

Valley Forge Chorus Announces Rich Gray as Director!

Valley Forge Chorus is pleased to announce the selection of Rich Gray as Director beginning November 1, 2019. As Director, he will lead Valley Forge into the holiday season and prepare the Chorus for the upcoming Sweet Adelines International (SAI) Harmony Classic barbershop chorus contest in Louisville, Kentucky in October 2020.



Gray is a talented director and performance artist with 20 years of a cappella barbershop experience. Currently, he serves as the Vice President of the Chorus Director Development Team for the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) Mid-Atlantic District, Director of the Pine Barons Chorus, and performs Lead in Studio 4 quartet. Additionally, he is a music and performance coach and an enthusiastic advocate for the barbershop art form.

In October 2019, he earned a silver medal with his quartet, Studio 4, at the BHS Mid-Atlantic District Quartet Finals; and the Pine Barons Chorus, under Gray's direction, placed fourth in the chorus contest and also won most improved chorus award. As Director, Gray will be tasked with leading the creative endeavors of Valley Forge Chorus, including developing the musical and artistic performance of the Chorus while supporting the leadership from within the Chorus. Over the next year under Gray's guidance, the Chorus will focus on membership growth and outreach within the greater Philadelphia and a cappella communities.

“It's truly an honor to join the Valley Forge Chorus as their Director,” said Gray. “The tradition and history of this Chorus is amazing, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with such terrific women and musicians.”

Gray succeeds Master Director, Joseph Spiecker, who resigned in January 2019 after a successful 12-year tenure. Despite a nearly 6-month search process, Valley Forge Chorus remained successful and productive under the thoughtful leadership of Debbie Kirsch, who was appointed Associate Director in May 2019.



“It has truly been a rewarding experience to lead the Valley Forge Chorus over the past six months,” said Kirsch. “I appreciate the trust the Chorus placed in me as we continued our pursuit for musical and performance excellence.”

Gray and Kirsch have already begun working closely together, collaborating with the Music Committee to prepare for the holiday season and new year ahead.

“I am so excited to collaborate with Debbie,” said Gray. “Her a cappella, quartet, and performance background offers a great perspective and her network within the Sweet Adelines community is invaluable.”

“Collaborating with Rich is rewarding,” said Kirsch. “Having the opportunity to combine Rich’s extensive barbershop background with the Chorus’s talent and drive thrills me.”

“Over the last ten months, it has been so inspiring to see the resiliency and dedication of our members to not just maintain but grow their musical skills,” said Nikki Burkhardt, President of Valley Forge Chorus. “The addition of Rich as our director will help us to reach even higher goals as we work together to prepare for Harmony Classic and beyond. I look forward to working with him to strengthen our ties with the local community as well as our barbershop brothers in the Barbershop Harmony Society.”