

By George!

NOVEMBER 2015 • ISSUE No. 2 • WWW.VIDEMUS.ORG

Welcome!



It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the second edition of the George Shirley African American Art Song and Operatic Aria Competition Newsletter!

You have greatly blessed us over this past year with continuing financial and spiritual support of our burgeoning initiative to encourage study and performance of the art songs of African American composers, and to provide opportunities for meaningful scholarship assistance for students of singing at the high school and

academic levels of learning.

Interest in this year's Competition, held at the Detroit Opera House, produced a dramatic increase in applications from across the nation, and thanks to your generosity we were able to award over \$12,000 in prizes to 10 winners, of whom 5 were high school students and 5 collegiate scholars. We anticipate an even larger pool of applicants in 2016, and we hope that we can count on your continued assistance as we gather exciting momentum in pursuit of our goals.

On December 12, 2015 at 8 PM we will present our Annual Scholarship Fundraiser at the Kerrytown Concert House in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Soprano Louise Toppin, countertenor Darryl Taylor, and the Willis Patterson Our Own Thing Chorale will headline this joyous event, so please join us for an exhilarating evening of song and fellowship, a perfect way to launch the Holiday Season.

I look forward to greeting you on December 12th, and thanking you in person for your support in making this initiative a dream no longer deferred.

With gratitude,

George L. Shirley

The J. Edgar Maddy Distinguished
University Emeritus Professor of Music (Voice)
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THE GEORGE SHIRLEY
African American
ART SONG &
OPERATIC ARIA
COMPETITION

For more information about the George Shirley Vocal Competition, visit www.videmus.org/competitions



This is a Videmus and Smith Jackson Arts sponsorship.



Bravo!

Bravo George Shirley!

2015 has been a banner year for our beloved founder. On September 10, 2015, the White House hosted a ceremony during which President Barack Obama honored Mr. Shirley as a 2014 Medal of the Arts Recipient. This prestigious distinction is the highest award given to artists by the United States government to individuals deserving of special recognition for their outstanding contributions to excellence, growth, and support of the arts. (imbedded Obama/Shirley image).

On October 14 and 15, 2015 Eric Owens hosted an all-star line up of singers with the New York Philharmonic in honor of Black Pioneers of the

operatic stage. In Their Footsteps: Great African American Singers and Their Legacy honored singers William Warfield, Marian Anderson, Betty Allen and George Shirley in music that these singers performed with the New York Philharmonic.

On December 20, 2015, Mr. Shirley will receive his 4th honorary doctorate, this one will be bestowed on him by The University of Michigan, where he currently serves as the Joseph Edgar Maddy Distinguished University Emeritus Professor of Voice.

All of these are well deserved accolades honor his commitment to his adopted city, Detroit, his students and the University of Michigan and his position as a pioneer who forged a path of access to opera companies and concert halls around the world for future generations of African Americans. Well done George Shirley!!!



After a successful fifth competition, we have been working diligently to insure the continued visibility and stability of the competition. Last year's competition was documented by two companies based in Washington, DC, RyOne, Inc., (www.ry1inc.com) startup tech company and Whitespace Studio (www.whitespacevisuals.com) a visual consulting firm, specializing in portrait & architecture based photography & videos.

Together the team conducted interviews, filmed hours of rehearsals, and performances. To develop a promo video that would captures the essence of the competition and its participants. To watch click [here](http://www.videmus.org/competition) or view on the Videmus website at www.videmus.org/competition.

In Other News

On October 4, Videmus supported the Lincoln Center, NYC performance of Robert Sims. Sims generously provides our annual spirituals prize of \$1,000. His performance of the spirituals of Roland Hayes included a star-studded audience and a surprise final spiritual sung by George Shirley! Sims graciously donated a portion of the proceeds from the sales of the book and CD sold that day to the competition! We are grateful to have such a generous collaborator!!! (I'll ask Robert to send a photo if he has one)

Fundraising Events



In September we had a wonderful fundraiser at King's Keyboard in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Three of our student contestants performed for the evening to an enthusiastic crowd. We formed new partnerships and gained the five year financial commitment of Zingermans to our competition. Thanks Zingermans!! (photo from fundraiser which I have on my computer).

In December we will host our fourth holiday heritage concert at Kerrytown in Ann Arbor. This year the featured artists are Darryl Taylor (who is releasing a new CD at the event), Stephen West, Louise Toppin, Our Own Thing Chorale, Kathryn Goodson, and several more of our student competitors. The event is December 12 at 8pm. More details on our website so please join us if you are in the area.

In May we will host a fundraiser at Zingermans to benefit the competition. Details to follow so please visit our website.



How You Can Help

This past year we gave away \$13,500. In order to give that amount and more, we need your help. Consider making a commitment to sponsor one of the prizes or creating a new prize or a donation to help us continue rewarding these high school and college students. We are happy to receive your support at whatever level you are comfortable.

We look forward to seeing you this year at one of our events!



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