



# Southern California Vocal Association

DECEMBER 2025

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Michael Ushino*

Dear Colleagues,

It's the most wonderfully stressful time of the year! Many of you not only have your winter concerts, but other singing engagements throughout this season. In addition to reminding us all to breathe and giving ourselves an emotional space, this is an important opportunity to show our singers the appreciation and love that they deserve.

I'm always trying to draw inspiration from other places that I can bring into my rehearsals. I love both sports and food as much as I love choral music and will often use examples from both worlds in my rehearsals. My love of food is such that my students joke about how I am always watching cooking videos and interviews with great chefs during my lunch breaks.

A quote that sticks with me that comes from Thomas Keller, founder of the French Laundry which is widely considered as one of the best restaurants in the world. **"Do you know why cooks cook? We cook to nurture people."** Thomas Keller also states that the nurturing is not just for the guest, but extends to everyone else in the kitchen, the waiters, and all the way to the farmers that providing ingredients. I believe that **nurturing** is the purpose of music as well. This season is a wonderful opportunity to nurture our audiences, our students, our colleagues at our school sites, administrators, booster parents, and anyone else that we come into contact with.

As an organization, my hope is that we are continually offering opportunities for your students to grow but also give you all the love, appreciation, and support that you deserve. Let's get through this season in one piece and have some wonderfully stress-free weeks off. Wishing you all the best this winter season and happy holidays!

Michael Ushino  
President

Tammi Alderman  
Past President

Bethany Encina  
President Elect

Carolyn Kelley  
Treasurer

Bekka Knauer  
Secretary

Dora Ridgeway  
Membership

Karen Bluel  
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Mark Freedkin  
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Kristen Walton  
VPI - High School Honor Choir

Drew Lewis  
VP - Vocal Solo Competition

Monica Benson  
VP II - Vocal Solo Competition

Ken Haro  
VP I - Festivals

Trevor Torres  
VP II - Festivals

Daniel Alvarez  
VP - Festival Adjudication

Sammy Salvador  
Jr High/Middle School Honor Choir

Brandon Harris  
VP - Show Choir

Brittney Wescamillo  
VP - Jazz/Contemporary A Cappella  
Honor Choir

Kaitlin Pi  
VP - Jazz Festival

Sarah Flores  
Elementary Activities

Marco Rodriguez  
VP - Close Harmony Festival

# Remembering

## FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES



It is with deep sadness that we acknowledge the passing of two beloved colleagues and friends this fall. Marcelo Martinez and Eric Graham were dedicated choir directors who touched countless lives through their work as music educators and their commitment to our choral community.

Marcelo served our organization with distinction as a board member, serving as Vice President of Jr. High Honor Choir, and both men were cherished SCVA Members whose friendship and artistry enriched our professional family.

### Marcelo Martinez

February 19, 1982 - September 2, 2025

### Eric Graham

February 6th, 1978 - October 18th, 2025

We invite you to honor Eric and Marcelo's memory by reading their full obituaries at the

following links:

[Marcelo Martínez](#)

[Eric Graham](#)



# SEVA VOCAL SOLO FESTIVAL 2026

**THIS YEAR'S FESTIVAL CONSISTS OF THREE ROUNDS:**

**PRELIMINARY, SEMI-FINALS, AND FINALS.**

**AFTER THEIR PRELIMINARY SUBMISSIONS, SINGERS WILL RECEIVE AN  
ADJUDICATED SCORE AND RANKING. OUR TOP 10 IN EACH CATEGORY  
WILL ADVANCE TO SEMIFINALS.**

**FROM THERE, THE TOP 5 IN EACH CATEGORY WILL BE INVITED TO  
PERFORM AT FINALS.**

**STUDENTS ARE INVITED TO SUBMIT IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES  
(AND CAN SUBMIT IN MULTIPLE CATEGORIES):**

**CLASSICAL VOICE, COMMERCIAL MUSIC/JAZZ, AND MUSICAL  
THEATRE.**



## **KEY DATES:**

First round:

Virtual Video submissions

due by Jan 24

Feedback delivered by Feb 15

Semi finals: In Person Masterclass

Hosted in regional areas BETWEEN Mar 15-Apr 11

Finals: In Person May 17th from 3:00-5:00 PM

Glendale City Church

610 E California Ave, Glendale, CA 91206

**\$40 SOLO ENTRY**

**\$45 DUO/TRIO/SMALL ENSEMBLE**

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## **QUESTIONS?**

Drew Lewis at [drewlewis1977@gmail.com](mailto:drewlewis1977@gmail.com) or  
Monica Benson at [monicatbenson@gmail.com](mailto:monicatbenson@gmail.com)

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# SPRING FESTIVALS

Registration opens Oct. 15th!

## High School Festivals

Day	Date	Time	Site	City	Level	Type	Sight-Reading	Host
Monday	2/24/2026	10:00 AM	Hacienda Heights Community Center	Hacienda Heights	Open	Open	N	Jeffrey Fahey
Tuesday	3/3/2026	8:00 AM	Granite Hills High School	Apple Valley	Open	Open	Y	Shane Churchill
Thursday	3/5/2026	6:00 PM	Bloomington High	Bloomington	Open	Open	N	Ryan Duckworth
Thursday	3/5/2026	10:00 AM	Bishop Amat High School (FULL)	La Puente	Open	Open	Y	Jennifer Escovar
Thursday	3/5/2026	2:00 PM	Bishop Amat High School (FULL)	La Puente	Class I	Open	Y	Jennifer Escovar
Monday	3/9/2026	7:00 PM	California Lutheran University Chapel	Thousand Oaks	Open	Open	N	Janna Santangelo
Tuesday	3/10/2026	10:00 AM	Loara High School (FULL)	Anaheim	Open	Open	N	Katherine Kelty
Tuesday	3/10/2026	7:00 PM	California Lutheran University (FULL)	Thousand Oaks	Open	Open	N	Amy Rolniak
Wednesday	3/11/2026	10:30 AM	Bonita Center for the Arts (FULL)	San Dimas	Open	Women/Men	N	Ryan Yoder
Wednesday	3/11/2026	10:00 AM	Rubidoux High School (FULL)	Jurupa Valley	Open	Open	N	Jeff Lin
Thursday	3/12/2026	10:30 AM	Bonita Center for the Arts (FULL)	San Dimas	Open	Mixed	N	Ryan Yoder
Thursday	3/12/2026	10:00 AM	San Marino High School (FULL)	San Marino	Open	Open	Y	Derek Jamieson
Thursday	3/12/2026	1:00 PM	San Marino High School	San Marino	Class I	Mixed	Y	Derek Jamieson
Friday	3/13/2026	10:00 AM	Temecula Valley High School (FULL)	Temecula	Open	Open	N	Sang Park
Friday	3/13/2026	12:00 PM	Santa Susana High School	Simi Valley	Open	Open	N	Bevin Abbe
Friday	3/13/2026	6:30 PM	Santa Paula High School	Santa Paula	Open	Open	N	Jerry Cruz
Saturday	3/14/2026	11:00 AM	Biola University Lansing Auditorium (FULL)	La Mirada	Open	Mixed	N	Shawna Stewart
Saturday	3/14/2026	3:00 PM	Biola University Lansing Auditorium	La Mirada	Open	Mixed	N	Shawna Stewart
Saturday	3/14/2026	7:00 PM	Biola University Lansing Auditorium	La Mirada	Open	Mixed	N	Shawna Stewart



# SPRING FESTIVALS

## High School Festivals

cont.

Day	Date	Time	Site	City	Level	Type	Sight-Reading	Host
Monday	3/16/2026	12:00 PM	University of La Verne (FULL)	La Verne	Open	Open	Y	Clarissa Shan
Tuesday	3/17/2026	10:30 AM	Silverado High School (FULL)	Victorville	Open	Open	N	Jackie Reeff
Tuesday	3/17/2026	10:00 AM	Vista Del Lago High School (FULL)	Moreno Valley	Open	Open	N	Jennifer Meregini
Tuesday	3/17/2026	10:00 AM	Fontana High School	Fontana	Open	Open	N	Andrew Salas
Wednesday	3/18/2026	1:30 PM	Santiago High School (FULL)	Corona	Open	Open	Y	Rachelle Randeen
Wednesday	3/18/2026	9:30 AM	Santiago High School (FULL)	Corona	Class I	Open	Y	Rachelle Randeen
Wednesday	3/18/2026	11:00 AM	Etiwanda High School (FULL)	Etiwanda	Open	Open	N	Sheri Nelson
Friday	3/20/2026	10:00 AM	Los Osos High School	Rancho Cucamonga	Class I	Women's	Y	Stevie Leyton
Friday	3/20/2026	2:00 PM	Los Osos High School	Rancho Cucamonga	Class I	Mixed	Y	Stevie Leyton
Friday	3/20/2026	1:00 PM	Murrieta Mesa High Schol (FULL)	Murrieta	Open	Mixed	N	Bradley Allen
Tuesday	3/24/2026	10:00 AM	Sunny Hills High School Performing Arts Center (FULL)	Fullerton	Class I	Open	N	Aaron Schwartz
Wednesday	3/25/2026	10:00 AM	Sunny Hills High School Performing Arts Center (FULL)	Fullerton	Class III	Open	N	Aaron Schwartz
Thursday	3/26/2026	8:30 AM	Arcadia Performing Arts Center	Arcadia	Open	Mixed	Y	Connie Tu
Thursday	4/2/2026	10:00 AM	Corona del Mar Sea King Theater (FULL)	Newport Beach	Class I	Open	Y	Andrew Ball
Tuesday	4/7/2026	9:00 AM	Ramon C. Cortines School (FULL)	Los Angeles	Open	Clinic	Y	Drew Lewis
Wednesday	4/15/2026	12:30 PM	Marshall Auditorium (FULL)	Pasadena	Open	Open	Y	Michelle Espinosa
Tuesday	4/21/2026	10:00 AM	El Monte High School Auditorium (FULL)	El Monte	Open	Open	N	Joel Whisler
Tuesday	4/21/2026	7:00 PM	The Thacher School	Ojai	Open	Open	Y	William Wagner
Thursday	5/21/2026	7:00 PM	Mira Costa High School	Manhattan Beach	Open	Open	Y	Kate Crellin

# SPRING FESTIVALS

## Middle School Festivals

Day	Date	Time	Site	City	Level	Type	Sight-Reading	Host
Thursday	2/26/2026	10:00 AM	Beacon Park School (FULL)	Irvine	Open	Open	N	Miguel Chicas
Monday	3/2/2026	1:00 PM	Bonita Center for the Arts	San Dimas	Open	Mixed	N	Jared Pugh
Monday	3/2/2026	10:00 AM	Bonita Center for the Arts	La Verne	Open	Open	N	Caitlin Shaw
Tuesday	3/10/2026	11:00 AM	Los Cerritos Middle School	Thousand Oaks	Open	Open	N	Grant Goldstein
Tuesday	3/10/2026	10:00 AM	Bonita Center for the Arts (FULL)	La Verne	Open	Open	N	Caitlin Shaw
Friday	3/13/2026	8:30 AM	Santa Susana High School (FULL)	Simi Valley	Open	Open	N	Bevin Abbe
Thursday	3/19/2026	11:00 AM	Los Cerritos Middle School (FULL)	Thousand Oaks	Open	Open	N	Grant Goldstein
Thursday	3/19/2026	10:30 AM	Roosevelt Middle School	Oceanside	Open	Open	Y	Dawn Inouye
Thursday	3/19/2026	10:00 AM	Baldwin Park Performing Arts Center	Baldwin Park	Class III	Open	N	Becky Othmer
Thursday	3/19/2026	10:30 AM	Ladera Ranch Middle School	Las Flores	Open	Open	N	Elena Benefield
Thursday	4/2/2026	1:00 PM	Corona del Mar Sea King Theater	Newport Beach	Open	Open	Y	Andrew Ball
Tuesday	4/7/2026	1:00 PM	Ramon C. Cortines School	Los Angeles	Open	Open	N	Drew Lewis
Friday	4/10/2026	9:00 AM	Norco Intermediate School	Norco	Open	Open	Y	Kyle Betts
Friday	4/10/2026	1:00 PM	Norco Intermediate School	Norco	Open	Open	Y	Kyle Betts
Wednesday	4/15/2026	10:00 AM	Marshall Fundamental School Auditorium	Pasadena	Open	Open	Y	Michelle Espinosa
Thursday	4/16/2026	2:00 PM	Ethel Dwyer Middle School	Huntington Beach	Open	Open	Y	Neil Reyes
Thursday	4/16/2026	10:00 AM	Vista Del Lago High School	Moreno Valley	Open	Open	N	Jennifer Meregini
Thursday	4/16/2026	10:30 AM	Las Flores Middle School	Las Flores	Open	Open	N	Elena Espinosa
Thursday	4/30/2026	10:30 AM	Ladera Vista Performing Arts Gym	Fullerton	Open	Open	N	Andrea Calvo
Friday	5/8/2026	1:30 PM	Manhattan Beach Middle School	Manhattan Beach	Open	Open	Y	Kate Crellin



**MIDDLE SCHOOL/9TH GRADE**

**HONOR CHOIR**

**2025-2026**

## **Important Dates**

### **Saturday January 31st**

Audition Weekend #1 9am-1pm  
Cope Middle School ~ Redlands  
Ramona Middle School ~ La Verne  
Kennedy High School ~ La Palma  
Madison Middle School ~ Oceanside

### **Saturday February 7th**

Audition Weekend #2 9am-1pm  
Ramirez Intermediate School ~ Eastvale  
Temple City High School ~ Temple City  
Beacon Park K-8 School ~ Irvine

### **Saturday March 14th**

Regional Rehearsal 9am-1pm  
San Juan Hills High School  
San Juan Capistrano

### **Saturday May 2nd**

Rehearsal Day and Final Concert  
Portola High School ~ Irvine

**Ruth Morris Gray**

*Conductor*



**AUDITION  
SIGN UPS OPEN IN  
JANUARY!!**

**AUDITION  
ADJUDICATORS  
NEEDED!!**

**OPEN TO ALL  
6TH-9TH  
GRADERS!!**



# SCMA



**VOCAL JAZZ & CONTEMPORARY A CAPPELLA FESTIVAL**

**Saturday, February 7th, 2026**  
**Saugus High School, Santa Clarita, CA**

*\*Registration is now closed as the festival is full.  
Please email [kpi@hartdistrict.org](mailto:kpi@hartdistrict.org) to join the waitlist.*

**Introducing our Featured Performers: LOCKED!**



LOCKED is new vocal group based in Los Angeles composed of four singers from completely different musical backgrounds — featuring Maddi Lasker, Yohanna Bauerdorf, Mateo Gonzales, and Raymond Ortiz who met while singing together in their collegiate a cappella group, The SoCal VoCals.

As session vocalists, songwriters, and award-winning arrangers, all members studied at the USC Thornton School of Music, pursuing degrees such as Popular Music and Jazz Studies.

Within one month of creating LOCKED, they have garnered millions of viewers across TikTok and Instagram, allowing them to share their arrangements on a larger scale. Driven by their tight friendship and passion for music, LOCKED has the vocals you've been looking for.



# **SCVA** ***SHOW CHOIR SPECTACULAR***

# **MAY 16<sup>TH</sup> 2026**

**RUSD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**

2000 Otterbein Ave.  
Rowland Heights CA 91748

# **REGISTRATION** ***NOW OPEN!***

**ALL DIVISIONS OPEN**

***Middle School/Intermediate School***  
***High School Novice (Mixed & Treble)***  
***High School Intermediate (Mixed & Treble)***  
***High School Advanced (Mixed & Treble)***  
***Tenor/Bass***



# **CONGRATULATIONS, SCVA VOCAL JAZZ/ CONTEMPORARY A CAPPELLA HONOR CHOIR!**



VJCA Honor Choir Weekend 2025 was directed by John Knutson and took place November 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> at Valencia High School in Santa Clarita, culminating in a dazzling performance on the night of November 14th. Congratulations to the following students, schools, and directors:

***Leanne Flores- San Dimas High School- Director, Jared Pugh  
Chloe Grace Chen- Portola High School- Director, Adrian Rangel-Sanchez  
Camden Park, Alex Santos, and Michael Boynton-  
Tesoro High School- Director, Keith Hancock  
Presley Roach, Everett Nee, and Ivy Motschenbacher-  
Saugus High School- Director, Kaitlin Pi  
Laura Lo- Troy High School- Director, Mark Henson  
Samantha Lee- Arnold O. Beckman High School- Director, Laura Lodin  
Saraya Chigoji- The Webb Schools- Director, Rosanne Lamb  
Aurelia Evans, Matthew Glasgow-Allen, Birdie DeFreitas, Lilia Altamirano,  
Olivia Vielma, Ricky Lucero, and Benjamin Ross-  
Valencia High School- Director, Christine Mocha***





# HIGH SCHOOL HONOR CHOIR

**RECAP**



This year's SCVA High School Honor Choir featured the work of over 250 students representing over 70 schools. Students performed a fabulous program in the University of Redlands Memorial Chapel under the direction of our esteemed conductors- Dr. Buddy James (TTBB), Dr. Cari Earnhart (SATB), and Dr. Alyssa Cossey (SSAA). It was exciting to be able to walk around to rehearsals and see how quickly students were making progress and growth with some incredibly challenging repertoire. The best part was that they were having fun and making friends along the way. Your students were truly so kind, respectful, hard working, and fun! Thank you, to our SCVA members, for helping prepare your students for the audition and rehearsal process. They arrived prepared to really dive deep into every note and every phrase.

The SCVA High School Honor Choir is truly a team effort and runs smoothly with the help of volunteers. THANK YOU to everyone who adjudicated or hosted auditions, to those who shuttled students back and forth, and to those who volunteered the weekend of. From part checks to coffee runs- we couldn't have done this without you. A special thanks goes out to Bethany Encina and Michael Ushino for jumping in to help run the weekend.

Kristen Walton - High School Honor Choir VP

## Important Dates & Deadlines

### Event

Vocal Solo Virtual Video Submission Deadline  
Middle School/9<sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Choir Auditions  
VJCA Festival  
Vocal Solo Submissions Feedback by  
Middle School/9<sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Choir Regional Rehearsal  
Vocal Solo Master Classes  
Middle School/9<sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Choir Concert  
Vocal Solo Finals  
Show Choir Spectacular

### 2026

Jan 24  
Jan 31 & Feb 7  
Feb 15  
Feb 7  
March 14  
March 15 - April 11  
May 2  
May 17  
May 18

MEMBER

## SPOTLIGHT

### **RODGER GURRERO**

#### **Tell us about your teaching career so far.**

This is year 40 as a choral director, 28 of which were spent conducting high school choral ensembles at Canyon HS (Canyon Country), Monache HS (Porterville, CA), and Harvard-Westlake School. I have also conducted K-8 choirs at San Gabriel Mission School & Holy Angels School in Arcadia. I also led a 4th-6th grade chorus at Westfield Elementary School in Porterville, CA (maybe my favorite chorus ever!). I conducted the USC University Chorus during my doctoral work there, as well as the Univ. of Miami Men's Chorus during my master's studies. Oh, and I led church choirs of multiple faiths for 30 years, on and off. This is my 10<sup>th</sup> year as Director of Choral Studies at Pasadena City College...I think that I still have a few years left in me.



#### **What piece have you recently been most excited about?**

There are too many to name! But along with my Central California buddies, Heather and Dan Bishop (Clovis), I led two sessions on Repertoire Selection at the CCDA Summer Conference this past July. I included a HUGE list of favorite choral works for the attendees at that conference, one that included about 200 octavos for SATB, SSAA, and TTBB voicings. Anyone who is interested in a copy of it can email me at PCC. Let's just say that it is incredibly diverse, both in terms of styles and historical eras.

#### **What is one thing you wish you could tell your past self in his first year?**

Time will fly, so stay in the moment. One day you're sweating over all of the details, the little things that don't really matter in the long run. The thing you know, it will be 40 years later, and all that matters are the wonderful relationships that you built with the incredible human beings you interacted with through choral music. Make your mark through the students you work with. That will be the mark that you make upon the world.

#### **What is your history working with SCVA?**

I led a choir at Canyon HS to my first-ever SCVA festival in 1986 at Crescenta Valley HS. I also hosted SCVA Festivals from 2002-2016 when I was at Harvard-Westlake School. Most importantly, my tenure on the SCVA Board started in the early 2000's, first as Vocal Solo Festival chair. Then I moved from assistant HS Honor Choir chair to HS Honor Choir chair, two terms as President (2010-2012 and 2014-2016) and finally as Past President for two terms after each of the presidencies. In short: I LOVE SCVA!!!

#### **What piece of advice do you have for other choral professionals right now?**

Hang in there. The music that our students create with and through us is the panacea for the pandemonium that surrounds us. Oh, and one more thing: the students that we work with are not "our students," and the ensembles that we lead are not "our choirs." We collaborate with the singers, but the choirs belong to them. WE belong to them.