

GOOD NEWS ABOUT CLASSICAL MUSIC  
FROM  
THE HAMPSHIRE MUSIC CLUB

Friday, May 19– Sunday, May 28, 2023

*Courtesy of Jean Pitman Turner*

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(The Events schedule is at the end.)

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Da Camera Singers Present the Western Mass Premiere of

**Considering Matthew  
Shepard**

by Craig Hella Johnson

Introduction by Lesléa Newman

Guest Narrators: Mark Auerbach, Metta Dael, Jill Kaufman, Bill Newman, and Stan Rosenberg

**May 21, 2023 at 4:00pm**

Greenfield High School  
21 Barr Ave, Greenfield, MA

Open to all, Free

## A 25th anniversary observance

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Dear Friends,

What appears above is a partial poster with details about the performance only. The fine print indicates the gravity of the occasion. Lesléa Newman is a poet and was, for a time, the Poet Laureate of Northampton; Jill Kaufman, a reporter for NEPM; Bill Newman a civil rights attorney; Metta Dael an administrator at the Northfield Mount Hermon School; and Stan Rosenberg - well, everybody knows Stan, for some years our state senator. He currently serves with me on the board of the Greenfield Senior Symposia.

So, what about Matthew Shepard? He was a 21-year-old college kid from Laramie, Wyoming - a town a little bigger than Northampton, and the site of the state university. Matthew Shepard was murdered in 1998 in what is now called a "hate crime." The murder was brutal and barbaric. You can read about it in [this report](#) by BBC reporter Jude Sheerin.

This murder is reminiscent of the antics of the Ku Klux Klan. However, the murderers of Matthew Shepard were not an organized gang with an agenda, but a couple of young men with nothing better to do than harass and kill a vulnerable person.

"Considering Matthew Shepard" is an oratorio - a musical setting of an event, told by its characters.

Here is the poster in its entirety:

The poster features a background image of a vast green field under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text is overlaid on this image. At the top, it says "Da Camera Singers Present the Western Mass Premiere of" in white. Below that, the title "Considering Matthew Shepard" is written in large, bold, white letters. Underneath the title, it says "by Craig Hella Johnson" in white. Further down, in smaller white text, it says "Introduction by Lesléa Newman" and "Guest Narrators: Mark Auerbach, Metta Dael, Jill Kaufman, Bill Newman, and Stan Rosenberg". The date and time "May 21, 2023 at 4:00pm" are prominently displayed in large, bold, blue letters. Below that, the location "Greenfield High School" and "21 Barr Ave, Greenfield, MA" are listed in blue. It also states "Open to all, Free" in blue. A logo for the "Mass Cultural Council" is shown, with the text "Generously supported by" to its left. At the bottom, a white text box contains the following information: "This work celebrates Matt's life, explores the events of his murder in 1998, and asks to consider how we can rid the world of homophobia and hate crimes. Donations collected at the door will be shared with the Matthew Shepard Foundation (\*Please note this work contains mature content and includes a homophobic slur)".

Da Camera Singers Present the Western Mass Premiere of

# Considering Matthew Shepard

by Craig Hella Johnson

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**21 Barr Ave, Greenfield, MA**  
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Generously supported by  Mass Cultural Council

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The composer, Craig Hella Johnson, is a well-known choral conductor and composer. A graduate of St. Olaf's College, Juilliard, and Yale, he resides in Texas and has served as Artist in Residence at Texas State University.

The Amherst-based Da Camera Singers, founded in 1973, is directed by Sheila Heffernon, for many years Director of Music at Northfield Mount Hermon School.

The murder of Matthew Shepard is not a pleasant subject. It is not something on which one would wish to dwell. Tragedy often inspires art. So it has in this case. In "Considering Matthew Shepard," we are compelled to confront the story and appreciate the art.

This performance of "Considering Matthew Shepard" will take place this Sunday at Greenfield High School, at 4:00 p.m. It is about an hour and a half long. The

concert is free, but donations will be accepted for the benefit of the [Matthew Shepard Foundation](#).