CHORALFEST 2022 BIOS

The **Montclair State University Singers** is the University’s flagship choir - a mixed-voice elective ensemble comprising undergraduate & graduate students who are experienced musicians. Students from all schools/colleges in the University in good academic standing may audition. The University Singers performs a wide variety of sacred and secular repertoire, encompassing genres from the Renaissance to the 21st Century, with special interest in contemporary composers.

Previous season highlights include New York Choral Festival Showcase Concerts performances at Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall, their ACDA Eastern Division Convention debut performance in Providence, RI (2012), their NAfME All-Eastern debut in Atlantic City, NJ (2017), Mid-Atlantic tour of the USA (May 2013), and collaborating with the esteemed American composer Morten Lauridsen on his *Nocturnes* during his November 2013 MSU residency. The choir has also toured Central Europe and Russia with performances in Prague, Budapest, Bratislava, Debrecen, Moscow, Pushkin, and St. Petersburg. An important ensemble in the NJ arts community, the University Singers perform regularly with the NJSO, presenting Handel’s *Messiah* annually since 2014. They have also performed Mozart’s *Requiem* under Jacques Lacombe (2013) and Xian Zhang (2018). In October 2018 they gave the US Premiere performance of *Speak Out!* by Kate Whitley (UK), an inspiring work based on texts by Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala, for the NJSO’s 2018-19 season opening.

The University Singers has also had an exciting performance relationship with renowned composer-artist Meredith Monk beginning with their historic collaboration in December 2006 and continuing with the critically acclaimed March 2009 performances of *Ascension Variations* at the Guggenheim Museum. They recorded the CD *Songs of Ascension* with Meredith Monk and Vocal Ensemble on the prestigious European label ECM Records under the legendary producer Manfred Eicher, released May 2011. This collaboration was included in the Producer of the Year section of the 2012 Grammy nominations. 2019-20 saw the choir return to the NJSO for two *Messiah* performances under the baton of guest conductor Roderick Cox, with an inaugural live broadcast on WQXR hosted by John Schaffer from the Cathedral Basilica, Newark. During the COVID pandemic, the Basilica performance was rebroadcast in December 2020 on WQXR and the National Public Broadcast network. The choir’s first solo CD recording, *I Sing Because...* was released in March 2020 and is also available for digital download on Spotify and iTunes.

During 2020-21, and in the face of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, the University Singers continued to function in the vanguard of best choral practices, with socially distanced outdoor rehearsals and innovative recording projects. The choir’s activities received widespread regional and national media attention, including TV appearances on *The Today Show*, *NBC Nightly News*, *The Kelly Clarkson Show*, and *News 12 NJ* in addition to print and digital media stories. During the Fall 2020 semester, their social media outreach included 99,591+ views. By invitation of the New York Yankees, their video performance of *The Star-Spangled Banner* was performed at Yankees Stadium in June 2021.

2021-22 season highlights included two NYC debut performances: collaborating with the internationally acclaimed UK-based vocal ensemble VOCES8 at Merkin Hall; and the MSU/Cali showcase event in the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium at The Metropolitan Museum. The choir also commissioned composer Kamala Sankaram *Let My Country Awake* as part of her Cali Immersive Residency. 2022-23 will see the choir return to mainstage performances with the NJSO (*Messiah* and Mahler *Symphony No. 3*) under principal conductor Xian Zhang, perform the NY metropolitan premier of the new social justice piece *Weather* (Rollo Dilworth) in collaboration with the MSU Wind Symphony (Dr. Thomas McCauley, conductor), and continue their partnership with VOCES8 (February 2023) through the Cali Immersive Residency Program. The University Singers’ performances are broadcast on Cali Live and the Cali YouTube Channel.

**MSU Vocal Accord** is a project-based chamber choir recognized for its superb artistry, creative programming, and cutting-edge collaborations. This season the choir members are drawn from University Singers. Vocal Accord made its debut performance in the Cali School of Music’s Leshowitz Recital Hall in January 2010. During the 2011-12 season they completed a 14-day European tour with performances in Austria (Vienna, Graz, Gleisdorf, Ottendorf) and Italy (Venice). Tour highlights included a week-long residency at the Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Graz, Austria and performing with members of the Vienna Philharmonic strings in the HÖRgenuss 2012 festival. *American Voices*, a documentary of this tour, was released in February 2013 and subsequently aired on NJTV network.

Vocal Accord’s 2013-14 season includes two performances of *The Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddesses*: the First Quest in August 2013 at NJPAC with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and the Second Quest in November 2013 at the Theater at Madison Square Garden with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s. In March 2014 Vocal Accord had their Carnegie Hall debut performance in the Weill Recital Hall, where they also gave the World Premiere performance of *Reflection: Innocent thoughts on Peace* (James Conrad Smith) which was the winning score in the Inaugural Cali Choral Composition Competition.
In December 2014 Vocal Accord collaborated with the internationally acclaimed Richard Alston Dance Company (UK) for four performances of Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* as part of Montclair's *Peak Performances* series. Following this success, they were invited to Sadler’s Wells, UK for the RADCA season opening (January 2015) receiving further critical acclaim. Fall 2015 heralded an invitation to the prestigious *Fall For Dance* festival in NYC, their final collaboration with RADCA before the founder’s retirement. Additional NJSO collaborations include live performances of the Harry Potter film *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, the European summer music festival *The Passion of Italy* (July 2017), and a June 2019 tour of Vienna, Salzburg, and Munich. Vocal Accord’s 2022-23 season includes collaborations with internationally acclaimed performing artists VOBES and Rhiannon Giddens for the Cali School’s Immersive Residency Program.

Comprised of the best wind players and percussionists in the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University in New Jersey, the **Montclair State University Wind Symphony**, since 2006, has appeared at the New Jersey Music Educators Association Conference, the 2012 CBDNA Eastern Division Conference, the National Association for Music Education Eastern Division Conference, and the 2015 and 2012 Northeast Regional Tuba-Euphonium Conference. Their appearance at the 2019 CBDNA National Conference in Tempe, Arizona marked the first time that a large ensemble from Montclair State University appeared at a national conference. Most recently, the MSU Wind Symphony appeared at the international conference of the prestigious World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE) in Prague, Czech Republic, in July of 2022.

The Montclair State University Wind Symphony is one of three concert bands in the John J. Cali School of Music, and, though the graduate student population is always growing, the majority of its members are undergraduate students majoring in Music Education, Music Therapy, Music Performance, or Composition. The MSU Wind Symphony has premiered pieces by composers Michael Daugherty, Bruce Yurko, David Gillingham, Elizabeth Brown, O’Neal Douglas, Patrick Burns, and Ting Ho, and has participated in commissioning works from composers Lawton Hall, Armando Bayolo, James Beckel, Stephen Anderson, and Rollo Dilworth. The MSU Wind Symphony has appeared in concert with, among others, Dame Evelyn Glennie, The Imani Winds, the Monarch Brass, The Manhattan Brass Quintet, Warren Vache’, and Demondrae Thurman. Since 2006, recruiting and concert tours have taken the ensemble to Philadelphia, Boston, Indianapolis, Chicago, Atlantic City, and New York where, in 2014, they appeared at Carnegie Hall.

Former members of the band program are now teaching in public and private schools throughout the northeast, performing as professional musicians throughout the country, and have gone on to attend some of the most prestigious graduate institutions in the world.

**DR. HEATHER J. BUCHANAN**

Conductor

Australian-born conductor **Heather J. Buchanan, PhD**, is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Montclair State University (MSU) where she conducts choirs ranging in size from 24 – 165 voices. Choirs under her direction have won critical acclaim for their “heartfelt conviction” “grace and precision,” “vibrant sound,” “eloquence”, and for singing with the “crispness and dexterity of a professional choir.” During her 20-year tenure, MSU choirs have collaborated with a variety of renowned national and international performing artists, perform masterworks regularly with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO), and have sung on commercially produced recordings with Meredith Monk (*Songs of Ascension*) and the NJSO (*Carmina Burana and Verdi Requiem*). The MSU Singers released their first solo CD recording *I Sing Because...* in March 2020.


Dr. Buchanan holds degrees from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music (Australia), Westminster Choir College of Rider University (USA), and the University of New England (Australia). A licensed Body Mapping Educator since 2002, Dr. Buchanan specializes in the teaching of this neuro-anatomical educational technique that trains musicians to attain freedom of expression through effective movement. In June 2017 she was awarded the *Barbara Conable Teaching Award* by the Association for Body Mapping Education (ABME) in recognition of exemplary teaching, innovative ideas, support to colleagues, active involvement in ABME, & personal growth. A vibrant teacher, dynamic performer, and passionate musicians’ health advocate, Dr. Buchanan is in demand as a guest conductor, somatic educator, and choral clinician in the U.S. and abroad.
**Dr. Thomas McCauley**  
*conductor*

**Dr. Thomas McCauley** is the Director of University Bands in the John J. Cali School of Music, Montclair State University, New Jersey. There, he conducts the Montclair State University Wind Symphony, the MSU Symphonic Band, and teaches both graduate and undergraduate conducting. He held similar positions in Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois, in addition to teaching high school instrumental music in Nevada for nine years. Composers including Karel Husa, David Gillingham, Joseph Turrin, Bruce Yurko, Robert Aldridge, Morten Lauridsen, Armando Bayolo, and O’Neal Douglas have praised his work. Dr. McCauley has twice appeared as a clinician at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago. Each November, he hosts and teaches a symposium at Montclair State University—the *Weekend Wind Conducting Symposium*—with renown guest clinicians and participants from around the world.

Dr. McCauley is in demand as a guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator throughout North America. Currently a Conn-Selmer Educational Clinician, the Nevada Music Educators Association named Dr. McCauley Music Educator of the Year (1995); the Indiana Music Educators Association honored him with the Outstanding University Music Educator Award (2006). He serves on the Executive Board of the New Jersey Band Association, is the New Jersey State Representative of the College Band Directors National Association and is the former New Jersey State Representative of the National Band Association. He is an active member of the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles, and the National Association for Music Education. He has published in *The Instrumentalist*, several state music education magazines, in the second edition of *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band, Vol I* (G.I.A. Publications), and is author of *Adventures in Band Building: How to Turn a Less-Than-It-Could-Be into More-Than-It-Should-Be* (G.I.A. Publications, 2015).

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**Steven W. Ryan**  
*MSU accompanist*

**Steven W. Ryan** joined the Cali School faculty in 2006. He has performed as an orchestral keyboardist with most of the major orchestras in New York City, including members of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. He has played celesta with the legendary Berlin Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall; piano, harpsichord, and portative organ with the Dessoff Choirs; and synthesizer with the Moody Blues rock band. He has collaborated with conductors such as Lorin Maazel, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Neeme Järvi, Bernhard Haitink, Gerard Schwarz, and Maxim Shostakovich, among others. Mr. Ryan took first place in the 2001 Concours des Grands Amateurs de Piano. At the close of this international competition, he was engaged to perform Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-Flat Minor at the Sorbonne in Paris. In addition to winning the French competition, Steven took second prize in the 2000 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition for Outstanding Amateurs. In July 2022 he performed Messiaen’s *Couleurs de la Cité Céleste* with the Wind Symphony (Dr. Thomas McCauley, conductor) in Prague for WASBE Conference.