

SUNDAY,
APRIL 19, 2026

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THE PILOT

A Celebration Of Universal Love in Song

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Special to The Pilot

Songs about love — and its companions joy, peace and unity — will fill BPAC's Owens Auditorium at Sandhills Community College on Sunday, April 26, 4 to 5:30 p.m. The Moore County Choral Society (MCCS) presents their 51st annual spring concert, titled "Perhaps Love." General admission tickets are \$25 and \$10 for students; purchase in advance at moorecountychoralsociety.org.

For this second concert of a love-themed season, the distinguished 80-voice chorus, directed for 24 years by Anne Dorsey, with Stephen Gourley as collaborative pianist since 2019, will be joined by a chamber orchestra and a jazz combo. Dorsey's concert program of thrilling choral selections celebrates human love in its rich variety as expressed in songs from the past 60 years of American repertoire. The audience will enjoy mostly familiar songs arranged in a variety of traditional and contemporary choral genres, from classical to folk and country, gospel to swing, shifting constantly and at times combined in a single song.

The choral program of this concert, organized in thematic clusters of two or three songs, is unified by recurring motifs worth listening for: personal love as renewal after challenges, patriotic affirmation of liberty and freedom amid public traumas, love for the world and the Earth, and hope for humanity to find spiritual harmony, peace and unity.

The opening number, a tenor solo by Ethan Garner, is "Perhaps Love," by John Denver, who in his 1981 duet with Placido Domingo expressed complex feelings of despair over his dying marriage and renewal through memories of love.

Other songs in the first part of the concert address themes like the gift of a transformative love that brings "What the World Needs Now"; the familial and divine loves that sustain us through personal loss; deep appreciation for unsung heroes and those who answer freedom's call; and rousing appeals to build a better world in "Let the River Run" and "Put a Little Love in Your Heart."

During the intermission break, the MCCS will present three 2026 choral student scholarships.

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The second part of the concert includes a set of three first-person songs that each offer friendship and reassurance for a loved one in need. The singer of “That’s What Friends Are For” promises “I’ll be on your side forever more.” Simon and Garfunkel’s singer consoles a friend who is weary and down and out with the line “Like a bridge over troubled water, I will lay me down.” A third song, whose singer encourages a troubled friend to embrace their beautiful “True Colors,” was a musical medium for singer Cyndi Lauper to express her own compassion for a friend dying of AIDS.

The closing cluster of four songs affirms the power of songs and singing to unite humanity in love

and peace. Dorsey introduced the first, “I’d Like to Teach the World to Sing,” by saying, “I’ve been trying to do that my whole life!” Composed by British songwriters as a Coke ad, this swing tune retains universal appeal with lyrics like “I’d like to see the world for once all standing hand in hand” for “peace throughout the land.”

Patriotic and spiritual love inform the lively “I Hear America Singing,” where André Thomas interweaves Walt Whitman’s lines about the nation singing of its greatness and beauty with verses from the spiritual “Walk Together Children.” Next comes “Sing Gently,” by Eric Whitacre, a peaceful call for unity through song, which closes “sing gently as one.” As Dorsey reminded us, “This concert has a message!”

Finally, “I Will Sing” closes the concert with a rousing contemporary gospel song that epitomizes concert themes. “I’ll sing of the joy

that fills my heart when freedom rings,” the lyrics declare, and then pray as an incantation “let it ring” through love, peace and hope.

The Moore County Choral Society gratefully acknowledges support from their 2025-2026 sponsors: The Foundation of First Health, Penick Village, First Bank, McNeill Oil & Propane, NC Self Storage, The Pilot and Sandhills Community College; and donors and supporters, including Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church, where the chorus rehearses each Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m, and the Arts Council of Moore County, which hosted our festive 2026 Wine Tasting Gala. MCCS is grateful for annual grants from The Arts Council of Moore County and the North Carolina Arts Council’s Grassroots Arts Program. Consider making your own contribution to our performances at moorecounty-choralsociety.org.