

The National Association of Teachers of Singing Virginia Chapter



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Dear VANATS members,

It is with great enthusiasm that I send you the annual fall president's letter outlining news and upcoming events for our chapter.

Plans are well underway for our 2009 Fall Workshop and Master Class with NATS president Scott McCoy, November 1 at George Mason University. Many thanks to the voice faculty of GMU who are working alongside to plan and coordinate, and the MD/DC NATS chapter with whom we are collaborating for this event. If you have missed any emails about the workshop and want to know more, be sure and read about it on our website: vanats.org.

The spring conference is scheduled for March 5 & 6, 2010 on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). The kick-off event will be the biennial artists award NATSAA competition Thursday evening, March 4th, in the Recital Hall of the James W. Black Music Center. If you have students qualified to sing in this marvelous event, please go on-line to the national NATS web site for complete information. You may also contact our VANATS governor Karen Hoy (cantihoy@verizon.net) with any questions.

Of special note is our quest clinician for Friday and Saturday of the spring conference, world-renowned American composer, Lori Laitman. The current October edition of Classical Singer magazine names Ms. Laitman as "one of the foremost art song composers of this generation" and features her works in an article titled "From Art Song to Opera". We are very pleased that Lori Laitman has agreed to be with us to share her expertise in the interpretation of her song literature as well as other contemporary American composers. On Friday evening of our March event, students that were winners in their categories at last year's conference qualify to perform in Ms. Laitman's master class. **Please note:** Ms. Laitman has requested specifically that master class students sing her literature if at all possible. She has generously offered to help or give suggestions concerning her compositions to any VANATS teacher that may have a question. You may contact Ms. Laitman directly at Lori@artsongs.com. If you would like to recommend a student for the master

class, please submit name, (including accompanist) and song selection to me (Nancy McDuffie) no later than February 1, 2010.

In addition to the clinician's master class and lecture, our spring conference will again offer educational opportunities for you and your students with workshops in Alexander Technique, Studying and Singing in Europe, College Auditioning, Music Theater Vocal Discovery and a Private Teacher Roundtable.

The deadline date to register for the spring conference and to pay state dues is **December 15th, 2009**. This deadline date is strictly held and applies to on-line registration of students and the mail-in forms with payments for teacher registration, student registrations plus lunch and banquet fees. These forms, both mail-in and on-line forms, will be available soon on the vanats.org web site.

As you consider attending the conference this spring, let me encourage you to bring students to our membership dinner Friday evening, March 5th. The dinner event is not for teachers only and students are welcomed to attend. This is a great opportunity for your voice students to observe the inner workings of the NATS organization and thereby encourage them to join NATS in the future as they become eligible.

Among the many items of discussion at our recent VANATS board meeting was the issue of payment methods in the future for conference registrations and dues. At the present time, one other state chapter in our Mid-Atlantic Region is attempting the use of PayPal for their members' monetary transactions. Our board discussed this at length and agreed to wait with this decision.

Lastly, it is of utmost importance that VANATS members that register students for the spring conference be available to **judge BOTH days of the conference**. As the size of our chapter grows and more and more students compete, it is crucial that we have three members available to judge in each singing category. In past years this has not always been the case.

VANATS is indeed growing – we have recently seen a spurt in membership enrollment that is a small reflection of what is happening at the national level. The national NATS organization is growing rapidly and hopes to reach a membership base of 7,000 members by year's end. This is indeed good news!

In closing, be sure and look for Vice-President Philip Sargent's letter with more detailed information about our upcoming conference. On behalf of the VANATS board and officers, thank you for your past participation – we look forward to seeing many of you early spring!

Nancy McDuffie

President, Virginia National Association of Teachers of Singing (vanats.org)