

# Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 18, 2020



## **THE SCHOOL OF GOOD CITIZENSHIP launches *I ONCE WAS LOST BUT NOW AM FOUND***

Charlotte, NC and online – August 24 - 27

8:30 - 9:00pm nightly on [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

In response to the discord affecting us, *I Was Once Was Lost But Now Am Found* lifts communities in word and song over four nights this August – uniting the voices of Charlotte in harmony while the Republican National Convention is in session. The program includes Charlotte based spoken word poets along with virtual choirs streamed on multiple websites including [School of Good Citizenship](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

*I Once Was Lost But Now Am Found* builds on **LigoranoReese's** creative practice using new technologies. The artists are shaping the ZOOM conference into a new performance genre that combines virtual choirs and live interaction. LigoranoReese with music director **David Tang**, opera director **Ashley Tata**, video designer **Eamonn Farrell** and technologist **Andy Carluccio** are transforming the computer screen into a communal experience.

Performers include Charlotte based poet **Bluz** as Master of Ceremonies, spoken word poets **Deem Malik**, **Herrison Chicas**, **Jaki Shelton Green**, **Shane Manier**, and 128 choir singers from across the country.

Each evening's program consists of spoken word performance, a virtual choir, a conversation between the featured artists and a "Doodle Talk," a facilitated conversation between small groupings of audience members in Zoom breakout rooms. The fourth program concludes with a live sing-along of *Amazing Grace*. Evenings also feature a short How To Video on voter registration in North Carolina.

Gospel preacher **John P. Kee's** *I Believe*, is performed by **The Charlotte Community Virtual Choir**, **The Winston-Salem State Singing Rams** (**D'Walla Simmons-Burke** director) and **Alegría Hispana** (**Carmen Calvar** director). Audio mix by **David Tang** and **Jim Brock**; video editing by **Mary Patierno**.

*I Once Lost But Now Am Found* features the premiere performance of **Eric Banks' To be a stranger**, commissioned by **Firebird Arts Alliance**, a virtual choral piece written for the new vocal group **Ensemble Diaspora** based on texts by Dorothy West, James Baldwin, John Lewis, and Frederick Douglass.

*Will I See?* arranged and mixed by **Kevin Mayes** is a mash-up collaged from **Jonathan D. Larson's Will I?** from *RENT* and **John Newton's Amazing Grace**. 42 singers from around the United States ask questions

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posed by Jonathan Larson in his Broadway musical RENT: *Will I lose my dignity? Will someone care? Will I wake tomorrow from this nightmare?*

For more information... <http://schoolofgoodcitizenship.org/day-3/>

Instagram [@SchoolofGoodCitizenship](https://www.instagram.com/SchoolofGoodCitizenship),

Twitter [@SchoolofGC](https://twitter.com/SchoolofGC)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/schoolofgoodcitizenship>

#ligoranoreese, #publicart, #SchoolOfGoodCitizenship

Streaming Partners: NC Museum of Art, Minnesota Street Project, Busboys and Poets, Community Building Initiative, PEN America, For Freedoms and others.

## **About the School of Good Citizenship**

Organized by artists LigoranoReese, The School of Good Citizenship (SoGC) is a collaborative arts project, building a platform for creative community voices to be heard. Working in collaboration with Charlotte and North Carolina artists and cultural and educational organizations, The School of Good Citizenship is realizing workshops, exhibitions, film screenings, live streamed spoken word and virtual choir performances to take place in Charlotte (and online) from June through November 2020. This varied programming leading up to the general election will conclude with a Civic Saturday sermon on October 10, 2020. SoGC partners include The Levine Museum of the New South, The Light Factory, Working Films, Johnson C. Smith University, UNC Charlotte, International House, La Coalicion, Democracy NC, Community Building Initiative, and Firebird Arts Alliance.

School of Good Citizenship Charlotte Advisory Council members are: Susan Brenner, Keith Cradle PhD, Suzanne Fetscher, Patrice Funderburg, June Lambla, Massie Minor, Sonya Pfeiffer, Mary Saunders.

Artist Bios attached (currently below)

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## **Artists Bios**

### **LIGORANOREESE**

Nora Ligorano and Marshall Reese who collaborate as LigoranoReese are the artistic directors of School of Good Citizenship. Their artwork examines society through images and sound from print, television, internet, and radio. They have exhibited at the Biennial of Contemporary Art, Cartagena, Colombia, Catharine Clark Gallery, Kent Fine Art, MIT MediaLab, Museum of Arts & Design, Jim Kempner Fine Art, New York Public Library, and Lincoln Center. They have received funding from the Jerome Foundation, Puffin Foundation, NYFA, NYSCA, NEA, and been in residence at the MacDowell Colony, Montalvo Arts Center, and Djerassi Resident Artists Program. They are represented by Catharine Clark Gallery and Jim Kempner Fine Art.

### **DAVID TANG**

David Tang is the founding director of the Firebird Arts Alliance and its chorus - VOX. He is also the Director of Music at Sharon Presbyterian Church. The Firebird Arts Alliance is dedicated to building community by fostering new and innovative artistic collaborations throughout the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region. Before his current associations, David led Carolina Voices, the largest choral organization in the Carolinas, the symphony chorus of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra – the Oratorio Singers of Charlotte (now Charlotte Master Chorale), Choral Arts Philadelphia, the orchestra program at West Virginia University, the Davidson College Symphony Orchestra and Davidson College Chorale.

### **KEVIN MAYES**

Kevin Mayes is a musician, composer, and arranger currently living in Austin. He's musically directed various theater productions as well as vocal ensembles of various sizes and configurations. He was the Artistic Director of Bailiwick Chicago, a theater company in Chicago, and worked as a professional actor in both NYC and Chicago for many years.

### **ERIC BANKS**

Composer, conductor, and translator, Eric Banks has garnered international acclaim for his creative influence and unwavering commitment to new choral music. A ground-breaking composer, Eric has harnessed his passions for foreign languages, poetry, social justice, and natural science to create works that reach far beyond the scope of the established a cappella canon. His works have been commissioned by and performed in 30 countries worldwide.

### **MC: BLUZ**

Boris Rogers aka Bluz is the slam master and coach of SlamCharlotte, a competitive team of poets whom he led to back to back National Poetry Slam victories in 2007 and 2008, something that has not been done in slam poetry for 15 years. Bluz was the host of the RedBull StreetStyle Contest, Fresh fest B-BOY break dance contest and participated in the Redbull SayWhat spoken word workshop. An active member in the Charlotte community, Bluz has worked with organizations Junior Achievement, Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, HBOs Def Poetry, The Afro-American Cultural Center, and NASCAR where he wrote and performed several intros for the Nationally televised show NASCAR:TODAY. Bluz has shared the stage with Taylor Mali, Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, Gil

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Scott Heron and he has opened for Outkast, Amel Larrieux, Little Brother, Pink Floyd, Last Poets, D'Angelo, John Legend, Soulganic, Del La Sol, KRS ONE. He is the author of a book of poetry *Articulate Slang*, released 3 cds, and been featured at the Nuyorican poets Café and Bowery Poetry Club.

**DEEM MALIK** is a practicing Sunni Muslim of West Indian decent who loves his faith, his heritage, and his family. In 2018 Deem won the annual writing challenge at the close of the International Hip Hop Festival and was titled the Iron Poet of that year. He has been a feature poet online internationally via Instagram, Zoom, Podbean, and Blogtalk Radio. He has performed in India, Ghana, Nigeria, Canada, the US, the UAE, the UK, and The Republic of Ireland.

**JAKI SHELTON GREEN** is the first African American and third woman to be appointed as the North Carolina Poet Laureate. When he appointed her in 2018, Governor Cooper stated that "Jaki Shelton Green brings a deep appreciation of our state's diverse communities to her role as an ambassador of North Carolina literature. Jaki's appointment is a wonderful new chapter in North Carolina's rich literary history." Jaki Shelton Green is the author of eight collections of poetry including *Dead on Arrival*, *Masks*, *Feeding the Light*, *I Want to Undie You* among others. Her poetry has been published in over eighty national and international anthologies and featured in magazines such as *Essence* and *Ms. Magazine*.

**HERRISON CHICAS** is a spoken word artist whose work centers around the Latinx identity. Chicas' poetry has been featured on major platforms such as Public Radio International, Univision, BET, and various TED talks. He has been invited to perform across the country in institutions such as the Smithsonian Anacostia Museum, Dartmouth College, Duke University, and others. Currently, Chicas is a PhD student at UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School studying the Latinx experience in the workplace and the broader society.

**SHANE MANIER** is a Creative Coach, Poetry Mentor, Artist, Live Painter and National Spoken Word Poet based in NC and founder of the nonprofit Guerilla Poets. She is currently the Spoken Word and Arts Teaching Instructor for Behailu Arts Academy, Harvey B. Gantt Center, Henderson High School and Playing for Others. In 2011 she was the youngest poet to ever be inducted in the Poetry Council of North Carolina and has been recognized as a National Poet performing with Respect Da Mic Slam Team 2017-2019.

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