



THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP OF HIGH SCHOOL

# A CAPPPELLA

## FINALS

April 26, 2024



#ICHSA

THE TOWN HALL

# 2024 International Championship of High School A Cappella Finals

## **Tonight's Competitors:** *(in performance order)*

**BLUE KIDS ON THE BLOCK** | ICHSA Midwest Champion  
*Hilliard Davidson High School, Hilliard, Ohio*

**THE ACABELLAS** | ICHSA Mid-Atlantic Champion  
*Ridgewood High School, Ridgewood, N.J.*

**RESOLVE** | ICHSA Great Lakes Champion  
*Niles West High School, Skokie, Ill.*

**THE CRESCENDOS** | ICHSA Northeast Champion  
*Chelmsford High School, North Chelmsford, Mass.*

**INFINITI** | ICHSA Southwest Champion  
*Rockwall-Heath High School, Heath, Texas*

**WALK THE LINE** | ICHSA Wild Card  
*Rockwall High School, Rockwall, Texas*

**SCOTS-APPELLA** | ICHSA West Champion  
*McKay High School, Salem, Ore.*

**SONIC EDGE** | ICHSA Wild Card  
*CCCEPA at Pebblebrook High School, Mableton, Ga.*

**TRACES OF BLUE** | ICHSA South Champion  
*Sumrall High School, Sumrall, Miss.*

### **Our Judges**

SHAMS AHMED  
DIANA GALEANO  
SHANNON MCNULTY  
JUSTIN JOHN MONIZ  
LEE STOVALL

### **Our Host**

COURTNEY JENSEN

### **Special Guest Performance**

THE PITCHMEN | Belmont University (2023 ICCA Champions)

**Friday, April 26, 2024**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2024 International Championship of High School A Cappella Finals! As Varsity Vocals wraps up its 28th season presenting the best student groups on stage and in the studio, our enthusiasm for the art of a cappella is greater than ever. Our tournaments have grown from a handful of events to the massive showcases they are today, featuring more than 650 groups and over 10,000 singers at 85 events across North America and the United Kingdom.

Our tournament inspired the hit movie “Pitch Perfect,” based on the nonfiction book documenting the true story of rival groups competing in our very own ICCA. The “Pitch Perfect” franchise remains the highest-grossing musical series of all time. A dozen years after its release, we now have competitors who grew up watching “Pitch Perfect” and dreamed of participating in the real thing. Now here they are in New York City at ICHSA Finals!

Despite the incredible growth and mainstream popularity we've enjoyed, our focus remains on the promotion and development of the talent that crosses our stage. We believe competition fosters growth, as groups work together toward a specific goal and cultivate lifelong skills and relationships. We provide insightful feedback from our highly qualified judges – but more importantly, our singers get to connect with a larger audience from across the country, learning from their peers and finding inspiration in other groups.

We are humbled more than ever to set the stage for so much magic. It is a true privilege to present tonight's Finals, representing the very best there is in student a cappella. Thank you for your continued support and enjoy the show!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Amanda Newman'.

Amanda Newman  
Executive Director

**We're social!** Follow us @varsityvocals on Instagram and Facebook.  
Join the conversation using **#ICHSA**

  @varsityvocals

# Tonight's Competitors

## **BLUE KIDS ON THE BLOCK – Midwest Champion | @bkotbacappella**

Blue Kids on the Block is Hilliard Davidson's most selective ensemble. The group consists of 19 singers who are chosen in a highly competitive audition process. They sing a diverse repertoire of contemporary a cappella and traditional choral genres. Blue Kids serves as the flagship ensemble for Hilliard Davidson and performs many concerts each year, including performances at ICHSA, Franklin Park Conservatory, Ohio Statehouse, the Clippers, Wildlights at the Zoo, and private events throughout the greater Columbus area.

## **THE ACABELLAS – Mid-Atlantic Champion**

The Ridgewood High School AcaBellas is an all-female a cappella group made up of passionate and independent musicians from the choir, band, and orchestra programs. They were founded in 2011 and annually compete in the ICHSA. They perform at school functions including sporting events, assemblies, and notably Valentine's Day, when they serenade students with singing grams. They enjoy performing songs performed and arranged by women from all eras. You can support The Acabellas at their school a cappella concerts and check out their live performances on Spotify.

## **RESOLVE – Great Lakes Champion | @nileswestresolve**

Resolve is the premier contemporary a cappella group at Niles West High School in Skokie, Ill. This mixed ensemble consists of 20 students from the ninth to 12th grades and performs a repertoire spanning multiple genres of music. Founded in 2023, this is their first year competing in the ICHSA.

## **THE CRESCENDOS – Northeast Champion**

The Crescendos is Chelmsford High School's treble-voiced a cappella group, founded in 2016. They are thrilled to return for their seventh ICHSA season, eager to build on their success as a Semifinalist and Wild Card Runner-Up in 2023. The Crescendos are proud of their group's strong student leadership and they have earned many special awards over the years for their choreography, arrangements, and vocal percussionists. The group loves to record music videos and shorts and they maintain an active social media presence. Look for them on Instagram and TikTok!

## **INFINITI – Southwest Champion | @heathinfiniti**

Infiniti is the mixed a cappella ensemble from Rockwall Heath High School, directed by Lauren Smith. Since 2018, they've been heavily involved in the Texas a cappella scene, consistently placing in competitions like ICHSA and AcaTex. In 2021, they earned a trip to ICHSA Finals in New York City. Last year, they dropped their first single, "Arms Unfolding and I'm Coming Round," featured on *BOHSA*. Stay updated on their journey via Instagram and TikTok.

### **WALK THE LINE – Wild Card | @rhswalktheline**

Walk the Line was formed in 2015, and has competed at ICHSA Finals in 2017 and in 2022, most recently earning second place. They have recorded and released three albums, each earning track placements on Varsity Vocals' BOHSA, and three *Voices Only* compilations. After seven previous nominations, they won a Contemporary A Cappella Recording Award (CARA) in 2022 for Best High School EP. They are excited to be back on the ICHSA stage this year and eager to share their 2024 set!

### **SCOTS-APPELLA – West Champion | @scotsappella**

Scots-Appella is the contemporary a cappella group at McKay High School in Salem, Ore. They enjoy making music and performing for their school and throughout the community. The group has competed in ICHSA and the Rose City Sing-Off and they enjoy sharing their music and stories on the competitive stage.

### **SONIC EDGE – Wild Card | @sonicedgeacappella**

Sonic Edge is the premier vocal a cappella group from the Cobb County Center for Excellence in the Performing Arts. Last year, Sonic Edge made their competitive debut at the National A Cappella Convention (NACC) and they are so excited to compete in the 2024 ICHSA!

### **TRACES OF BLUE – South Champion**

Traces of Blue is the advanced women's choir and pop a cappella ensemble from Sumrall High School. Traces of Blue has performed extensively throughout the United States and made their ICHSA debut in 2023, placing first at their Quarterfinal and second at the South Semifinal. Traces of Blue's mission is to be a light and gift to others by sharing their musical talents, inspiring confidence and individuality in younger singers, and enriching the lives of their community members. They seek to establish themselves as positive role models by spreading joy with their God-given talents.

## **Our Judges**

**SHAMS AHMED** is an Emmy-winning producer, music director, and arranger based in Los Angeles. He made his initial debut in a cappella as the director and arranger for two-time ICCA Champions, The Nor'easters. Alongside his partners Ben Bram and Scott Hoying (of Pentatonix), Shams recently produced the acclaimed "Ragged Old Flag: An American Chorus," which earned an Emmy nomination and eventual win, making Shams the first Bangladeshi-American to receive an Emmy Award for Music Direction. The trio also co-founded the popular female pop/R&B group Citizen Queen, who signed with Sony Music's RCA Records, toured arenas with Pentatonix and Rachel Platten, and are now

captivating millions on TikTok, having just released their first major original work as an independent artist. Shams is a co-founder of Acapop!, a music brand for children that has made appearances on “The Kelly Clarkson Show” and “America’s Got Talent,” and has garnered over 100 million views of their music videos. Drawing inspiration from his dual identity, he has been taking on more projects in the Indian/South Asian music space. Most recently, he vocal produced Shreya Ghoshal in her first-ever English-Hindi crossover piece, “Invincible,” in collaboration with Pentatonix. Shams also manages Hrishi, a pop-Carnatic fusion artist, who is making waves on social media and catching the attention of music industry giants. As a former ICCA competitor himself, Shams has seen the immense value in ICHSA and ICCA competition and is delighted to return to Finals as a judge to support and celebrate these talented young musicians.

**DIANA GALEANO** is a graduate of Florida State University, where she studied music education with an emphasis in secondary choral education. At FSU, she sang with 2009 ICCA South Champions, The AcaBelles. Since graduating, she has worked as a high school chorus and music educator, directed FSU's summer music camps, sang with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and was an essential part of establishing and running A Cappella Academy in Los Angeles, where she served as assistant director and proud camp mom from 2014 - 2018. While no longer in the traditional classroom setting, Diana teaches at a cappella festivals, offers masterclasses to groups in the greater Boston area, and sings with and co-directs semi-professional group and Open Finalists, Sound Off.

**SHANNON MCNULTY** is a vocalist, educator, event planner, and mom of two. Currently, Shannon is the executive producer of the NACC, an annual conference celebrating vocal music and achievement, held in Orlando, Fla. Previously, Shannon taught music at Marlborough High School, where she directed two choirs and developed and taught their award-winning a cappella recording class, Music Production. Shannon holds a B.M. in vocal performance and music education (Ithaca College, 2007, alumna of Premium Blend) and an M.M. in music education (Boston University, 2012)

**LEE STOVALL** teaches vocal music at Rufus King International High School and directs Nova, an a cappella group predominantly composed of music therapy students at Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wis. His life passions are to use vocal music to spread joy to his students and their communities, as well as to break down societal barriers such as segregation and toxic masculinity. A founding member of the collegiate a cappella group Fundamentally Sound, Lee has been interested in promoting contemporary a cappella education since college and has coached and arranged for local and international groups ever since. Previous work and accolades include arranging for “Broadway Goes A Cappella 3,” which played at Feinstein’s 54 Below in New York to rave reviews, and earning recognition from the ICCA, ICHSA, and the CARAs for his work with groups from high school to professional levels. Lee is a board member for multiple local and state music associations and has sung in numerous professional ensembles. He currently sings with the early-music-focused Aperi Animam.

**DR. JUSTIN JOHN MONIZ** serves as Associate Director of Vocal Performance and Coordinator of Vocal Pedagogy at New York University's Steinhardt School, where he holds the rank of Associate Professor. He is a recipient of the Yamaha Corporation's 2022 Top 40 Music Educator Award and a Musical America Top Professional of the Year. At NYU, Justin leads the graduate vocal pedagogy program and teaches courses in pedagogic theory, practice, applied voice, and directs the DownBeat Award-winning NYU Pop/Rock Ensemble. Justin also serves as Program Director of the NYU Summer Contemporary Vocal Workshop, Executive Director of Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, and as a member of the Vocal Arts Faculty at Manhattan School of Music where he teaches vocal wellness and physiology. His clients have performed on Broadway, Off-Broadway, on national tours, in regional theaters and opera houses, and on national television. A leading expert on contemporary vocal pedagogy and vocal wellness, Justin is regularly engaged as a guest clinician and consultant for organizations including the National Association of Teachers of Singing, National Opera Association, The Royal Conservatory of Music, New England Conservatory, Boston University, Berklee College of Music, and Barry's Bootcamp. As a voice teacher, researcher, and NASM-certified personal trainer, he is particularly passionate about identifying the parallels between the worlds of voice science and sports medicine, especially concerning vocal load, efficiency, and sustainability. For the past 10 years, Justin has served as a judge for Varsity Vocals at various events across the nation. Find him on Instagram @jj\_moniz

## **Tonight's Guest Performers**

**THE PITCHMEN** Pitchmen is an all-male a cappella group from Nashville, Tenn., composed of 16 students from Belmont University. This student-run group's dedication to their craft and one another has yielded many accomplishments, from releasing their debut album, *Ultraviolet*, to winning the 2023 ICCA Championship and taking home awards for Outstanding Soloists, Outstanding Choreography, and Outstanding Vocal Percussion during their run to the Finals. Encompassing a modern Nashville sound, they pride themselves on singing a broad range of music for different audiences to enjoy. Beyond their musicianship, The Pitchmen are adored for their authenticity. This year's group represents an array of unique backgrounds, talents, and perspectives. The Pitchmen are empowered by their differences, holding high character standards for each member and creating a welcoming atmosphere for the group as a whole. This year, The Pitchmen has enjoyed numerous opportunities following their 2023 ICCA win, including performances at the Southern Regional Convention of the American Choral Director's Association, Kaiser Permanente's College Notes 2024 in California, and recording new music in the historic Ocean Way Studios on Music Row. The Pitchmen are beyond excited to return to the Varsity Vocals stage and cannot wait for you to experience the Pitchmen charm.

## Our Host

**COURTNEY JENSEN**, who appeared on NBC's "The Sing-Off" Season 2 with The Backbeats, is a singer, beatboxer, and a longtime member of the Varsity Vocals team. She workshops with a cappella groups around the country, and has published a beatboxing tutorial called "Breaking Down the Beats."

## Our Staff

Amanda Newman

*Executive Director*

Elise Hackl-Blumstein

*ICHSA Director*

*PA/MA Program Coordinator*

David Rabizadeh

*ICCA Director*

Emily Sucher

*Director of Publications*

Lucy Jacobs

*ICCA West Producer*

Lindsay Howerton-Hastings

*ICCA South Producer*

Arvin Zabalerio

*ICCA Central Producer*

Gemma Davies

*ICCA United Kingdom Producer*

Emily Benjamin

*ICCA Northeast Producer*

Christopher Hoffman

*ICHSA Northeast Producer*

Ben Garza

*ICHSA Southwest Producer*

Alaina Wagner

*Associate Producer*

Rebecca Williamson

*Associate Producer*

Jake Yoakum

*Associate Producer*

Sara Yood

*Senior Producer*

Emily Flanders

*Director of Adjudication*

*ICCA Great Lakes Producer*

Andrew Poole

*Director of Digital Media*

Charlotte Taylor

*Marketing & Social Strategy*

Holli Kitching

*ICCA Mid-Atlantic Producer*

Leah Alrutz

*ICCA Midwest Producer*

Bronwyn Jensen

*ICCA Southwest Producer*

Christopher Witham

*ICCA United Kingdom Producer*

Jillian Kimberlin

*ICHSA Mid-Atlantic Producer*

Adam McNeil

*ICHSA Great Lakes Producer*

Jody Hagler

*Associate Producer*

Bri Decerio

*Associate Producer*

Bryce McCracken

*Associate Producer*

Andrea Poole

*Consultant*

**Varsity Vocals would like to thank:** The Town Hall staff; Ben Bram and Elise Schroeder for creating our closing number; Martin Waymire; our photographer Ryan Camp; Greg St. Germain, Warren Trent and RDX Productions; our guest performers The Pitchmen; our judges, hosts, volunteers, partners, competitors, and producers; and you, the audience, for supporting Varsity Vocals programming and these students.



## About Tonight's Show

The performance order was determined by random draw a few weeks ago and is listed in this program. Tonight's performers will be evaluated on elements of their vocal and visual performance, which carry numerical weight. The highest and lowest score from the individual judges will be dropped for each group. Our judges may recognize exceptional performances with special awards as they see fit.

Because each group only has 10 minutes to perform, we ask you to keep your applause to an enthusiastic minimum between songs. Please feel welcome to applaud as much as you want after each group has finished its set. There will be a 15-minute intermission. After the final group has performed our guest performers and 2023 ICCA Champions The Pitchmen will entertain you while the scores are tabulated.

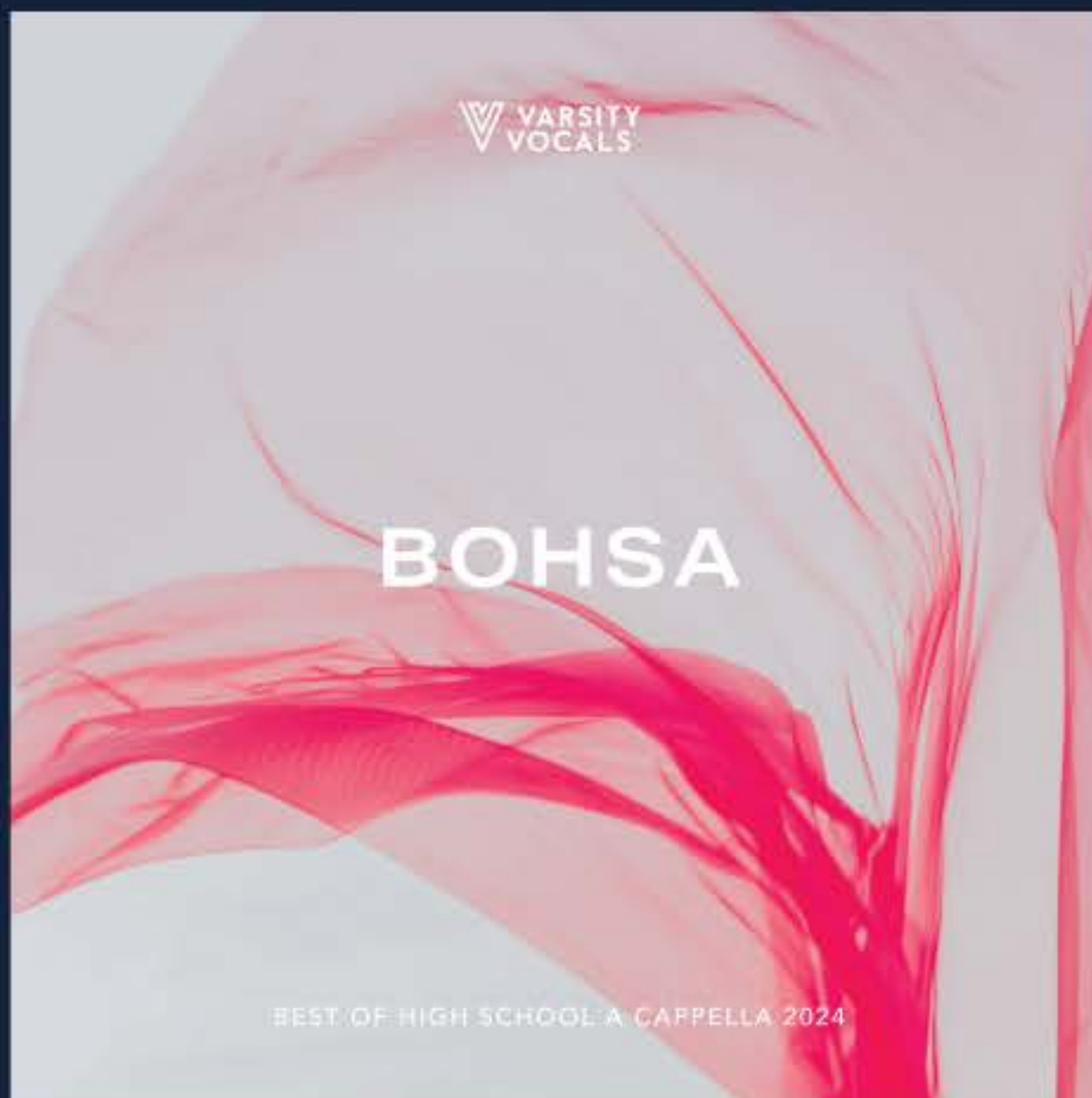
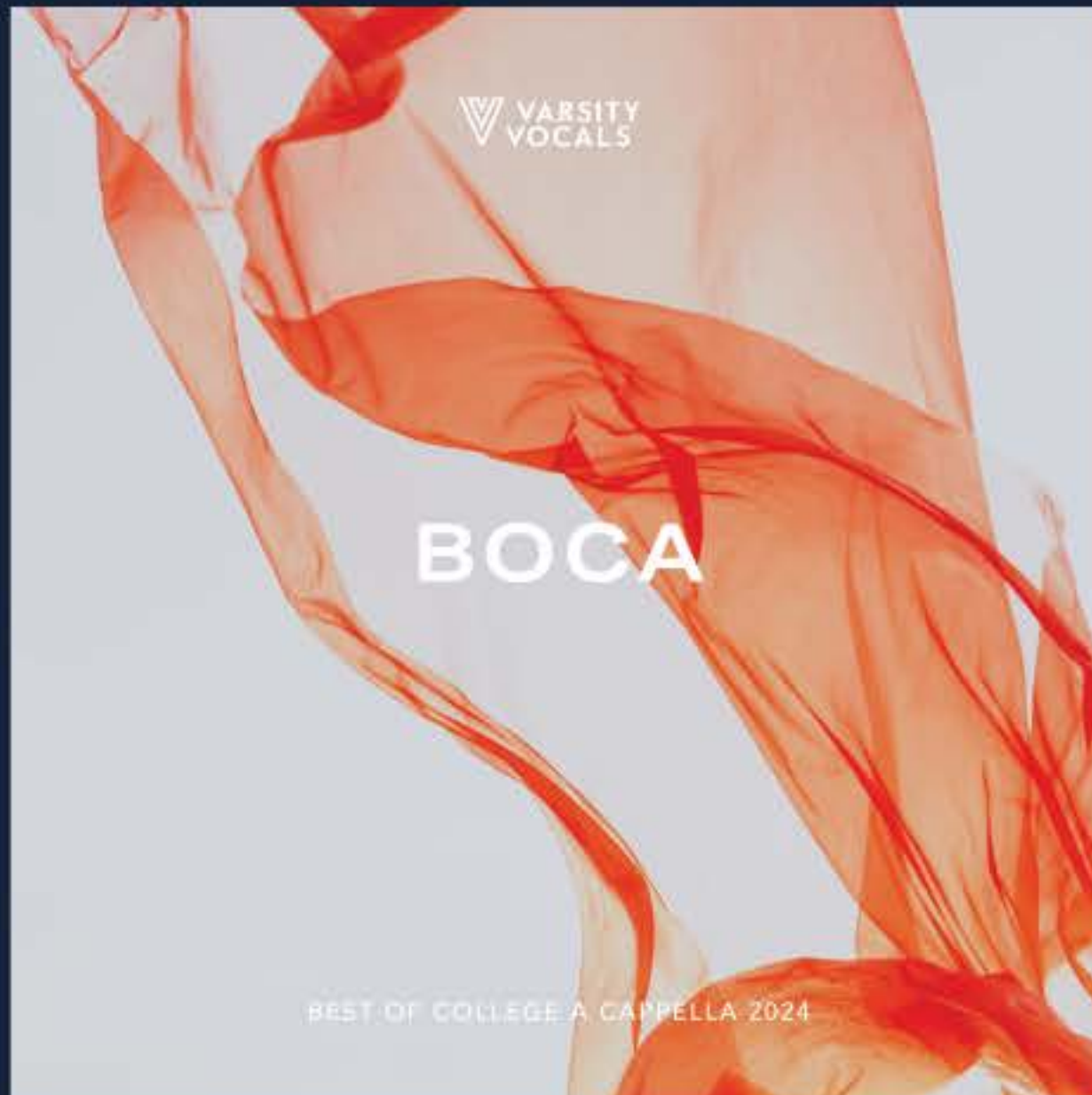
Video cameras, phones, and non-flash photography for personal use are permitted during the concert, so long as you do not disrupt our performers or other patrons. Our talented professional photographer, Ryan Camp, will be making high-resolution images available for purchase in a few weeks. A link to purchase his photos will be released on our social media. Due to licensing restrictions, we do not provide a video or audio recording of this performance.

## About Varsity Vocals

Since 1996, we have encouraged students worldwide to sing a cappella throughout their lives. Our programs include the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella (ICCA), and the International Championship of High School A Cappella (ICHSA). We also produce the annual *Best of College A Cappella (BOCA)* and *Best of High School A Cappella (BOHSA)* compilation albums. Our a cappella competitions give top-notch a cappella groups the opportunity to showcase their talents for an international audience and to take home valuable feedback from our qualified judges. This year, competing groups will appear in venues all around the world, offering their energetic musical performances for your enjoyment.



# BRING THE HARMONY HOME



**BOCA: Best of College A Cappella**  
**BOHSA: Best of High School A Cappella**  
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