co-Founder and Artistic Consultant) began playing the violin in the metro Atlanta area at the age of 9. He is an alumnus of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Talent Development Program and earned a Bachelor of Music and a Master of Arts in Teaching both from Georgia State University. After 5 years as the Director of Orchestras at Tri-Cities High School, Christopher founded MPA Productions (www.mpaproductions.net) to offer orchestral support to teachers everywhere. He has worked with students from all over the world in venues such as Carnegie Hall and the Sydney Opera House and performs regularly around the southeast.

**KERREN BERZ** has talents that span the musical spectrum. Currently Concertmaster of the Columbus (GA) Symphony Orchestra, she has performed, recorded, and toured with the Atlanta Symphony, the Harlem Festival Orchestra, and the Nashville Chamber Orchestra, whose "music without boundaries" mission produced critically acclaimed performances and recordings of music by Aaron Copland, Conni Ellisor, and Jay Ungar, among others. Kerren's arrangements and performances have been featured on mega pop hits and with iconic superstar artists. She's also arranged for live orchestra concerts and quartets in a variety of genres. She loves working with the artist to create a unique, tailor-made sound!

**MARY MCCOY** is a national board-certified orchestra teacher, with a degree in Music Education from Loyola University, New Orleans. She performs professionally on violin and viola in several regional orchestras and ensembles, and freelances extensively throughout Atlanta, participating in theater productions, church presentations, weddings, private functions, corporate events, and recording sessions. Ms. McCoy also offers studio private lessons for string students and offers coaching to vocal students and others in Italian and French.

**MARLA MAJETT** started her career as a full-time music teacher in 1996 and has stayed active with her students. She earned a bachelor's degree in music from Furman University. As a former Suzuki piano and cello student, Ms. Majett has also taken Suzuki training with several Suzuki cello pioneers. As an advocate of the Suzuki Method, Ms. Majett was one of the founding members of the Suzuki Association of Georgia and served as vice president. She also served on the Steering Committee for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Talent Development Program, chaired the Advisory Committee on Race for the Suzuki Association of the Americas, is the director of the Kulea Music Institute, and currently serves as the president of the Suzuki Association of Georgia. Ms. Majett has also performed with various regional orchestras and ensembles.

**GERALD FREEMAN** (Fusion co-founder) is a gifted pianist. He showed an interest in piano at age 4, when his parents observed him pressing the keys using individual fingers. At age 7, he began instruction at Atlanta Music School in Dunwoody, GA, where he learned by both Traditional and Suzuki methods. By age 7, his "absolute pitch" ability aided him in learning and memorizing new pieces. Throughout his middle and high school years he continued to play in recitals, as well as Regional and State competitions. He has received Outstanding Performance ratings. Gerald has provided accompaniment for vocal soloists and ensembles in his school music programs. In the summer of 2010, he received a scholarship to attend the Brevard College Music Festival in North Carolina, where he did further study in piano performance. Gerald is a Certified Piano Technician from the Larry Crabb School of

Piano Technology in Tucker, GA. As a member of the Piano Technicians Guild, he specializes in Fine Tuning through his company, Freeman Piano Services in Dunwoody and serves as piano technician for Steinway Piano Galleries.

**STEVE BROWN** performs regularly in Atlanta and Decatur as a singer, pianist and bassist, and is active as a church musician participating in choral music, piano and organ accompaniment, and as a cantor. He first became a working musician as a bassist while in high school and has appeared onstage with Mary Lou and the MGs, Nick Craig and the Sentimental Journey, the John Sox Jazz Quartet, the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, The Tom Olsen Trio, and Mark Karell. Steve has BA and MS degrees from DePauw University and the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is a commercial pilot with instrument and glider ratings and is president of Southern Eagles Soaring, Inc., a not-for-profit soaring club in Warm Springs, Georgia. He is married to Lisa Turner who is an owner at Trinity Mercantile and Design in Decatur.

Fusion Board member and Atlanta Percussionist, **PAUL VOGLER** has appeared on the bill with Ziggy Marley, Thelonius Monk Jr., Dr. Billy Taylor, The New York Voices & others. As a public educator of public and private schools (Baylor and McCallie schools of Chattanooga) and universities including UTC and Georgia Perimeter College. Paul lectured World Music, Percussion, Jazz Studies and Electronic Music and directed Jazz Band and Orchestra. Paul's company, Atlanta Event Music, has provided educational programming since 1995, receiving the 1997 Dorothy Mullen National Arts Award for "The Bessie Bus", a mobile jazz and blues program. Atlanta Event Music also provided audio/video production/editing and inter-active exhibits including working with the National Afro-American Museum on the traveling exhibit "When the Spirit Moves" appearing at the Smithsonian Institution.

Currently, Paul maintains an active performance schedule with Atlanta Steel Pan and Island Music, the Atlanta Jazz Trio, and 2nd Line Atlanta while continuing to teach private lessons. Paul Vogler performs as solo percussionist on vibraphone, marimba & steel drum. Paul is also an Alternate Mode Mallet Kat endorser and proudly plays the Panyard Solid Hoop steel pans.

# Ivy Belk Pirl, Staff Accompanist



**Ivy Belk Pirl, Accompanist,** is a favorite of Choral Foundation audiences, having also performed with the Festival Singers for many years. Ivy has been principal Accompanist of the Cobb Summer Singers since the group's founding in 2006. She is a native of Marietta and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Piano Performance from Florida State University in Tallahassee. She recently completed her Master of Music in Piano Pedagogy from Georgia State University in Atlanta. She is a certified Kindermusik instructor and she teaches piano in private studio. Ms. Pirl makes her home in North Atlanta.



# A Tribute to the American Black Composer

Sunday Afternoon, 19 February 2023 4:00 PM, St. John United Methodist Church, Atlanta, Georgia

The New South Festival Singers, Lynn Swanson, MME, Music Director & Conductor With Fusion Chamber Ensemble & Ivy Belk Pirl, piano

The New South Festival Singers acknowledges funding from the Georgia Council for the Arts

I

WALK TOGETHER CHILDREN LET ME FLY

Scott Smith, soloist

Spiritual arranged by Robert DeCormier

Karin R. BANKS

BANKS

BANKS

Spiritual arranged by Moses Hogan

Π

DAWN PACEM

David Folkes, soloist

# Ш

THE MYSTERY PLAYER

SOPHISTICATED LADY

I BELIEVE IN GOD (Credo from "Gospel Mass") Alexis LaSalle & Laura Hotchkiss, soloists

Robert RAY, 1946-2022

The New South Festival Singers Lynn Swanson, Music Director & Conductor

V

VI

STRING QUARTET IN G AT MONDAY DATE **KAINTUCK** 

> Tadd DAMERON, 1917-1965 Astor PIAZZOLLA, 1921-1992

William Grant STILL, 1895-1978

Florence PRICE, 1887-1953

Earl HINES, 1903-1983

BANKS

Fusion JAZZ Karin R. Banks, Founder & Director Christopher Mosley, Karren Berz, Mary McCoy, Marla Majett, Steve Brown, Paul Vogler & Gerald Freeman

IT DON'T MEAN A THING

**OUR DELIGHT** 

WINTER SONG

**INVIERNO PORTEÑA** 

ELLINGTON, arranged by Gerald Freeman Ms. Hotchkiss & Steve Brailsford, soloists

The New South Festival Singers & Fusion JAZZ

Mr. Smith & Mr. Folkes, soloists

IV

Duke ELLINGTON, 1899-1974, arranged by Gerald Freeman

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William Baker Festival Singers, Prairie Village, Kansas, 1998

New South Festival Singers, Atlanta, Georgia, 1985 Lynn Swanson, MME, Music Director & Conductor

**Summer Singers of Atlanta**, Midtown Atlanta, 1990 Andrew Phillip Schmidt, MM, Music Director & Conductor

Summer Singers of Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri, 1999 William O. Baker, DMA, Music Director & Conductor

> **Cobb Summer Singers,** Marietta, Georgia, 2006 Lynn Swanson, MME, Founder & Music Director

Summer Singers of Lee's Summit, Lee's Summit, Missouri, 2014 Jennifer Lahasky, MME, Music Director & Conductor

> Voces Festivas, Roeland Park, Kansas, 2021 Leilani Velasco Vaughn, Music Director

Kansas City Bronze, Roeland Park, Kansas, 2018

**Vox Venti,** Chicago, Illinois, 2022 Ed Frazier Davis, MM, Music Director & Conductor

Institute for Healthy Singing & Voice Research, Roeland Park, Kansas, 2015 Jamea J. Sale, PhD, Director Lynn Swanson, MME, Founder

> Institute for Choral Creativity, Chicago, Illinois, 2020 Ed Frazier Davis, MM, Director

# Choral Conversations Podcast with William Baker & Jamea Sale, Roeland Park, Kansas, 2018 Jane Sullivan Choral Resource Library, Roeland Park, Kansas, 2016



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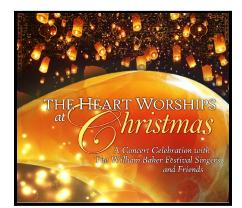
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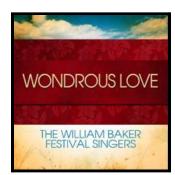
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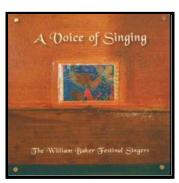
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THE WILLIAM BAKER FESTIVAL SINGERS

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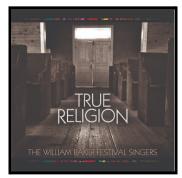
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