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LIFT EVERY VOICE - LIFT EVERY HEART CHICAGO SINGS!

THE 2016 CENTRAL DIVISION CONFERENCE

What is the best way to promote lifelong health in our school children? Get them singing, of course! Recent studies have shown a multitude of physical benefits from singing, including exercising of the lungs and heart, increasing “feel good” endorphins, boosting the immune system, lowering stress levels, and even extending our life span. Singing also reduces depression and anxiety, and choral singing brings us into close community with each other, something that seems to be missing in today’s daily flurry of emails, texts, and tweets. Those of us who love choral singing have felt these benefits for years, even if we couldn’t articulate the science behind our feelings. Our singers deserve to experience the same benefits!

The 2016 Chicago conference will provide just what the doctor ordered—**FIVE HONOR CHOIRS** for singers in fourth grade through college. Encourage your singers to apply today for this amazing opportunity! There is nothing like an Honor Choir to instill in someone a lifelong love of singing. For many professional choral conductors and singers, the honor choirs we sang in when we were young convinced us to choose this profession. The experience is that powerful.

The conductors of the 2016 conference honor choirs are among the most inspiring teachers in our field - **Rollo Dilworth** (Children’s HC), **Henry Leck** (Boys’ Middle School HC), **Ruth Dwyer** (Girls’ Middle School HC), **Joe Miller** (High School HC), and **Jerry Blackstone** (Collegiate Repertoire Chorale) – these amazing conductors will ignite your singers’ hearts and minds with the joy of singing.

Younger singers aren’t the only ones who deserve to be inspired by choral music at the 2016 conference. I don’t think it is a stretch to say that many professional choral musicians are feeling challenged today - budgets have shrunk, jobs expectations have changed, program continuity is being challenged, and trends over which we have no control affect key aspects of our choir work. However, the beauty of voices singing together will always be here for us, and will always remind us that the choral art increases our strength, joy, and sense of belonging. Put the stress aside and soak up the beauty of these choirs at the 2016 conference: VOCES8 with Ola Gjeilo, The Anton Webern Chor, and the Bach Institute at Valparaiso University with the Leipzig Baroque Orchestra, performing Bach’s *St. John Passion*.

Finally, if you yearn to relax with new choral friends, join us for the Choral Cabernet, a combination wine tasting and music reading event that will brighten a winter’s night with laughter and camaraderie. What a fun and slightly zany way to make new friends!

So come to the 2016 ACDA Central Division Conference, February 24-27, 2016. Boost those “feel good” endorphins and lower your stress levels. Your heart and mind will thank you!

- *Gayle Walker, ACDA President-Elect, is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio.*



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And now it's time to move on from my role as Central Division President and to welcome Gayle Walker! Gayle will officially step in into the role of Division President as of June 30, 2015.

Believe me when I say that she and her conference planning team have been busy, busy people putting together the various aspects of our Chicago 2016 conference. You will find Gayle to be a tremendous leader and most definitely an advocate for choral music, not only throughout our division, but far beyond our borders. She has great passion for our art, that is for certain. She has a brilliant mind, an attentive ear and a kind heart.

In my upcoming role as Vice President, I look forward to working alongside Gayle and her leadership team, as they move toward February 2016 in Chicago! I urge you to get behind Gayle and her team. Consider submitting a choir for performance, suggesting an interest session, and or having some of your singers audition for one of the honor choirs! Do what you can to get yourself to Chicago.

Serving first IL-ACDA as state president and now Central Division ACDA has been most rewarding. As you might imagine, it can be rather daunting and yet exhilarating - sometimes at the same time. Regardless, it has been a time in my life that I will cherish for many years. I'm glad that I stepped up and assumed these two roles, as each has certainly enriched my life far beyond what I could have imagined.

Servant leadership is really what we are about, isn't it? There's something about working together with a group of people with a common goal, and doing so for the betterment of others and for a great cause - in this case, choral music. It took quite a few years for me to realize that it's not about "me," but it's more about what together "we" can do to make this world a better place, and that is just what our leadership team has tried to do. We joined "the dance," and indeed it has been grand sharing the dance floor with my team!

What happens the next time you are asked to step up and join the dance? What will you do? Yes, taking on a leadership position can be time consuming, especially when your professional and personal life are already a blur. Still, if and when you are asked, I ask you to pause, take a breath, and consider joining in on the fun. Consider your gifts and what you

could bring to our membership! Perhaps it isn't the time right now, then again, when will it be the time?

Back in my college days, Harry Chapin was a rising story teller/singer. His words come to mind as I begin to close this chapter in my life.

Circle - by Harry Chapin

*All my life's a circle; Sunrise and sundown;
Moon rolls thru the nighttime;
Till the daybreak comes around.*

*All my life's a circle; But I can't tell you why;
Season's spinning round again;*

The years keep rollin' by.

It seems like I've been here before;

I can't remember when;

*But I have this funny feeling; That we'll all be
together again.*

No straight lines make up my life;

And all my roads have bends;

There's no clear-cut beginnings;

And so far no dead-ends.

*And yes, I do have this funny feeling that we'll
all be together again!*

I look forward to the next time!

I hope to see you in Chicago in February 2016!!!!

Be kind to one another. Peace.

Thanks to my Sue for her unending support! I am a lucky man!

We ARE Central

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*-R. Brett Goad, ACDA Central Division
President, retired in 2009 after 33 years
in choral music education and is currently
serving as an adjunct faculty member for
Northern Illinois University and directs the
Young Naperville Singers Young Men's Chorus.*

Resound

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Having recently returned from the national ACDA conference in Salt Lake City, I'm in GO mode. The sheer number of people involved in some aspect of choral music is staggeringly reassuring and energizing.

We have a good thing going, and we're making a large difference in every life that sings. Our purpose will become more important as individuals' connections to each other diminish, given faster and more accessible technology. We were all happy to utilize the handy conference program app, but along with that, to text our neighbor concert comments. I tend to think a lot about these changing aspects of our profession, how we adapt and change with the tide.

During a discussion with Dennis Morrissey, your IL-ACDA President-Elect. We were talking about the balance of caring for singers and caring for the music during high-level music-making. (Dennis will have a lot more to say about that down the road.) I

mentioned that I am just as naïve and idealistic as I was when I first walked into Franklin Elementary School in Sterling, Illinois, to teach general music some long number of years ago. Stating the obvious, my students, then and now, are different sizes, different ages, different colors; objectives, goals and purposes were different. Parental involvement has changed, technology has zoomed forth. Regardless of these changes and more, the constant was and always will be my concern for their well-being and serving the music.

I suggest that if we make all of our decisions based on the demands of musical and programmatic goals, the personal goals will fall into place. For instance, if one is working on getting more dynamic contrast in a particular piece, if one says "I want it *forte* here" then you are the decision maker. (Of course you are, but stay with me...) Then, later, "I want it softer here," I want it more *staccato*," etc. Play it out into the ensemble's next selection, how do you want that? The director is the source of inspiration then. The students are not looking to the music. An opportunity to build literacy, independence but also personal confidence and mutual respect is underutilized simply by our delivery. If we pay attention to this, you may see a shift in not only how much a student claims ownership of musical ideas, but their ability to transfer concepts to other pieces, but also into a non-musical situation. I wish this was more quantifiable.

I treasure a note from Bill Hertel, the Sterling Schools music supervisor at the time. He wrote, "The 5th graders sang 'Bless the Beasts and the Children' so musically and they looked so confident." Now I have the privilege of exploring Stravinsky, Bach, name-the-composer, but I pursue the same result.

I would like to know what you think about this. There are many rapid possibilities to share what works for us: blogs, ChoralNet forums, Facebook, Twitter, but I would really rather have a conversation. I hope you will come to the IL-ACDA Summer Retreat at Illinois State University June 24-25. Rick Bjella and Carol Krueger are our headliners. They are expert pedagogues, inspirational musicians, and all-around great people.

- Karyl Carlson is Director of Choral Activities at Illinois State University and serves as President of ACDA-Illinois.

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MAKE PLANS FOR THE CHICAGO CONFERENCE: YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN



It is not too early to make plans for the Central Division Conference in Chicago, February 24-27, 2016. You will be enriched, reinvigorated, and more knowledgeable, if you choose to attend.

Several thousand of our colleagues and I returned a few weeks ago from an amazing national conference in Salt Lake City. From my perspective, this was among the very best ACDA national conferences ever. The performance and conference venues, the interest sessions, the performing ensembles were extraordinary. Many thanks and congratulations to Central Division's very own Mary Hopper and her committee for a job well done. The time, effort, and expenses I incurred were well worth it. Without reservation, I believe I am a better teacher and conductor from having attended.

From the fabulous performances of many styles of music by both choirs and orchestras to the fantastic interest sessions, I learned many things. I reached outside my comfort zone a bit and attended a fun and enlightening session with Jeremy Fox on circle-singing (group improvisation), which has given me some ideas to use with one of my university ensembles. Hearing Michael McGlynn of Anuna discuss the origins of Irish choral music gave me a better understanding of what makes his music so compelling. Conducting sessions with Simon Halsey, John Nelson, and James Jordan were rich, and gave me some new insights and reminders for my own conducting and for teaching conducting.

It was fantastic spending time with some many dear colleagues, including several former students, now active conductors. They chose to attend some different interest sessions than I, ones that met the needs they had for their areas of expertise. There were many different concerts and sessions for just about everyone in our choral teaching field – something for everyone.

I learned from speaking with my former students and a number of other school teachers that they discovered some useful methods of obtaining financial assistance. Of course, every school system is different,

but many do have professional development funding available - but you have to ask, and you may need to apply early. I learned from several teachers that their choir booster/parent organizations provided some funding – in one case, almost all of the costs. Perhaps some who have church jobs might investigate special funds that would support attending the Central Division conference.

The Central Division conference will be a fine opportunity to hear fantastic choirs sing beautiful music, to learn some new repertoire, to share ideas with colleagues over a meal, to attend some enlightening interest session, and to fill your soul with newness and energy. It will be well worth your time and effort. I hope to see you there.

- Richard (Rick) Sowers is a Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Anderson University and serves as President of the Indiana Choral Directors Association.

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Teaching and making music with a choir is a complex process. I would compare it with the playing of an instrument, except that the instrument in our case is a group of people with various personalities and emotional sensitivity, different life experiences, and individual understanding of music as an art. We then add factors such as musical skill levels, singing experience, vocal health, and commitment to the goals of the ensemble that are inevitable and playing a significant role in the overall process. While the two music making processes might be different on many levels, they are also the same on many levels.

When I observe my piano practices and habits from over the years, I also think of my teaching methods, various techniques, and approaches that I use to cultivate musicality, expression, and healthy technique in my singers. The teaching of basic musicianship, singing skills, ensemble habits, understanding of interpretation, which we all repeatedly do in our choir rehearsal rooms semester after semester, season after season, often makes me compare what we do with what athletes do. The number of years devoted to our craft, the commitment, discipline, and perseverance of intense rehearsal schedules and performances, are similar. They are meant to build, develop and strengthen us and our students, not only as skillful musicians, but also as teachers and performers in tune with their inner sensitivity and able to communicate the finest nuances of musical context through their hearts and souls.

As I reflect on my years of training, teaching and performing, I realize that the amount of information that needs to be transmitted, cultivated, and assimilated in the choir room is vast. The gradual steps of building healthy vocal technique and ensemble awareness, the depth of musical details explained, the motivation and encouragement involved in embarrassing and loving the complexity of the singing process, are infinite.

Yet, there is a magical simplicity in all of this, a simplicity that makes the process enjoyable and fulfilling. I ask myself the questions, what are the most important aspects of this process that I want my students to embrace and care for? What are the seeds that I want to plant in their hearts and minds for them to carry on after they have sung under my direction?

Here is what I have found out, and which I communicate to them on a daily basis:

- Music is more about responding to sounds (after we have understood the meaning of the musical story), than making them.

- Listening is the key to sensible ensemble awareness.

- Connecting with those around us makes all the difference.

- There are three aspects to every sound: beginning-duration-ending. Care for the duration of each note as you would for a child, and respect the silence between sounds.

- Meaningful words set in music are powerful and have the potential to change someone's life. Absorb them in your heart and let them come out through your singing.

- Think in shapes and colors. Affect is derived from phrasing, not rhythms and notes alone.

- Be your own conductor and take ownership of the inner pulse.

- The intake of breath is the essence of life. Think about the first breath of a newborn baby.

- Emotion breathes life into the notes and rhythms we sing/play. Without it, however perfect the notes and rhythms are, they are just notes and rhythms. The good news is, emotions is what we are made of.

- Eagles have an incredible vision and are able to see many things at once from a broad perspective with complete clarity. Chickens have poor vision and can only see what is immediately in front of them. Be an eagle.

- Posture is audible. Share your joy an appreciation by visibly engaging in the now.

- Share your heart. Singing is the most instinctive reaction and reflection of our emotions. That is why it is so powerful.

- Allow yourself to be vulnerable and open your mind's ear. Our minds have an incredible potential to understand musical content on both intuitive and analytical level.

- Making music is a privilege. Invest yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually.

This summary is by no means comprehensive and is perhaps nothing new, but it could be a starting point of communication with our singers in the exciting and complex process of teaching and making music with them. It has been for me and it has worked beautifully.

- Gabriela Hristova is Director of Choral Activities at the University of Michigan at Flint and serves as President of ACDA-Michigan.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS



I had a great conversation with a colleague this week as he worked with my high school singers to help them prepare for our upcoming district adjudicated event. He commented as my students entered the room that there was an attitude among them that said, “We’re

here to work, what do you have for us?” This led us to a lengthy discussion about expectations that I hope might be useful to you.

My students and I have both struggled in recent weeks due to a crazy schedule which has been implemented to accommodate state wide testing (don’t even get me started on that subject). We’ve found it a challenge to stay motivated through days of not seeing one another, followed by two-hour rehearsals that, even in my mind, seem to stretch on forever. However, the expectation has been put forth that this is the hand we have been dealt and we will be successful, despite its taxing nature.

My colleague commented that it was clear to him in just watching the kids walk in the room that the expectation imparted to the students is clear, consistent and very high. I was so flattered to know that someone else noticed this in my students. I shared with him a mantra that I have kept since my early days of teaching; I think I may have even shared it in a previous article: people will do exactly what you expect of them. In other words, if the expectation is low, that is exactly what the conductor will receive in return: low performance. Conversely, if the expectation is high, it will be met and perhaps exceeded.

I think what is most important about this concept is that it is true, regardless of the age we teach. Children’s choirs, church choirs, college choirs, middle school choirs can and should all be held to high expectations. These expectations should encompass every aspect of their experience in the choral ensemble: warm-up, sight reading, concert performance, behavior inside and outside the choir room, treatment of one another, etc.

My choirs do frequent community performances and combined events with other choirs, often adult choirs. We consistently receive what are meant as compliments but they just rub me the wrong way. Statements like “They’re so well behaved” or “They sat so quietly through the service” or “They are so mature.” I sometimes want to say in response “Did you think I was bringing a pack of wild

dogs to this event?” Of course they are well behaved and mature and respectful. I expect it!

I know all of us feel that high expectations are important. I don’t think I’ve ever heard another choir director say that they prefer to keep the bar pretty low because it prevents disappointment; at least I’ve never heard anyone admit it out loud. However, I do think the degree of loft we set before our students can vary, depending on where we are emotionally and physically and also where we are in our careers and sometimes just where we are in the calendar year. I feel it is important to maintain the same high expectations start to finish. The expectations must be stated early and often and constantly reinforced. It’s tough, it’s exhausting and sometimes it beats us up, but our singers deserve it. When the bar is set high, there is tremendous satisfaction in having colleagues or audience members or parents comment that they notice what you are expecting and that it is paying off. What’s the best part? Setting the bar high and watching our singers sail right over the top of it! Have a wonderful spring filled with high expectations!

- Dara Gillis is Choral Director of Choral Activities at Delaware Hayes High School and serves as President of the Ohio Choral Directors Association.

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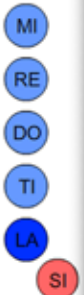
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BUILDING A VOCAL JAZZ PROGRAM



There are many positive rationales for starting and building a vocal jazz program in the educational setting. Foremost is that it is America's original music. It was born here, lives here, exports from here, and attracts listeners and musicians from everywhere. The following few lines may help give you some ideas on how to begin.

The administrative hurdle.

You may have to sell the concept to your administrative team. There are many approaches one can take, and you may have to investigate a little before proposing the program. One of the easiest first steps is to recruit the best of the best (8-16 SATB or so) from within your program, rehearse one night a week outside of the school day, teach them two accessible pieces with crowd appeal, and feature them on a choir concert. Invite your administration to the concert and surprise them with the new pullout ensemble.

Jazz choirs are typically 16 or less, are easily transportable, and can quickly build community support and popularity through performances at choral concerts, community, school and club functions. (We have performed a jazz national anthem at many school functions.) Take them to a non-competitive jazz festival, go places, do things and make it popular (but with integrity). The director may end up working for free for a year or two while the program builds in quantity and quality. Who knows? You may get lucky and already have a supportive administrative team that has a stipend or two they can break loose. Bottom line - make it musical, fun, special to belong to, and the singers will beat a path to the audition door.

Repertoire. "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing." Finding jazz charts that represent the style accurately and musically is easier than ever. Start on the easier side and give the students success. Starting with a killer grade 5 chart will only frustrate and confuse them.

Try this for picking your first 3 charts. Pick the first chart that is easy enough to learn the first 25% and begin swinging in the first rehearsal. It may be a 12 bar blues, an AABA 32-bar head chart ("I've Got You Under My Skin," arranged by Phil Mattson, is still available and works perfectly). For the second chart, pick something that may take a week or two before

it starts "clicking." The third chart should go a little deeper and challenge the group on one front or another. In my experience, the students have really enjoyed "Words" by Anders Edenroth of The Real Group and "Moondance," arranged by Jeremy Fox. There are many quality arrangements available from Sound Music Publications, Kerry Marsh's website, Hal Leonard, Alfred, Walton, and UNC Jazz Press, to name a few. Check out ACDA's website for links to repertoire lists.

Listening. This is the most important tool to begin "catching" what jazz is all about. For many years, jazz was an aural art which did not exist on paper. Tunes, traditions, style, improvisation, and arrangements all happened by ear. "Jazz is better caught than taught," to quote a deceased former colleague of mine. Now that we have Youtube, Pandora, and other streaming music stations, it is super accessible. Listen to many versions of the song you are singing. Listen to recordings of other jazz groups singing the same tune and arrangement that you are singing. It is great fun to compare, contrast and borrow ideas. Make a playlist or a CD with 10-15 hand-picked exemplary pieces and plan a listening and discussion day for 20 minutes, once a week.

Voices. Your best choral voices may or may not be your best jazz voices. Select/audition students that are good musicians, have a strong work ethic, play well with others, demonstrate flexibility in their voice, are capable of controlling/eliminating their vibrato, are independent learners, have strong ears and time to practice.

Practice. Preparation is the key to success. One of the best tools for successful practicing is a notation software that allows the director/and or student assistants to input the songs and extract parts or tracks. Post the tracks online, and make them downloadable. In jazz, it is critical that each singer knows and can sing their part with confidence as a solo and in a group. Begin the class with whole group rehearsing, then segue into quartets or one-on-a-part singing. Quartets work best if the teacher selects them at random. Everyone is accountable to everyone else, and they never know who they will be singing/working with next. At first, the students may feel self-conscious. In a few weeks, they will adapt and quickly see the value of being self-sufficient. Set goals for each rehearsal. The director needs to be firm about expectations for practicing and

DIVISION LEADERSHIP

JAZZ CHOIRS

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JUNIOR HIGH & MIDDLE SCHOOL CHOIRS

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SHOW CHOIRS

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TWO-YEAR COLLEGE CHOIRS

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WOMEN'S CHOIRS

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YOUTH & STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Robert Sinclair
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rsinclair@vandercook.edu



While attending the national conference in Salt Lake City in February, I found myself reflecting on the performance preparation of each conductor, especially regarding conducting technique. Yes, those conductors offered verbal and written instruction to singers and, in some cases, supported the part learning from the keyboard. However, likely sooner than later, they began communicating through gesture and demeanor the musical path the singers should follow through that composition.

For high school teachers and church choir directors without rehearsal accompanists, the decision to move to the podium prior to a performance can generate much angst. They may wish they had taken that Introduction to Conducting class more seriously or signed up for the advanced section.

For those conductors who are ready to reboot their technique, consider the following suggestions:

- 1) Stand before a mirror and review the conductor's starting hand position or baton grip and patterns.
- 2) Close your eyes and visualize how you should look conducting that challenging phrase or complete work from memory.
- 3) Open your eyes now and perform that phrase or selection watching the mirror.
- 4) Would you, as a singer, perform musically for that conductor in the mirror?
- 5) Are your patterns and gestures appropriate to the style?
- 6) Does your left hand relay secondary musical information in an expressive manner?
- 7) Does your face reflect changes in mood from selection to selection?
- 8) If you peruse YouTube for conducting examples, chose someone with simple but artistic gestures to emulate as you reboot.

If you spend most of your rehearsal time at the piano, you may accumulate upper body tension from rehearsing over the keyboard that you don't wish to transfer to your choir. When moving from the piano to the podium, your conducting should foster a comfortable vocal production in your singers as well as artistically shape the music. This will be aided largely by preparing your conductor's interpretation before mounting the podium.

1) Perform a complete harmonic and melodic score analysis, singing all parts to discover vocal challenges.

2) Translate, if needed, then create a synopsis of the meaning of the text.

3) Determine phrase lengths and indicate their shape in your conducting.

4) Establish tempo and, when called for, transitioning between meters.

5) Conduct the large beat primarily. Divide the beat only if necessary.

6) Meld (blend or merge) beats that are secondary in importance, allowing the text to be sung expressively, not overly stressing the verticality of the music.

7) Relax and invite the singers to share in the performance with you. If you over-conduct, you will likely be a hindrance to the music making.

After initial readings of each selection, rehearse the ensemble unaccompanied as often as possible. Rehearsal conducting should involve minimal cueing and verbal instructions. Such rehearsals aid the ensemble in developing the choir's own rhythmic and tuning integrity. Thus, accompanied works evolve into collaborative events rather than the singers following the accompanist.

When the ensemble achieves musical independence, the rehearsal conductor morphs into the performance conductor. In concert, the conductor should:

1) Release the rehearsal mindset and adopt the concert mindset.

2) Allow the heart rate to settle before beginning each piece.

3) Internalize the tempo of the new piece and execute the preparatory beat in that tempo.

4) Design all conducting and stage movements, including receiving applause, in the character of the music.

5) Memorize as much as possible then maintain eye and face contact with the singers. To quote Fr. Cornelius a Lapide, "The face is the image of the heart and the eyes are the mirror of the soul and its affections." Conductors should strive to make this connection with singers.

Conductors must possess performance skills, technical music skills, an historical perspective of music, and the ability to interpret scores creatively. Through each selection they are privileged to connect musically and emotionally with the singers, the composer/arranger of each piece, living or not, (muse on

that thought) and with a live audience. That emotional link is unique to human beings and inspires us as conductors to fervently and conscientiously practice our art form!

- Robert Jones is the ACDA Central Division College Repertoire and Standards Chair. He directs the University of Dayton Chorale and Choral Union and teaches courses in vocal music education. He is also Minister of Music at Grace United Methodist Church in Dayton.



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Galina Grigorjeva
Bless the Lord, o My Soul (Psalm 103)

Premiered by Vox Clamantis at the Vale of Glamorgan Festival, Wales; U.S. premiere by Cor Cantiamo (Eric Johnson), College Church, Wheaton, IL



Paul Moravec
I Will Fear No Evil (Psalm 23)

Premiered at Temple Emanul-EI (K. Scott Warren) and Cathedral of St. John the Divine (Kent Tritle), New York
“A Notable Event”
- *Financial Times*



Roxanna Panufnik
Love Endureth (Psalm 136/135)

Premiered at Westminster Cathedral, London; U.S. premiere by Chanticleer at Idaho State University; performed at ACDA Dallas Convention



Daniel Kellogg
Preserve Me, O God (Psalm 16)

Premiered by Wheaton College Concert Choir; also performed by Westminster Choir College (Andrew Megill) and Cor Cantiamo (Eric Johnson)



Ēriks Ešvalds
Psalm 67

Premiered by Polyphony at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam; taken on tour by Trinity College Choir, Cambridge; U.S. premiere at St. Bartholomew’s Church (William Trafka), New York



Soli Deo Gloria, Inc. is a nonprofit foundation devoted to the preservation, performance, and promotion of classical sacred music.

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WHY YOU SHOULD BRING YOUR CHOIR

How many times have you told yourself that your choir should be singing at a conference, and yet did nothing about it? Here is your opportunity to do something about it! The 2016 Central Division Conference will be in Chicago February 24-27, 2016. If selected, your group will get the opportunity to sing in the Palmer House ballroom in front of a very appreciative audience.

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Middle School Choirs, High School Choirs, Show Choirs, University/ College Choirs, Church Choirs, Children's Choirs, Community Choirs, Women's Choirs, Men's Choirs, Vocal Jazz Choirs, YOUR CHOIR! There are so many outstanding ensembles in our division and ideally should all be represented. Wouldn't it be amazing if we had representation from all of our Repertoire & Standards areas? Your performance will be memorable and educational. Apply now!

HOW TO APPLY - THE PROCESS IS SIMPLER AND IS NOW ONLINE!

The choral performance application is online at <http://www.acdacentral.opusevent.com>. All information will be collected online - your .mp3 recordings, choir information, director information, institutional information will be all gathered in a safe database. You even pay your application fee online. Apply now! The deadline is **Friday, April 24, 2015**.

Make sure that the trip is affordable for your ensemble. It would be awful to apply, to be accepted, and to then find out that it is not possible, for financial reasons, for your group to attend. A little planning now and a realistic budget should be at the front of your plan. Consider transportation, housing, food, chaperones and possible activities in Chicago. Apply now!

Check at home and make sure that your family and loved ones are on board with you. This is a wonderful, yet pressure filled event. You will need support to get you through this. Apply now!

WHAT RECORDINGS SHOULD BE USED?

Make sure, first and foremost, that you use good recordings! The audition committee listens to recordings blindly and will be given no information about the submitted recordings, except for the R & S area represented: college/university choir, high school choir, etc. There is no reference to geography or director. The sound and quality of singing is what is considered first. A simple song sung beautifully will be well received, as opposed to a complex piece sung poorly. **BE CERTAIN THAT THE .mp3 FILES SUBMITTED PLAY!** Do not send a file without first listening to it.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE MATERIALS ARE SUBMITTED ONLINE?

This is the process your audition materials will go through once they are received online:

- The submissions will first be checked to make sure that all forms have been filled out correctly, that proper letters are submitted, AND that your music files play.
- You will be sent an e-mail confirming that your application has been received and whether you're missing any materials.
- Your application will be assigned an identification number designating the R & S area under which you are applying. This code gives NO clue as to your identity or that of your ensemble. This code becomes the ONLY means of identification for the audition committee.
- An audition committee is selected from among previous conference conductors who are not vying for performance on the current conference program. We attempt to represent multiple age levels and ensemble types. To prevent placing them in an uncomfortable position with their associates, we do not release the names of audition committee members. While the Program Chair organizes and oversees the audition process, she

does not have a voice in the outcome.

- Once the audition committee convenes, your recording is heard and evaluated on a ten point rubric evaluating five general areas: tone color, phrasing & dynamics, balance & blend, intonation, and caliber of musical performance. Recordings are grouped by the R & S area selected by each auditioning conductor, thus, all middle school choirs are considered together, etc. The committee takes a short break, after which they listen to all of the high school choirs, and so forth. Typically, the audition process takes the better part of a weekend.

- After the slate of performers has been selected, you will be contacted with the results of the audition.

I look forward to see many applicants for the Chicago conference. We had a wonderful variety of performing groups in Cincinnati in 2014. **APPLY NOW!**

Questions?

Please contact:
Mary Evers, Program Chair
810 North Broadway
Greenfield IN 46126
mevers@gcsc.k12.in.us



Jazz, from page 11

being ready for the next rehearsal.

Jazz Nights. Finally, jazz concerts are different from choral concerts. Save one night of the year for an intimate, club-like gathering. Encourage some students to prepare solos. Set up a space with low level lights, put in round tables, serve soft drinks and bowls of snacks at the tables. Be creative with your group and time as that is the essence of jazz.

I hope this gave you a few ideas. If you ever wish to bounce ideas off of me, please email at james.mccullough@d303.org. *Bon chance* and have a good spring concert season.

- Jim McCullough is Choral Director at St. Charles (Illinois) East High School and serves the Central Division as Repertoire & Standards Chair for Jazz Choirs.

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The Stace N. Stegman Award was established by the Central Division of the American Choral Directors Association in 2003 in memory of Stace N. Stegman (1946-2003), who gave tirelessly and selflessly in the service of choral music. To the many conductors, teachers and performers who knew him as a colleague and friend, Stace will always stand for what is best in our profession. He demonstrated passion, knowledge, and integrity in his work and in his relationship with the Central Division. In this spirit, and in recognition of significant contributions to the choral art and to the Central Division of the American Choral Directors Association, the Stace N. Stegman Award is presented at each Central Division conference to a member who has demonstrated similar characteristics in service to the choral art.

To nominate an ACDA member for this award, please complete the below information and send with any attachments by September 15, 2015 to Brett Goad as listed at the bottom of this page.

ACDA Member Nominee Information:

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Reasons for Nomination (can also be outlined in a letter and attached to this form):

Nominator's Information:

Name: _____

Preferred Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____/_____

Please mail this form and any attachments to: R. Brett Goad, 2526 Ravinia Lane, Woodridge IL 60517

Postmark Deadline: September 15, 2015.

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS - FEBRUARY 24-27, 2016

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Unchanged treble voices, grades 4-5
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Registration Fee: \$100
Must have teacher recommendation

Middle School Girls' Honor Choir

Treble voices, grades 6-8
Conductor: Ruth Dwyer
Application Fee: \$30
Registration Fee: \$165
Must have conductor recommendation

Middle School Boys' Honor Choir

Unchanged and changed voices, grades 6-8
Conductor: Henry Leck
Application Fee: \$30
Registration Fee: \$165

High School Mixed Honor Choir

Grades 9-12
Conductor: Joe Miller
Application Fee: \$30
Registration Fee: \$175

Collegiate Repertoire Chorale

College and university students
Conductor: Jerry Blackstone
Registration Fee: \$10
Conference Fee: \$90



Honor Choirs Timeline

August 1 - October 23, 2015 **Online** application will be open. Go to www.acdacentral.opusevent.com and click on the Honor Choir link. ACDA members/sponsors are to register singers and submit recordings online. Audition fees (if applicable) must be paid by debit or credit card online through secured server.

November 13, 2015 Notification of all accepted singers. Room reservations at the conference hotel should be made immediately.

November 25, 2015 Postmark deadline for singer acceptance forms and chaperone forms. Registration fee must be paid by debit or credit card online through secured server.

December 7, 2015 Music packets will be mailed to participants.

February 25-27, 2016 Honor Choir rehearsals and performances (Children's Honor Choir is only on 2/26/16)

Why should my students audition for the Central Division Honor Choir?

The honor choir experience is one that your students will never forget! They will not only work with a renowned conductor and sing great repertoire at the highest level, but will also have a chance to meet fantastic students from the Central Division states and be immersed in their passion for music for an entire weekend.

What is the financial commitment?

All honor choirs will have a registration fee, which will include music. Students selected to participate will be responsible for hotel lodging at the designated hotel, transportation to and from Chicago, and meals. Chaperones must also stay at the hotel and are responsible for students outside of rehearsal and performance times.

For more information -

Visit www.acdacentral.org or email the Honor Choir Coordinator, Puja Ramaswamy, at ACDAHonorChoirs@gmail.com

THE RESPECT OF ALTOS



Give a quick check of your favorite search engine on altos in choir, and the Internet will serve up “Altos get No Respect” type forums and questions from women young and old about how to become a soprano. This is an age-old problem that needs constant work. The altos of the choir take a special place for female choirs, and yet, because many altos either learn to read music earlier or are placed in the alto section by virtue of their reading skill, there may be a tendency to ignore this important part of the choir. Altos often master the notes faster than other sections in the choir and they sing in the middle part of the female range, and because of those two issues, their problems are more easily hidden.

Placement in the section

Altos sometimes are placed in this section because they have not yet learned usage of their head voice. This topic at first glance may sound like it only pertains school choirs, but many adult women never learned to properly use their head voice and yet could learn this essential vocal technique to improve themselves and therefore the choir. It is very rarely too late.

While placement of singers in the alto section for this reason is acceptable as a start, as soon as each singer gains facility in head voice, they should be reassessed. All women in the choir should be given the opportunity and instruction in how to use their entire range. Strengthening the head voice can only help the altos with intonation and phrasing. The lyricism that comes of a balanced voice is necessary in nearly every genre of choral music worldwide.

Females can be placed in the alto section for a variety of reasons, from range to timbre, to simply the needs of the choir for that year-- or that song. Many conductors advocate a rotation of singers through the soprano and alto sections based upon the needs of a particular work or the needs of each singer to sing and learn more of her range and the particularities of singing any part. Often, most if not all singers in a women's chorus can switch parts on at least one song. Careful decision making can adjust the timbre of a choir to match the musical era or composition characteristics.

Lack of melodic material can work against the altos in several ways. Melodic material often inspires singers to phrase more carefully because they know they are being listened to, or they simply like what they are singing. The rest of the parts, and especially altos, tend toward a support role and do not necessarily take the responsibility of phrasing unless led and inspired to do so. Depending upon the composer, some less satisfying musical lines may end up in the alto lines. This challenge can be used to the advantage of the singer. One must become a superior musician to make expressive music from repetitive notes or less than melodic harmony lines.

Dull timbre and its effect on intonation and more

When altos are not using good vocal placement or including the use of head voice in the tone, the pitch can be perceived as dull because the upper overtones will not be present in the fundamental. If this happens to be coupled with a lack of forward motion in the phrase, the entire presentation will suffer. No amount of brilliance in the sopranos can compensate when this fault is present. Our attention to the altos and true care of them as musicians cares for the entire choir.

Remember that the natural tendency of considering the top part the first part hierarchically is common in Western art music. That misperceived hierarchy can ruin what the conductor and choir join forces to carefully craft. Rather, we should extoll the virtue and absolute need for “ensemblists” and expect the exact same detail of phrase, tone, expression from every section of the choir.

Psychology

In the category of “catch them doing good,” the conductor's support and enthusiasm for the alto's musical material and contribution can turn the tide for an alto's psychological predisposition: “We don't matter, we are just altos.” When this myth is dispelled, a musically intentional alto section can make the difference between mediocre and expressive music making. Beyond the mere lip service of encouragement, the expectation of beauty ensures both the deserved sense of importance and the actual beauty itself.

In an overgeneralization, expecting the same lyricism and vocal technique from the alto line as we do of sopranos is one key to the expressive success of the entire choir. By varying timbre, consonant energy, phrase energy, altos can control color, contribute deeply to articulation, not simply to make the sopranos sound good, although that effect will occur. The excellent alto section strives to characterize expression while they support the melodic material with a highly developed intelligence about how harmonic tension and release shapes a phrase. The confidence born of detailed craftsmanship can propel singers toward establishing a culture that respects the need and excellence of each section in the ensemble.

- Lisa Fredenburgh is Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Aurora University and serves the Central Division as Repertoire & Standards Chair for Women's Choirs.



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Bless the Lord, o my Soul (Psalm 103)



Ēriks Ešēnvalds
Psalm 67



Daniel Kellogg
Preserve Me, O God (Psalm 16)



Paul Moravec
I Will Fear No Evil (Psalm 23)



Roxanna Panufnik
Love Endureth (Psalm 136/135)

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ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE BY REFINING DETAILS



Spring is in the air! This season, everyone is working to kick it up a notch. Here are some tips to bring your group up to the highest level of excellence. It's all about the time which you spend on the details. This article is written with show choir directors in mind, but hopefully some of the concepts will cross over into your jazz and classical choirs as well.

Placement and formation of your singers

Each venue in which we perform offers challenges for our singers to hear one another. It would be great if any formation would work the same but that isn't always the case.

For tuning and balance, it is critical that the choir hears the bass section. Most times, the bass outlines the root of the chord and helps singers to find and tune the next chord. They need to hear vertically to know where they are going horizontally. Inner voices depend on outer voices and sopranos can tune best with the bass.

Know where your strongest voices are, and be careful not to have them on the ends. They are a great help in the center and strategically placed throughout the ensemble. Teach them to be aware of where the microphones are placed so they aren't overbalancing the section or choir if they end up standing in front of a mic. Mixing the choir in an SATB formation works well with homophonic or chordal music. The ballad is a perfect place to sing mixed. It is also very pleasing to the singers because they hear the chords instead of just their section. When they feel the music, they become more expressive and feel the phrasing, because they begin to get the story line. This creates a real connection with the audience and creates kinesthetic excitement and energy.

In more polyphonic music, it is fun to separate by section for blending on unified passages and establishing strong themes in a linear line. Look at each piece and study the score. Sit down with your choreographer and discuss your preferences for sound. Each part of the song offers new opportunities. Many choreographers want the strongest dancers in front. Make sure they are around some strong singers. **LOOK OFTEN TO SEE THAT EVERYONE SINGS WHEN DANCING.** Demonstrate how to get a good prep breath and always be aware of their breathing.

Musical nuances

Things that need to be reinforced are dynamic contrasts, musical articulations, breath support, and vocal color changes. Most groups can sing something *piano* and *forte* but often it is difficult to get a true *crescendo* and *decrescendo* from each member at the same time. Even a true *sforzando* can be challenging, and this is especially true when movement is added. Make sure the movement reflects the dynamic. Keep energy in the soft singing. Make sure the

band reflects the singers' dynamic level and mark it in the score. The band is part of the singers and the singers are listening to the band.

When a song changes style, the tone color should reflect it. Gospel is warmer and richer, jazz or swing is generally lighter, and pop and musical theater is generally brighter. Rock may be bright or dark, depending on the tune. Funk can be nasal. Your biggest teachers of style from any eras are recordings. It is important to listen to several different versions of the song before you decide the color you want to use. Once you decide what you want, be sure to play an example for the students so you are on the same page. Have them listen and discuss what characteristics stand out. Have them imitate to start.


Be sure that they are always breathing correctly from the diaphragm, singing with a relaxed neck, shoulder, upper chest, and relaxed knees. Listen to the parts that are in the most challenging parts of each sections range and work the voice for consistency from chest to head or falsetto. Address diction with the singers. It's easy to sound classical by over articulating. Discuss the use of vibrato. Motown can handle vibrato, while jazz tunes with tight voicings sound better without vibrato. Discuss diction, rhythmic drive, and articulations. Listen to the band behind the singers and perhaps the band will get ideas and choose to imitate. Teach the drummer to reinforce hits and set up big moments. Tell them exactly what you want on the end. Have the horns face sideways so they don't cover the singers. Listen for balance with the band and singers. Know how to finish a song and more importantly, know how to end a show. It's what you leave the audience with to remember about you.

Know where your strongest voices are, and be careful not to have them on the ends.

Soloists

Take time to work with your soloists outside of class. This is an important part of the show. Make sure that you pick a soloist who is suited best for the range and tessiture of the solo, and remember to have a backup. Work on confidence, range, breath support, intonation, style, mic technique, stage presence, and tone quality. Practice on a microphone and let them hear themselves and the piano through a monitor. Keep the mic tight (about two inches from the mouth) and teach to pull the mic away slightly when singing *forte*. Make sure that any movement doesn't distract and that the soloist knows how to finish their solo. Do a quick video so they can see themselves. Analyze it together. The face and eyes should reflect the lyric. Always have the movement and vocal style they sing make sense with the big picture of what the tune is about.

See Show Choir, page 24



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WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH BOYCHOIRS?

I realize that, because we are the smallest Division, often my friends and colleagues (you!) don't always know what's happening with boychoirs around the country.

I am pleased to say, boychoirs in the United States are doing better than ever!

As an example, The American Boychoir School was just featured in a film starring Dustin Hoffman and Kathy Bates; while it has been released internationally, we are eagerly awaiting the domestic release of the film.

Furthermore, many of you likely heard Stephen Holmes' Maryland State Boychoir at the national conference in Salt Lake City; having given two outstanding performances, they then became stranded in Las Vegas, where they were able to put together a few ad hoc performances for local schools – all because of the fantastic network that is ACDA.

On my own homefront, the Cincinnati Boychoir just celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of our first rehearsal on March 6, and launched a new study of the male changing voice in conjunction with Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

Nationally, Craig Dennison (the new National R & S Chair for Boychoirs) is off to a great start, passionately advocating for our young male singers, no matter where and how they sing.

This brings me to the main point: whether or not you lead a boychoir, a mixed-gender children's choir, are thinking of starting a boychoir, or simply want to learn more about working with boys, the Boychoir R & S can be a resource for you.

Jennifer Call, Artistic Director of the Oberlin Choristers, has started an annual workshop on changing voices for both boys and girls. I was pleased to spend the day with the young men involved, while my colleague Jody Kerchner worked with the young women. The day was valuable as both teachers and students left with a clearer idea of what to expect and how to navigate the voice change.

We are looking for more creative opportunities such as this around the region, and more people advocating for the young male singer. The more great teaching we can provide for our young men, the more of them will continue to sing through high school, college, and beyond.

I am so pleased that there will again be an SATB boys' honor choir at the 2016 Central Division conference in Chicago. For boys who sing, there is nothing better than the opportunity to do it at a high level with their peers from around the region.

If you are interested in creating more opportunities for your young men, learning about aspects of the young male voice, or just chatting about children and youth singers in general, I would love to talk with you! My phone and email are always available and are listed on page 9 of this issue.

- Christopher Eanes is Artistic Director of the Cincinnati Boychoir and serves the Central Division as Repertoire & Standards Chair for Boychoirs.

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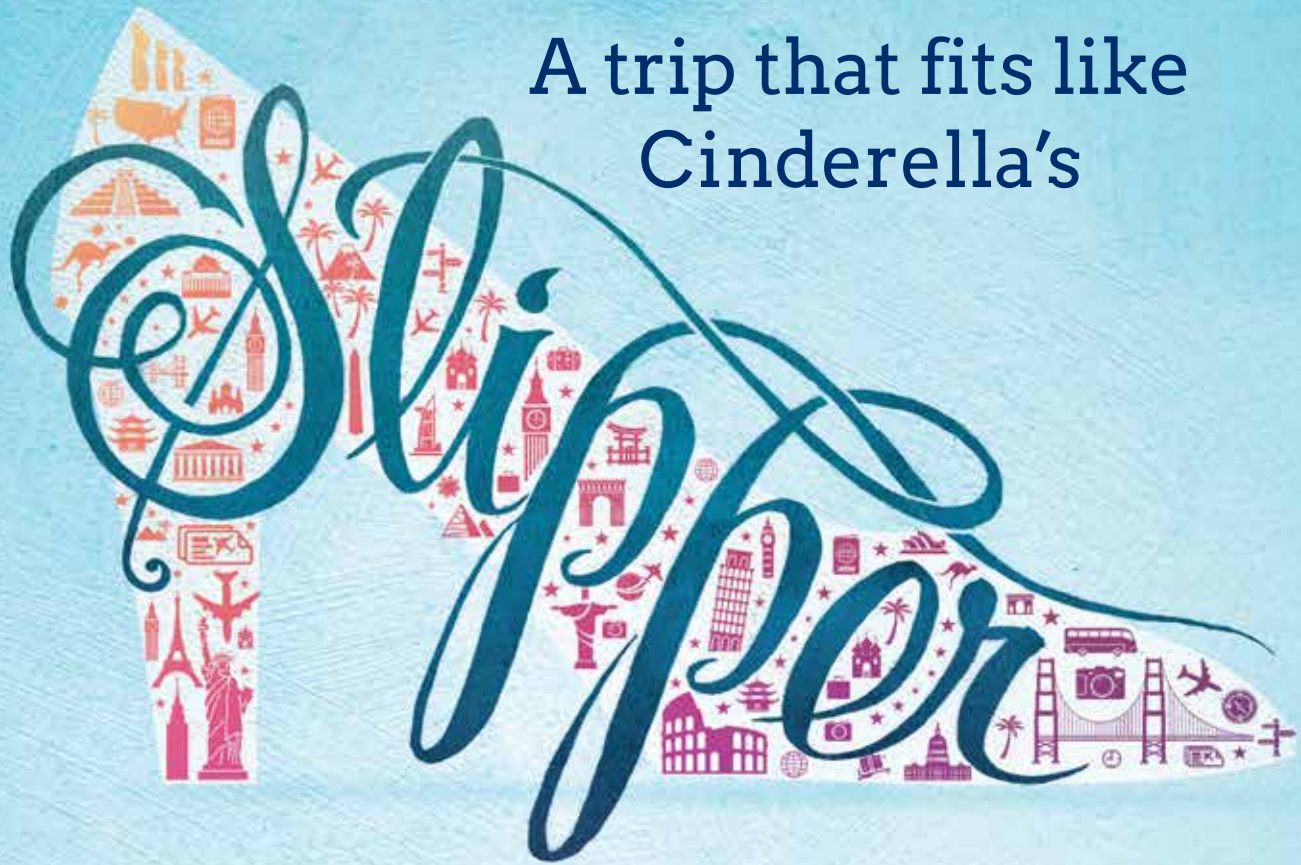
Show Choir, from page 22

Life Lessons

Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate. Vocal cords are muscles and need water. Make sure they get a great vocal and physical warm up to stretch first. They will have greater longevity and less chance of straining themselves. Build stamina by making them practice at the level they are going to perform. Preach about avoiding vocal abuse by getting enough sleep and not yelling/shouting or talking too much. Give them confidence to believe in themselves and not to be afraid to take a risk. Tell them it's okay to fail, just don't give up, get back up, and try again. Encourage piano lessons. It is the most important gift you can give them that will last a lifetime. It will help them significantly, should they decide to go on professionally or educationally in music. Most of all, teach them to be a nice person. Teach them to be a good sport and a team player. They will mirror you and look up to you. Remember that it is about the journey, not the destination. Make it a positive and happy one.

- Susan Moninger, Central Division Repertoire & Standards Chair for Show Choir, is Director of Choral Activities and Professor of Music at Elmhurst (IL) College.

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Making Moments That Matter

THE LAST WORD



Is it finally spring? I don't know about you, but even as a "winter person," I was ready for spring to arrive. March was particularly brutal, as we had to make up our cancelled January and February school days instead of having a Friday "off" here or there. It was difficult to motivate myself, let alone get high schoolers to sing well when they are feeling the same thing!

Something that did help me (at least for a while) was having gone to the ACDA national conference in Salt Lake City. While the weather wasn't as terrific as it was in Dallas in 2014, the ability to hear fine choral groups, find new literature, visit with old (and new) friends, and learn from interest session presenters was definitely helpful. I hope that you will plan to attend the Central Division's conference in 2016 - it is shaping up to be terrific!

Don't forget, however, about the state conferences which take place! The Central Division states, except for Michigan, all have their conferences in the summer months. Check the Central Division web site, www.acdacentral.org, for their dates and the state web sites for more information! I've been to several different ones and can verify that going to others' is a great way to meet new people and see different ways of doing things. You'll bring back new ideas to your state CDA for consideration. We all learn from each other!

On that theme, I hope that you will take the time to read all of the R & S chair articles in this online issue of *Resound* - even if you don't have a show choir, you can be reminded of musical details in Susan Moninger's article; if you are considering establishing a jazz group, be sure to read Jim McCullough's article! Why reinvent the wheel?

Brett Goad asks everyone to consider serving ACDA in some respect - whether as an R & S chair, on the Division board, however you can. I couldn't agree more - you will get out of it much more than you put in. Now finishing up 12 years on the Indiana CDA board, 13 years as Central Division editor, and having served for four years prior as Iowa state editor, I can assure you that you will meet people and learn things you never imagined. It can be a lot of work, but it's also a lot of fun - we have great colleagues in ACDA!! Again, we learn from each other.

As we head into the last few months of the academic year, please consider how you can impact your singers' lives, and not just in the classroom. You can impact them as singers very easily - have them audition (and hopefully be accepted into) the honor choirs which will rehearse and perform at the 2016 Chicago conference! Planning for the audition will give them something to do and to look forward to over the summer months, and will energize your program when they come back and talk about how great the experience was!

I hope that your spring months are terrific and that you enjoy this online issue of *Resound*. Many thanks go to all of our advertisers this year - please utilize their services if at all possible, and let them know that you saw their ad in *Resound*, would you? Thanks for reading and for being a member of ACDA.

- William G. (Bill) Niederer is Choral Director and Music Department Chair at Elkhart (Indiana) Central High School and serves as Central Division Editor.

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Items for publication (articles, concert information, news releases, literature suggestions, etc.) are to be sent to the editor as listed in the leadership columns in each issue. All submissions for publication are to be sent via electronic mail and should include the name, mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the author. If possible, please include a photograph and professional information when submitting materials.

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