

VOX
femina
LOS ANGELES

**MY VOICE
BE BRAVE**

November 3, 2024 at 4 pm
Zipper Concert Hall
at the Colburn School



VOX FEMINA LOS ANGELES

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Suzy Brown
Kate Burns
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Ashlyn Collins
Caroline Diehl
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Sibongile Ngako
Hillary Ngo
Sonia Ohan
Rachel Paterno-Mahler
Natalia Ramos
Jessica Rau
Mary Read
Lori Marie Rios
Laurel Roberts-Meese

Altos

Sara Austin
Morgan Bailey Keaton
Lesili Beard
Emma Benatar
Zellie Berry-Owen
Gillian Bieler
Casey Burgess
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Welcome to VOX Femina's 28th Season!

Still basking in the glow of our last season, which had VOX winning Chorus America's Margaret Hillis Award for Artistic and Organizational Excellence, and making our momentous Carnegie Hall debut, we were excited to kick off our 2024-2025 season last weekend with a get-out-the-vote tour at Universities in Arizona and Nevada. These concerts featured the stunning "Suffrage Cantata," which you will see this afternoon along with other stirring pieces that celebrate the bravery required to create change. On the eve of the election, we hope this music gets you fired up to vote!

This season, our exciting concert series includes many new commissions – local composer Jennifer Lucy Cook, whose arranging skills you will hear this afternoon, will provide a new multi-movement composition based on Margaret Atwood's chilling novel, "The Handmaid's Tale," in March. In June we will present a new Stacey V. Gibbs arrangement of the spiritual "I Know I've Been Changed," plus a major work by sought-after composer Rollo Dilworth, featuring lyrics from Claudia Rankine's moving poem, "Weather," about the murder of George Floyd. We are also thrilled to include collaborations, both new and old, with our favorite string players, the Orchid Quartet, returning to our stage this season and three-time Grammy-nominated vocal activist Melanie DeMore appearing in June, to inspire all of us, plus VOX will collaborate with the downtown Central Library on our March concert all about banned books!

VOX's Music Education programs continue to evolve and expand, serving over 1400 under-resourced students annually with a multi-tiered program in public schools throughout Los Angeles and beyond. Over 150 middle school students attended an Open Dress Rehearsal for tonight's concert here at the Zipper Hall earlier this week. During the second year of VOX's Treble Choir Festival, VOX will adjudicate six high school treble choirs, while the Justice Choir program, now in its third year, is partnering with five public schools as well as community centers Heart of Los Angeles and the Wallis Annenberg GenSpace.

VOX has held social justice at the core of its mission since its inception, and our commitment to giving women voice and singing for justice is more important than ever. As always, we are so grateful to you, our patrons and donors, for your continued support of our music and our mission and we look forward to sharing this wonderful season with you!

With gratitude,



Iris S. Levine
Founding Artistic Director



Rebecca Wink
Executive Director

Dr. Iris S. Levine, Founding Artistic Director



Nationally recognized for her excellence in choral conducting, Dr. Iris S. Levine is founder and artistic director of VOX Femina Los Angeles, L.A.'s premier women's chorus. Through her extensive experience with women's choral literature, and innovative concert programming, Dr. Levine has charted VOX Femina on an impressive journey, building its prominence in the choral community by way of numerous appearances at ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) conventions, Chorus America conferences, GALA Chorus conferences, and over 300 appearances throughout the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

Dr. Levine is faculty emerita at California Polytechnic University in Pomona where she served as the Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. Dr. Levine previously served as Dean of the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences, Interim Dean of the College of Education and Integrative Studies, and Department Chair and Professor of Music at Cal Poly Pomona. As faculty, she conducted the Kellogg Chamber Singers, taught Beginning Conducting, Choral Conducting and Music Education courses. Dr. Levine earned her Doctorate in Choral Music from the University of Southern California under the tutelage of Rod Eichenberger and James Vail, and she holds a Masters degree in Choral Conducting from Temple University in Philadelphia, where she studied with Alan Harler.

Dr. Levine is an active member of ACDA where she has served the organization in many leadership roles, including state, regional, and national Repertoire and Standards chairs for Women's Choruses. She currently serves on the California Choral Directors Association board. Dr. Levine has presented at numerous regional and national conferences.

Dr. Levine is the editor for the Iris S. Levine Treble Choral Series with Pavane Publishing. She authored the chapter on "Working with the Women's Community Choir" in the GIA publication: *Conducting Women's Choirs: Strategies for Success* and she is a contributing author in *Choral Reflections: Insights from American Choral Conductor-Teachers*. Dr. Levine is highly sought as guest clinician and adjudicator for choral festivals throughout the country.

Lori Marie Rios, Associate Conductor



Lori Marie Rios is a highly accomplished conductor, soloist, educator and voice teacher. She currently serves as Associate Professor of Music at College of the Canyons, Valencia where she is the music director of the Chamber Singers and Voices of the Canyons Community Chorus. She also teaches voice and administers the applied music program. Prior to her appointment at COC, she directed the choral program at La Cañada High School. Ensembles under her direction have sung all over the United States. Her choirs have appeared at the American Choral Directors Association Regional

Convention in Las Vegas in 2004 and in 2007 were selected to appear at the ACDA National Convention in Miami. The choirs at La Cañada also performed at the California Music Educators Conference. Lori Marie also is an adjunct professor at Pasadena City College where she conducts the Concert Choir. She is also on faculty at California State University, Los Angeles Summer Graduate Program where she teaches voice and graduate level conducting. Lori Marie is on the choral-vocal faculty of the Idyllwild Arts Summer Program where she serves as Assistant Director.

Ms. Rios has presented workshops for the American Choral Directors Association and this past year presented three workshops for the Nevada Music Educators Association. She is in much demand as a clinician and adjudicator. She has conducted district and state wide honor choirs. She also sits on the Los Angeles Bach Festival Board of Directors. She made her Walt Disney Concert Hall debut in 2006 as the soprano soloist in Mozart's Requiem.

Lisa Edwards, Collaborative Pianist



Following her undergraduate studies in piano performance at University of North Texas, Lisa Edwards earned her Master of Music degree in the Keyboard Collaborative Arts program at the University of Southern California with honors. While at USC, she was awarded the Gwendolyn Koldofsky Scholarship.

Currently, Ms. Edwards is the pianist/music assistant for the Los Angeles Master Chorale, under the direction of Grant Gershon and performs regularly on stage at the Walt Disney Concert Hall. Her concert credits include performances with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the Santa Barbara Symphony. On disc, Lisa can be heard on two Nonesuch recordings of Steve Reich's music - "You Are (Variations)" and "Daniel Variations".

Previous faculty positions include California State University Long Beach, Glendale Community College, and Pasadena Community College. In addition to being the pianist for VOX Femina Los Angeles, Ms. Edwards holds positions with San Marino Community Church, Stephen S. Wise Temple in Bel Air, and Congregation Kol Ami in West Hollywood. Lisa travels throughout the United States as a vocal/chamber music pianist.

Andrea Ramsey



Dr. Andrea Ramsey enjoys an international presence as a composer, conductor, scholar, and music educator. Her teaching experiences range from work with adolescent and children's voices to high school and collegiate voices. She enjoys regular opportunities to conduct all-state and divisional level honor choirs, festival events at Carnegie Hall, and served as a principal conductor for the Pacific International Young Women's Choral Festival in Eugene, Oregon and conducted the National ACDA Junior High/Middle School Honor Choir in 2023. Before leaping into full time composing and guest conducting, Andrea

held positions in music education and conducting at The Ohio State University and the University of Colorado, respectively.

An ASCAP Plus award-winning composer, Andrea believes strongly in the creation of new works. Her compositions are available with traditional publishers and also through MusicSpoke, a digital sheetmusic marketplace. She enjoys residency collaborations with ensembles and festival choirs, some of which have included: the University of Oregon, the Allegro Choirs of Kansas City, and the Crescent City Choral Festival in New Orleans.

As a scholar, she has presented for state, divisional, and national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association, the 6th Annual Symposium on Sociology in Music Education, as well as The Phenomenon Singing Symposium in St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada. She has co-authored articles published in the Choral Journal, as well as the Journal of Research in Music Education. A native of Arkansas, she has experienced in her own life the power of music to provide a sense of community, better understanding of our humanity, and rich opportunities for self-discovery.

Simone Ledward-Boseman



Singer, writer, and performer Simone Ledward-Boseman believes in the power of music and storytelling to drive empathy and affect social change. A native of Vallejo, California, Simone infuses smooth soul with elements of funk, hip hop and spoken word creating a unique brand of conscious music that uplifts and inspires. As a performer, she searches for the truth behind every passage and aims to draw listeners into the full power of the story through an honest portrayal that peels back the intricate layers of the human experience.

Orchid Quartet



The artists of Orchid Quartet became inseparable friends while on tour with the Japanese rockstar Yoshiki of X Japan across the US, Mexico, Europe, and Asia. While traversing the globe, it became increasingly clear that the foursome had a truly special musical connection and chemistry, and in 2016 Orchid Quartet was formed.

Quickly gaining in popularity, Orchid Quartet was invited to perform in China, where they embarked on a successful month-long chamber music tour in 15 stunning concert halls across the country, during which they presented a 90 minute program including many of their own arrangements.

Since then, members of the quartet have toured with Ariana Grande, Adele, Panic! at the Disco, Hans Zimmer, and Game of Thrones Live featuring Ramin Djawadi. They have performed or recorded for artists including Eminem, David Foster, Andrea Bocelli, Miley Cyrus, Portugal. The Man, Kendrick Lamar, Pentatonix, Imagine Dragons, Christina Aguilera, KYGO, Olivia Rodrigo, Sting, Damian Marley, Richard Marx, Alicia Keys, Halsey, Josh Groban, John Debney, The Chainsmokers, Alien Ant Farm, Frank Ocean, Steel Panther, and Iggy Azalea.

Quartet members have performed on the soundtracks to major motion pictures such as The Jungle Book, The Lion King, X-men: Dark Phoenix, SpongeBob Squarepants 3, Geostorm, 10 Cloverfield Lane, The Nun, Bad Boys II, Home Sweet Home Alone, First Man, and many more.

Additionally, they have performed and/or recorded for TV for programs like The Mandalorian, The Book of Boba Fett, Empire, The Orville, The Simpsons, Animaniacs, Russian Doll, Agents of Shield, Zoo, Chef's Table, the GRAMMYS, The Oscars, the Macy's Day Parade, the MTV Movie Awards, America's Got Talent, The Voice, the Billboard Music Awards, the American Music Awards, the ESPYs, The Game Awards, Jimmy Kimmel Live, The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon, and Carpool Karaoke with James Corden.

Orchid Quartet continues to perform live, record for artists, composers, and producers, and release music videos together. You can currently see them perform chamber music concerts regularly through the Fever Candlelight Concert series.

PROGRAM NOTES

Holley Replogle-Wong

"There will never be a new world order until women are a part of it."

Alice Paul

For twenty-eight years, VOX Femina Los Angeles has been giving women voice through the performance of music. Today, we launch our season two days before an historic election, with a concert that celebrates the courageous work of those who have dedicated their lives to equity and justice. The act of making music is one way of telling history - expressing the thoughts, words, and feelings of a community both past and present - in a way that keeps those memories alive and vital. My Voice Be Brave reflects upon American struggles for civil rights, and especially the right to vote - considering the struggles, the failures, the victories - and reminds us that we can both learn from the past and take strength from those who came before us, as we continue to march for the benefit of all.

The dedication on the front page of the sheet music for our first piece, "What Happens When a Woman?" by Alexandra Olsavsky and the Artemisia Trio, reads: "A song for the strong women of our world who seek to empower themselves by asking important questions." As the piece begins, a slow stomp develops into a rhythmic march, and a single voice starts raising these questions. More voices join her in unison, and then blossom into harmony and echo - different voices coming together to provide support and adding urgency to the call until the questions are answered in unity, marching together: "We rise above, we lead with love."

In "When Thunder Comes," composer Mari Esabel Valverde sets the words of Children's Poet Laureate J. Patrick Lewis, from his 2012 poem that celebrates the work of American civil rights activists Sylvia Mendez, Harvey Milk, and Helen Zia. Valverde writes: "Calling attention to our history's systemic erasure of the stories of marginalized human beings in the United States, Lewis's sonnet presents a powerful model for patriotism. The drums, a figurative representation of a grass roots revolution, provide thunder, and the singing relays the message that, once unified, our individual voices can come together and 'drown out fear.'"

In order to sustain a long-term fight for social justice, our bodies and hearts require times of respite. "My Heart Be Brave" by Marques L.A. Garrett is a piece that provides that breath of peace and rest, even as it is unshakably determined and full of hope. Starting with a quiet encouragement to the heart, the piece builds in intensity as the words of James Weldon Johnson turn to the assurances of nature - that the future will be bright as surely as night will turn to day.

Poet Barbara Saxton wrote "Hands Upon the Plow" in 2019 after researching the life and work of suffragist Alice Paul. Paul organized protests and parades and spent 7 months in jail for picketing peacefully outside of the White House. Some of the lyrics are inspired by Paul's own words: "I always feel the movement is a sort of mosaic. Each of us puts in a little stone, and then you get a great mosaic at the end." Composer Jocelyn Hagen sets these words with this idea of building in strength over time. She builds a mosaic-like character into the jazzy bass line of the piano - starting with a handful or smattering of notes, the line becomes more fluid and connected as the piece goes on.

“Keep Marching” is the finale of the musical *Suffs* by Shaina Taub, which premiered off-Broadway in 2022 and opened on Broadway in 2024. It brings the struggles of American suffragists Alice Paul and Lucy Burns to life, and highlights the struggles and differences in approaching the movement, and the ways in which the inclusion of Black women was curtailed. “Keep Marching” acknowledges that their victories are incomplete, and though it may take years, or generations, we must keep on marching.

The second half of our concert features a live performance of Andrea Ramsey’s “Suffrage Cantata,” which was commissioned by VOX Femina Los Angeles and a consortium of choirs in 2020. In this multi-movement piece, Andrea Ramsey adapts texts from Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, Jovita Idár and many other voices of powerful women in the Suffrage movement to tell the story of the fight women undertook to win the right to vote in America. The first movement, “One Day, It Is Coming” begins a narrative arc that leads to the 1848 convention on women’s rights at Seneca Falls. “Failure Is Impossible” is a musical representation of the arrest and trial of Susan B. Anthony for the crime of casting a vote in the election of 1872. The voice of Ida B. Wells-Barnett is highlighted in the third movement “When a Woman Knows Her Place”, confronting the limitations of white feminism in the suffrage movement. “Shall Not Be Denied” reminds us of the violent brutality that women were subjected to in the fight for suffrage as we are led into the final movement, “Forward Into Light” – much work has been done, and much work remains to be done as we continue in the ongoing fight for the rights of all people.



Holley Replogle-Wong is a Lecturer in Musicology at University of California, Los Angeles, and the Program Director of the UCLA Center for Musical Humanities. She has taught courses on film music, popular music, American musical theater, and western music history at UC Berkeley, Chapman University, and UCLA. She is also a regular speaker for the LA Opera Connects educational outreach programs. Her research interests include topics in musical theater, voice, fandom studies, 19th- and 20th-century American cultural hierarchies, classical crossover, and film and video game music. She has music-directed musical theater productions at UCLA and for primary and secondary schools, sung with various vocal ensembles (including VOX!) and for the occasional film soundtrack.

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MY VOICE BE BRAVE

November 3, 2024 - 4 pm concert
Dr. Iris S. Levine, Founding Artistic Director
Lisa Edwards, Collaborative Pianist
Orchid Quartet, Strings
Yuri Inoo, Eliza Kinney, Percussion

What Happens When a Woman? Alexandra Olsavsky/arr. Artemisia
Mika Jain, Missy Nieto, Sumana Wolf, soloists

When Thunder Comes Mari Esabel Valverde

My Heart Be Brave Marques L.A. Garrett

Hands Upon the Plow Jocelyn Hagen

Keep Marching (from Suffs) Shaina Taub/arr. Jennifer Lucy Cook
*Arrangement commissioned by VOX Femina members Eileen Dorn, Brianna Estrada,
Mika Jain, Missy Nieto, Rachel Paterno-Mahler, Jessica Rau, Mary Read,
and Sumana Wolf*

* * * * *

Suffrage Cantata Andrea Ramsey
Texts taken from historical text sources
Commissioned by VOX Femina Los Angeles and a consortium of women's choruses
Simone Ledward Boseman, Narrator
Multi-media by Helen R. Mendoza

1. It Is Coming
Early Women's Right's Perspectives
Lesili Beard, soloist
2. Failure Is Impossible
Illegal Voting, Arrest, & Trial of Susan B. Anthony
3. A Woman's Place
Ida B. Wells-Barnett and the 1913 Women's Suffrage Procession in Washington D.C.
Angelica Rowell, soloist
4. Shall Not Be Denied
The Silent Sentinels, Arrest, Imprisonment & Abuse
Desiree Balfour, Cynthia Glass, soloists
5. Forward into Light
Ratification and the Journey Forward
Bethany Encina, Sonia Ohan, Jessica Rau, soloists

SUFFRAGE CANTATA PROGRAM NOTES

Andrea Ramsey

This score represents well over a year of research, planning, and composing. The journey took me places I never imagined. I explored multiple suffrage exhibits in Washington, D.C., visited Susan B. Anthony's home, stood in the parlor where she was arrested for illegal voting, and held the handwritten letters of Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and Carrie Chapman Catt while at the University of Rochester archives. When I began this, I had no idea the 19th amendment represented seventy-two years of struggle. I didn't know any of these women's names, save Susan B. Anthony, who only received passing mention in my history books growing up. Walking through a bookstore, have you ever noticed how little of the history section is comprised of women? In working through this project, I have dwelled with women who were American heroes, but in many cases dismissed or outright silenced by the major authors of history. Even within the women's suffrage movement, women silenced other women. Leading white suffragists were dismissive of and in some instances intentionally omitted the efforts of suffragists of color from historical records.

My personal commitment to include diverse perspectives from the movement intensified the process in ways I hadn't anticipated. For every scrap of information I could find on Mary Church Terrell or Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, I could find 50 to 100 more documents on Susan B. Anthony or Alice Paul. Instances like this challenge us to critically examine the history we are presented. Who is telling the story? How do their experiences impact the story? And, if we are fortunate enough to write a story ourselves, are we sharing all the voices we can?

Some of the most revered figures in the U.S. Women's Suffrage Movement have been romanticized in ways that omit massive flaws of judgment. In the teaching and learning of American history, there has for too long been a desire for narratives that fit neatly on their specific shelves and generally allow us to observe only one facet of a historical figure. This approach, while tidy on the surface, can cause us to look away from complexities and injustices we deeply need to acknowledge. History is immensely messy. Many of the very suffragists who fought so hard to end slavery were deeply racist and classist (e.g. Elizabeth Cady Stanton). Others (even the Quakers like Susan B. Anthony and Alice Paul) were permissive of racist thinking when they felt it would expedite their efforts (i.e. how Alice Paul handled segregation in the 1913 parade). It is easy for many to dismiss this as simply being "how things were" or an unfortunate condition of the times. However, if women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton could be revolutionary enough in independent thought to see that women should be treated as equal to men, it stands to reason those same women could think radically and independently regarding Americans of color as well.

When I began the work, I naïvely thought, "I'll only include the 'good suffragists.'" While touring the Belmont-Paul Equality House in Washington, D.C. (former headquarters of the National Woman's Party), I arrived early and had a moment to talk with the guide before the tour. In our conversation, I told her of my project and said something to the effect of: "I know some of the white suffragists were racially problematic..." She stopped me and said, "Oh, they were all racially problematic." As I moved through the tour, I saw women who had been arrested, jailed, beaten and tortured for the right to vote— but who were also deeply flawed.

Planning for this work began in May of 2019. In less than a year, our own history was shifting dramatically with the arrival of a global pandemic, sustained protest, and racial upheaval. We are influenced by our environments and I know this work is different, and likely stronger, as a result of composing in this season of self-examination. I have tried to craft a work that is honest about the heroism of these figures while also acknowledging their flaws.

The music for the work is original, with the exception of a brief portion of movement 3, which quotes “Fall in Line,” a Suffrage March by Zena S. Hawn. Published in 1914, it is quite possible this march was performed at or inspired by the 1913 suffrage parade in Washington, D.C. The entirety of the original sheet music to this march is available for free online through the Library of Congress digital collections, which include many other suffrage tunes as well.

While movements 1 and 3 include some original lyrics, the bulk of the texts used in the work are historically sourced. The original lyrics of “one day the women got tired” provides a simple message as the women move forward in their various ways (e.g. Charlotte Woodward in her wagon, Sojourner Truth speaking at Broadway Tabernacle, Elizabeth Cady Stanton reading the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments.) The original lyrics in movement 3 were crafted to relay stories from Ida B. Wells’s autobiography “Crusade for Justice” as well as textbook accounts of the events within the Illinois delegation on the day of the 1913 parade in Washington D.C.

Apart from these original lyrics, the rest of the texts were pulled from historical content: banner messages, programs, speeches, writings, and letters of suffragists. Using mostly prose for the lyrical content required some additional creativity. In many instances, I would find (and even color code) similarly themed texts so I could parse together whole sets of lyrics. The opening chorus of movement four is a perfect example: a rapid-fire thread of quotes from five different suffragists summoning the women to battle. In some instances (e.g., movement 2) I needed to paraphrase for the sake of rhythmic coherence and lyricism. Susan B. Anthony’s verbosity did not always translate smoothly to melody, so occasionally, I removed/adjusted a few words without altering the overall meaning. In other moments, I would pull together fragments of descriptive text to create a mosaic effect (e.g. the Silent Sentinels banners, and Night of Terror sequences in movement 4).

SUFFRAGE CANTATA PROGRAM NOTES



*"My dear Miss Paul—
I am a seventeen year old high school girl and an ardent
suffragist. I am very anxious to take part in the suffrage
parade on March 3rd. What part would I be likely to have
in the parade? Sincerely yours, Carol H. Maynard*
Letter from Carol Maynard to Alice Paul

*"... where a change of ideas is to be wrought, it takes
time, and no sudden or bold stroke can accomplish so
great a change. It is the slow, sure work of creation,
which does not go backward."*

Lucy Stone



*"I will not allow my life's light to be determined
by the darkness around me."*

Sojourner Truth

*"The crowning glory of American citizenship is
that it may be shared equally by people of every
nationality, complexion, and sex."*

Mary-Ann Shadd Cary



*"Disenfranchisement says to all women:
'Your judgment is not sound; your opinions are
not worthy of being counted.' Man is the superior,
woman the subject, under the present condition
of political affairs, and until this great wrong is righted,
ignorant men and small boys will continue to look with
disdain on the opinion of women."*

Susan B. Anthony

VOX ANGELICA

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For more information, please visit our website: www.voxfemina.org/vox-angelica



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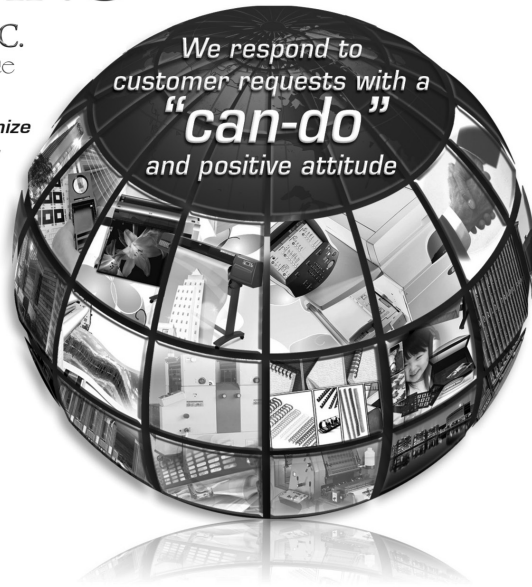
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