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HILARY APFELSTADT NAMED 2014 STACE STEGMAN AWARD RECIPIENT

At the Central Division Conference in Cincinnati, Hilary Apfelstadt was named the 2014 recipient of the Stace N. Stegman Award.

The award was established by the Central Division in 2003 in memory of Stace N. Stegman (1946-2003), who 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, the award is presented at each Central Division conference to a member who has demonstrated similar characteristics in service to the choral art.

Hilary Apfelstadt is Professor and Director of Choral Activities at the University of Toronto, where she conducts MacMillan Singers, the Women's Chamber Choir, and teaches choral literature and conducting at the graduate and undergraduate levels. In 2013, she was named winner of the first Faculty of Music Teaching Excellence Award. She also conducts the Exultate Chamber Singers of Toronto, a semi-professional adult choir.

Raised in Nova Scotia, she earned degrees from the University of Toronto, the University of Illinois, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She also received an ARCT diploma in piano performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Formerly Director of Choral Activities and Associate Director of the School of Music at The Ohio State University, she has conducted choirs at ACDA division and national conferences, as well as led festivals in Europe and at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York. In 2009, she conducted the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in a live broadcast of "Music and the Spoken Word." She has conducted all-state choruses in more than 30

states and directed the 2011 Ontario Youth Choir. She is conductor of the 2014 National Youth Choir of Canada.



A frequent presenter at professional conferences, Apfelstadt has presented conducting master classes at several universities and at division conferences of ACDA. She has published nearly 90 articles in professional journals and has written two chapters in *Wisdom, Wit and Will: Women Choral Conductors on Their Art* (GIA, 2009). She is also a contributing author to a recent publication, *Conducting Women's Choirs: Strategies for Success* (GIA, 2012), writing a chapter on Canadian repertoire for women's choruses.

A life member of ACDA, Apfelstadt served as president of North Carolina ACDA, president of the Central Division, and national president 2007 – 2009. Both the North Carolina chapter of ACDA (1993) and the Ohio Choral Directors Association (2008) honored her for her service to ACDA.

When notified of the award, she indicated, "Tom Merrill's phone call came as a complete surprise; I had no idea anyone had nominated me for this honour. Stace Stegman's contributions to choral music were legion and it is humbling to receive this award in his name. Central Division will always be my American home and I am grateful to my friends and colleagues there for this honour. Thank you!"

I HAVE HAD SINGING

PRESIDENT

R. Brett Goad
2526 Ravinia Lane
Woodridge IL 60517
H - 630/241-4454
C - 630/621-8452
rbgoad52@sbcglobal.net

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Gayle Walker
Department of Music
Otterbein University
1 South Grove Street
Westerville OH 43081
O - 614/823-1318
gwalker@otterbein.edu

VICE PRESIDENT

Tom Merrill
Xavier University
3800 Victory Parkway
Cincinnati OH 45207-5511
O - 513/745-3135
F - 513/745-3343
merrillt@xavier.edu

TREASURER

Kathy Walker
7360 Xavier Court
North Ridgeville OH 44039
H - 440/309-4691
katherine.walker@
avonlakescityschools.org



"The singing, oh the singing,
there was always so much singing then,
and that was my pleasure too.
Oh, we all sang!
The boys in the fields...
the chapels were full of singing.
Now here I lie,
I have had pleasure enough.
I have had singing.
I have had singing."

Fred Mitchell at age 85
(An English Horseman)

I love the poem by Fred Mitchell, "I Have Had Singing." In its simple way, it speaks of who we are and what we do. The "singing" (music making) is something which binds all of us together. The "singing" (music making) is something that can be experienced by most anyone anywhere and at any time.

People getting together and making music is a good thing. It matters not if it's a choir, band, orchestra, rock band, or just a few folks getting together. There can be an incredible sense of community developed through such experiences. It is in that music making that we hone our musical skills and learn many important life skills. Music has the power to make an incredible difference in a person's life.

It was a cold, dark, wintry night in Downers Grove, Illinois. The Millikin University Choir was in town for a concert. The MU Choir had top billing, with supporting performances from three local high school madrigal ensembles as well as two choirs from the Downers Grove First United Methodist Church. The place was buzzing with excitement. It was to be a very special evening.

Opening the evening's performances were the madrigal ensembles from Downers Grove South, Downers Grove North and Hinsdale South High School. Each ensemble presented two selections and their lovely singing was met with generous and appreciative applause.

The Downers Grove First United Methodist Church Chapel Choir was the next featured choir. The Chapel Choir's legacy in the church community is very significant. The choir was singing on their home turf, in front of many family and friends. Each member was inspired and excited to do their best, and they did.

The FUMC Chancel Choir closed out

the concert segment leading up to Millikin's performance. The Chancel Choir was composed of 60+ members ranging in age from 25 to 80 years of age. Many of the CC singers had been in the Chancel Choir for well over 35 years, many having also participated in their high school and collegiate music programs. I vividly remember the choir's singing Alice Parker's setting of "Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal." It was a joy-filled and electrifying performance. Their bodies danced to the music, their faces lit up with joy and exuberance, and their voices sailed. Diane Hires, the Chancel Choir Director, told me that the adult choir was motivated to do their best, and they certainly did that and more. The sanctuary exploded with applause at the conclusion of their performance.

After a brief intermission, the Millikin Choir moved into place. Each singer stood proudly with eyes focused on their director, Brad Holmes. Once given the downbeat, the choir's voices wafted throughout the sanctuary, inspiring everyone. It was an incredibly varied program, featuring music from here and abroad, in a wide variety of styles and genres. To the listener's ear, it was as if there was a different choir singing each new song. Their performance was magical and left the audience wanting more.

After having received tumultuous applause from a very appreciative audience, their director and the choir proudly processed out of the sanctuary to another area where they could take a few moments to debrief. Later that evening, Brad told me that he and the choir were both inspired and moved by the entire evening.

Many of the choir members, upon hearing the performances by the high school singers, were transported back to their high school years, remembering their participation

Resound

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William G. Niederer,
Editor

Elkhart Central High School
1 Blazer Boulevard
Elkhart IN 46516-4565

in similar concerts. Brad related that he and his singers were also deeply touched by the Chancel Choir. They admired the choir's performance, but could not help being awed by the wide age span of the singers. Many in the MU choir projected themselves years ahead in their lives and visualized themselves singing in such a choir. (Perhaps they also had visions of their parents and grandparents singing in their home church choir?)

Still, for this one night in this very special place, all voices were united in the spirit of community and sharing. Each singer, director and audience member shared this wonderful night of singing. That magical musical night in Downers Grove left an indelible imprint on all in attendance. It certainly made a difference in my life.

*"The singing, oh the singing,
there was always so much singing then,
and that was my pleasure too.
Oh, we all sang!"*

- 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 North Central College, Illinois State University and Northern Illinois University.

*To the Cincinnati
Conference Planning Team
and Central Division
Leadership:*

*Please accept my heartfelt
thank you for your
individual and collective
efforts that contributed
to the success of "Cantate
Cincinnati." Most
assuredly, it was a team
effort and it worked
because of each and all of
your contributions. You
made it happen and for
that, I thank you, as does
the Central Division.*

*R. Brett Goad
President, Central Division
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2016 CONFERENCE
PROGRAM CHAIR
Mary Evers
7746 North Michigan Road
Fairland IN 46126
O - 317/462-9211, ext. 34701
F - 317/467-6723
C - 317/409-4779
meversmusic@comcast.net

RESOUND EDITOR
William G. Niederer
Elkhart Central High School
1 Blazer Boulevard
Elkhart IN 46516-4565
O - 574/295-4743
F - 574/295-4712
H - 574/234-0718
wniederer@elkhart.k12.in.us



ACDA's concise mission statement, "to inspire excellence in choral music through education, performance, composition, and advocacy" can serve as a guide for each of us.

Each component of the statement is not discrete, but we have positions or areas which are more operative than another. In terms of education, ACDA provides abundant opportunities for individual professional learning and development. One sees ACDA's impact in a grand and obvious forum at conferences where we are supporting our colleagues and their performing ensembles, participating in workshops and sessions, watching honor choir conductors rehearse, being inspired by new music, and visiting with choral musicians with convivial conversation.

Having recently returned from "Cantate Cincinnati," I find myself grateful for our organization. What a great conference! Many thanks to the planning team – *tutti bravi!* A placard on my desk cites Michelangelo: "I am still learning," and our recent Central Division conference proved and illuminated that mantra. I am excited to see how I can program more adventurously (thank you, Linda Hasseler!), conduct with a truly vocal-technique-friendly gesture, (thank you, John Bragle!) and continue to discover new music.

The education that our choral charges receive is the amalgamation of what we have learned. Granted, our personal working circumstances can be challenging, even deemed impossible, but within those known parameters, we have to try to be brilliant about it. What positives play in? Personal inspiration, appropriate repertoire, will, persistence, and leadership – all qualities we value. Presumably, we have done our due diligence in our own learning and can be a conduit to further the music education experience of others. However, I also ponder the other side of this coin.

There is always the possibility that in spite of all of the professional, awesome teaching we might do, our constituents may not be professional learners. So, what are characteristics of a good learner? Starting a list, good learners:

- ask a lot of questions
- share what they've learned
- recognize that not all learning is fun
- aren't afraid to fail

What else can we add?

Claire Lamonica, the Director of Illinois State University's Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, has been pondering this too. In a recent "From the Director's Desk" letter, Lamonica queries what might fostering and supporting good learners and their "... environments look like? Well, this is just a first stab, but it's a stab based on research: Learning environments that support and foster good learners

- encourage—even require—students to ask questions

- allow students to engage deeply with ideas, concepts, and "messy problems"

- design learning experiences that maintain that delicate balance between challenge and skill, resulting in what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls "flow" or "optimal experience"

- provide opportunities for students to fail without penalty and learn from their failures

- include opportunities for the creation of knowledge rather than the regurgitation of knowledge

- allow learners to become teachers or to otherwise put their learning to use in ways that benefit others" [italics added]

Choral music environments foster these ideas quite well. It is always beneficial for me to revisit and ponder teaching and learning, and how I can most effectively "...inspire excellence in choral music through education..."

The Illinois ACDA Summer Retreat will be focusing on these very things, with headliners Janet Galván and Mark Hayes. It will be June 25 & 26, 2014 on the campus of Illinois State University. Janet will conduct our Directors' Chorus, which provides a fine singing experience for those of us usually only in front of choirs. She will also be discussing pedagogy and process. Mark Hayes will bring expertise for our Music in Worship area, and both clinicians will be available for conducting master classes. Our concurrent "Double Dip" sessions will be about IPA, church musicians dealing with pastors, yoga for singers, and more. We are still learning, and I can't wait!

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

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SOME REFLECTIONS ON ATTENDING THE CENTRAL DIVISION CONFERENCE



Because of conflicts with my university teaching schedule, the Central Division Conference in Cincinnati was the first division conference I have attended in recent years. How rewarding it was.

This was for me a valuable experience in all ways. The concert sessions are always my favorites. I was very impressed with all of the groups, from the younger choirs through the university groups. There was some very creative programming, and the transitions from piece to piece by a couple of the choirs were interesting and effective. I heard a few compositions that were new to me.

Some very good literature was shared in the reading sessions, and I found the interest sessions I attended to be informative. The approaches to some choral issues and other teaching strategies provided me with some new ways of thinking about how I might more effectively go about my job. How rare it is to hear a major work like John Adams' *El Niño*? Even though many among us will not perform this work, seeing and hearing it performed was, I thought, most inspiring.

I always gain so much from talking with my wonderful colleagues. Sharing our common struggles, our successes and our vision is edifying and at times reassuring. I never cease to be amazed at the talent, insight, compassion, and ingenuity of my colleagues.

Attending this conference was inspiring and invigorating in many ways. My hope is that you will mark your calendar for February 24 -27, 2016, for our next Central Division conference in Chicago. Make the effort to be there. You will be glad you did.

This summer, the Indiana CDA will be holding its annual conference, and I'd like to invite you to attend! Our headliners will be Vijay Singh and Sigrid Johnson, both well-known choral names in the United States. We will also have interest sessions and reading sessions for you to find new ideas and new literature. The conference is June 30 - July 2 at the University of Indianapolis. Registration will be online in April via a link at <www.in-acda.org>. Join us!

- 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.

DIVISION LEADERSHIP

ILLINOIS PRESIDENT

Karyl Carlson
Cook Hall 109
Illinois State University
Normal IL 61790
O - 309/438-2012
kkcarls@ilstu.edu

ILLINOIS PRESIDENT-ELECT

Dennis Morrissey
Heartland Comm. College
1 Stoney Court
Bloomington IL 61704
O - 309/663-1512
dennismorr@aol.com

INDIANA PRESIDENT

Richard (Rick) Sowers
Anderson University
1100 East Fifth Street
Anderson IN 46012
O - 765/641-4458
rlsowers@anderson.edu

INDIANA PRESIDENT-ELECT

Rick Gamble
Avon High School
7575 East 150 South
Avon IN 46123
O - 317/544-5093, ext. 5086
F - 317/272-8402
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rwgamble@avon-schools.org

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MICHIGAN PRESIDENT

Gabriela Hristova
University of Michigan-Flint
Department of Music
126 FH
303 East Kearsley Street
Flint MI 48502
O - 810/762-3375
ghristov@umflint.edu

MICHIGAN PRESIDENT-ELECT

Jared Anderson
Michigan Tech. University
209 Walker Arts Center
1400 Townsend Drive
Houghton MI 49931
O - 906/487-2143
jaredand@mtu.edu

OHIO PRESIDENT

Dara Gillis
320 Amber Light Circle
Delaware OH 43015
O - 740/833-1010
H - 614/327-1073
dbgillis1@yahoo.com

OHIO PRESIDENT-ELECT

Loren Veigel
2551 Sherwood Ave NW
Massillon OH 44646
H - 330/837-8371
lveig@sssn.net



A few weeks ago, I attended “Cantate Cincinnati,” the 2014 ACDA Central Division Conference. I was eager to leave what seemed to be a very stubborn, frigid Michigan winter, and for a few days dive into the colorful choral mosaic, wonderfully organized by the Central Division leadership. The conference was, beyond a doubt, exciting and recharging.

Choral musicians gathered at the beautiful Hilton Netherland Plaza Hotel for an exchange of ideas, experiences, and new research. It was an opportunity to hear the selected leading choirs in the division, to experience great works along with nationally recognized choral performers, to meet new people, and to reconnect with old friends and colleagues. Culturally diverse and very dynamic, the conference reminded me yet again of the power of choral music to unite and guide us toward common goals, to stimulate learning and creativity, as well as to encourage a continuous commitment to high artistic results.

The schedule offered concerts, interest sessions, and round table discussions for every taste, area of expertise or interest. The diversity of choral offerings began with the opening concert Festival of Anthems, featuring the Christ Church Cathedral Choir, and the Edgecliff Vocal Ensemble and Concert Choir from Xavier University, and concluded with the Middle and High School Honor Choirs concert.

In the middle, we enjoyed the solid performances of The Ohio State and Miami Universities Men’s Glee Clubs, the full of life and colorfully staged performance of the Carmel High School Accents, the beautifully crafted program of the Capital University Chapel Choir, the dynamic presentation of the Augustana Choir, the artistry and choral tone of Cor Cantiamo, the special African music presentation of Taifa Mziki men’s group from Kenya, and others.

The state of Michigan was very strongly represented in both concert and interest sessions. Sandra Snow’s Women’s Chamber Ensemble from Michigan State University, the University of Michigan Women’s Glee Club with Julie Skadsem, and the Ann Arbor Pioneer High School A Cappella Choir with Steven Lorenz offered compelling choral presentations that stood out with their creative programming and artistic interpretation. Pearl Shangquan

led the 2014 Collegiate Repertoire Chorale in two energetic, fast-moving sessions exploring rehearsal techniques and methods. John Bragle from the Interlochen Arts Academy presented an engaging session focusing on the importance of the balancing act between being a choral conductor and voice instructor in the rehearsal room of young singers. David Rayl from Michigan State University offered a discussion of little known sacred and secular repertoire by the great choral masters suitable for the smaller ensemble.

Among the rest of the interest sessions, one that I particularly enjoyed was the session on performing multicultural music using multimedia resources. Presented by Mollie Stone and Patty Cuyler, the session expanded the current knowledge of teaching tools and methods for ethnic music.

Two ‘first live experiences’ for me, left truly memorable impressions: On Thursday night, the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music choirs and orchestra, with the Cincinnati Children’s Choir Bel Canto, presented John Adams’ *El Nino*, featuring guest and student soloists. The two and a half-hour long oratorio, a truly remarkable and eclectic work based on the biblical story of the birth of Jesus, combined with exquisite French and Spanish poetry, was a demonstration of artistic accomplishment involving impeccable musicianship and the highest technical skill from all performers. On Friday night, the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers, directed by Philip Brunelle, performed an exquisite concert at the beautiful St. Peter in Chains Cathedral. Works such as Steven Paulus’ pristine “The Day is Done,” Aaron Jay Kernis’ choral concerto “Glorious Majesty,” Eric Whitacre’s opera scene-like “Leonardo’s Flying Machine,” Timothy Takach’s tender “Listen to the Apples” (world premiere), a delightful medley of Stephen Foster tunes, and others, filled our hearts with beauty and left us in awe with the artistic and vocal mastery of this group.

My time at the conference was inspiring, rejuvenating and encouraging. Leaving Cincinnati on Saturday, I felt honored to be part of the Central Division state-elected leadership, and in this position, I am looking forward to my further contribution to the organization and my choral friends.

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

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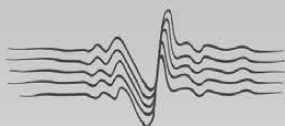
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Elizabeth Grefsheim



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BOY CHOIRS

Christopher Eanes
Cincinnati Boychoir
4501 Allison Street
Cincinnati OH 45202
O - 513/396-7664
christopher.eanes@
cincinnati-boychoir.org

CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY YOUTH CHOIRS

Angie Johnson
Young Naperville Singers
43 East Jefferson Ave., CH2
Naperville IL 60540-4905
O - 630/369-9679
ajohnson@youthchoirs.org

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CHOIRS

Robert Jones
University of Dayton
300 College Park
Dayton OH 45469-0290
O - 937/229-3909
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rjones1@udayton.edu

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Marvin Curtis
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South Bend IN 46634
O - 574/520-4390
H - 574/247-0982
cvm491@aol.com

ETHNIC AND MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Madlen Batchvarova
Hanover College
Box 890
Hanover IN 47243
O - 812/866-7327
H - 812/265-1161
batchvarova@hanover.edu



The day began at 4:00 am, and although it is not yet 8:30 in the morning, has included loading over 100 individuals (most between the ages of 14 and 18), their luggage, and instruments onto two very cramped vehicles which should have been advertised to each hold 55 very small people. We've been on the road for an hour and a half of what will be a 12-hour journey to the Big Apple.

Days like this beg the question: "Why do I do this?" This particular trip finds me only a co-pilot rather than responsible for the entire experience, but having planned numerous similar adventures, I find myself questioning the sanity of it all. If you have ever attempted to traverse the New York City subway system with a hundred young people behind you who are too fascinated by the rats and the smell to realize how petrified you are that you might lose one of them, you know what I am talking about.

I am sure most choral directors at one time or another have traveled or will travel with students. Many of my colleagues have journeyed much farther than I, to destinations in Europe and beyond. Some have returned with harrowing tales of hotel and weather disasters, but most have gathered wonderful stories of experiences shared with students which will create lifelong memories. These memories will be cherished by the students and the director alike. That's where the answer to "why?" can be found: in the memories.

I have more wonderful memories and funny stories from these experiences than I could ever fit in one short article; memories such as that of an awestruck young man, who happened to be both a singer and a cellist, walking into Carnegie Hall and saying "Mrs. Gillis, do you think Yo-Yo Ma has ever played here?" You can imagine his reaction when I said I was pretty sure he had (probably last week). I have a memory of a young singer being chosen to sing a solo on that same Carnegie stage, only to find on the day of the performance that he had left his white dress shirt hanging on his bathroom door at home. I still have a running joke with my husband about his expedition through the streets of Manhattan to find the cheapest possible white dress shirt with a 15 inch neck. He found it: Egyptian cotton, \$85. To this day, I will touch the sleeve of his nicest dress shirts and say "Hey, that's nice. Is that Egyptian cotton?" That same young man is now

a choral director himself at a school in Chicago. Last year, his students sang for Michelle Obama.

There are memories like that of my very first trip with students. It was a journey from Los Angeles to San Francisco, and I was 24 years old, barely older than the majority of my students. My husband (who happened to be missing his own law school graduation that weekend) and another parent were the only other chaperones. The kids were as good as gold and enjoyed every moment; however, the chain smoking parent chaperone who didn't even make it to Northridge before lighting up in the bathroom of the bus was another story.

I cannot leave out the day trip taken with a wonderful group of sixth graders who took an almost perfect 99 out of 100 score at an amusement park festival. They would leave me shortly after that performance for junior high school, but they also had just discovered I was moving to the high school and would see them again in two short years. At the end of the long day, several boys surrounded me with hugs and said "Don't be sad, Mrs. G, it's only a little time apart." Out of the mouths of babes! Those sixth graders now include a professional actor with performances recently reviewed in the *Washington Post* and a key grip who has filmed a movie with Jennifer Aniston.

Finally, I must say a person has not lived until they have watched the latest Disney-Pixar film on a charter bus with a group of teenagers. They are finally old enough to really understand the humor, and they take such joy in sharing it with someone else. It is an opportunity for them to be both little and big at the same time without fear of judgement. What a joy!

If you have not yet traveled with your singers, or if your last experience was less than stellar, all I can say is that the good will outweigh the bad, and either give it a shot, or try it again. The memories created, and better yet, the people created from those experiences will be well worth the time and energy invested.

- 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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I love my new role as the Central Division Repertoire & Standards Chair for Boychoirs, but there are times when I feel like a general without an army! To the best of my knowledge, there are only a handful of other boychoirs in the Central

Division. While many are associated with churches or mixed-gender children's choirs, only a very few are independent organizations.

I brought this up at our (very small) roundtable meeting at the Central Division conference in Cincinnati, and I'd like to share with you some feedback from the roundtable and some food for thought for the future.

First, we asked the obvious question: why do we have an R & S position for a genre of choir that is so small?

The answer from all present? We must remain a resource and a sounding board for any and every one working with male singers. The young male singer is a unique creature. So special is this genre of music making that, as I write this, the American Boychoir is filming a feature (with Dustin Hoffman) about a boy's journey through the boychoir world.

However, while capable of great vocal ability and beautiful expressivity, the male singer will also inevitably experience a feeling of loss (temporarily, we hope) as his voice changes. Though not based on anything aside

from anecdotal evidence, my belief is that if you spoke with almost any boychoir conductor, he would tell you that his main goals, after providing an enriching experience for all singers, are to work properly with the changing male voice and to encourage boys and young men to stay involved with choral music beyond their treble days.

What we are trying to get at is this: please use the boychoirs and their directors of the Central Division as a resource for your own boys. More and more school and community children's choirs are developing boychoirs as a part of their programs, and I couldn't be more thrilled. In the meantime, please keep up the wonderful work!

I was thrilled to witness more than 80 boys singing together at the division conference in Cincinnati under the fantastic direction of our national R & S chair for Boychoirs, Julian Ackerly, and clearly you all are doing something right with your young men! We have great kids in the Central Division, and it was terrific to see them all come together as a team over just a few days. Kudos!

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

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For further information, visit www.fabm.com or find us on Facebook!



11 Chronicles 5:13 - 14

FIVE TUNES IN MY (JAZZ) LIBRARY



We're all always looking for literature that works. Here are five tunes I would recommend to you, with information to help you know what might work for you and your group!

For Once in My Life

arr. Kirk Marcy, SMP08-017

This piece is an up tempo samba with a solo vocal feature in the second chorus. The solo is an interpretation of the melody using words from the song. I give it a grade of 4 out of 5. There is a fair amount of repetition in voicings and rhythmic figures to make it more easily attainable. I use it because good sambas are hard to come by.

All or Nothing at All

arr. Kirby Shaw, Hal Leonard 08742196

I give this a solid grade 3+. This is a go-to swinger for my choirs. It is great for teaching swing techniques as well as internalizing the pulse. The two part singing (guys/girls) that occurs towards the beginning is good for teaching jazz balance and blending.

He Beeped when he Shoulda Bopped

arr. Michele Weir, Hal Leonard 08744888

Michele is a consummate arranger in vocal jazz. She really swings a chart and has lots of innovative harmonizations. The rhythmic variety and chord structures make this a 4+/5 rated arrangement. I like it because of the humor as well. The song was written by Dizzy Gillespie and the opportunity to introduce him and his playing should be seized!

For All We Know

arr. Eldridge and Meader, Alfred 28822

This is a ballad from the New York Voices catalog that is readily attainable and intensely musical and thought provoking. The opportunities for rubato are numerous and espressando reigns throughout. Lots of guy/girl two-part interaction as well as gorgeous four-part writing balances the arrangement. Rating: 3

Chamego

arr. Eldridge and Meader, Shawnee 35003211

Another piece from the NYV catalog, this is a "chill" bossa nova. The piece flows smoothly with a little build and fire towards the end. It is very gratifying to sing and teach. An instant hit with teenagers. Rating: 3+

- 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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Would you like to help with the 2016 Central Division Conference? Don't wait to be asked - contact Gayle Walker (see page 2 for contact information).

MENTORING: ASSURING THAT OUR PRESENT WILL HAVE A FUTURE



The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves. - Steven Spielberg

During the 2013-2014 school year, the Ohio Choral Directors Association launched, in conjunction with ACDA, a pilot mentoring program. OCDA has long had an informal tradition of mentoring choral directors at all levels, and by establishing certain criteria and methodologies, OCDA hopes to determine a consistent and effective path for assisting new choral directors in their professional development.

It is OCDA's position that when an ensemble, via its director, achieves success, the program will grow in prestige and importance within the school's curriculum base, the community, and ultimately create more choral music consumers and members.

This mentoring program will be unique in its professional goals and personal intent. With the introduction of the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), new educators can be overwhelmed with administrative expectations. Therefore, the program and its leadership dedicate themselves to foster supportive and creative relationships between mentors and mentees. This may be accomplished by 1) listening to concerns 2) allowing mistakes to be revealed in a non-threatening atmosphere and 3) by not overwhelming them with too much information. It is expected that the mentors and mentees will establish a strong relationship via email, phone, and personal communication.



OCDA Region Chairpersons are being asked to play an integral role in this program as well.

- OCDA requests that Region Chairs locate three first-year choral directors in their region to participate in this program.
- Region Chairs will contact three mentors and pair them with the mentees.
- At the end of the mentoring period, Region Chairs should discuss and evaluate the progress of the mentees with their mentors. The Region Chair and the Mentor Chair will each receive a written evaluation of the mentee's experience. The mentees will be asked to complete an evaluative survey of the program. The hope is that the relationship would be renewed in the future, through mutual agreement of the mentor and mentee.

The mentoring program focuses on the musical challenges within the rehearsal environment; specifically, choral tone and musical accuracy will be the prime evaluation points. A sample timeline would consist of a two-month timeframe that includes three observations by the mentor. Although other challenges such as class scheduling, school administration, and environment, etc., may exist, the goal is to improve choral artistry through support from experienced mentors. Coaching, evaluations, and supplemental written materials should provide excellent support for these young educators.

Although the mentorship program currently targets elementary and secondary school directors, our hope is it will expand into other Repertoire and Standards areas of OCDA, such as Music in Worship, Community Choirs, and College/University Choirs.

As Chair of the OCDA mentoring program, I welcome any questions from potential mentors or mentees in Ohio. Inquiries from Central Division members would be addressed as well.

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

SINGING WITH STYLE



Getting a choir to sing a variety of vocal styles can be a challenge for the choral director. Most of us have worked diligently on learning and teaching correct vocal technique. Choral directors often have several groups, where each of their groups has a distinctive sound based on style, voicing, age, and repertoire. Sometimes one choir sings many styles of music. The most challenging aspect is keeping the authenticity of the style without sacrificing healthy singing. This article is designed to help you to gain additional insight and confidence in teaching many styles.

Historically, the American choral director has taken pride in doing European music as authentically as possible. We listen to early recordings and research practices of how to sing Renaissance with a straight brighter tone, Baroque with light melismatic detached passages to bring out the contrapuntal lines, Romantic with a rich darker tone and warm vibrato and Modern, which varies depending on the composer's intention and style. We have embraced music of many cultures and enjoy the variety of sounds and tones that each country and ethnic background has to offer.

Singing jazz or pop music with our students often raises eyebrows with the classically trained educator. Some of us have had students who have come to us with past or present vocal problems that have occurred for one reason or another and many like to blame it on contemporary vocal styles being done incorrectly. Therefore, we shy away from allowing our students to sing in those styles. (A student who is having vocal issues may be talking excessively or at a loud volume, even perhaps at a monotone or low pitch, which is a topic for another article!) Many problems can arise from oversinging and singing incorrectly.

The exciting news about singing jazz or pop music with your traditional choir or forming separate groups is that there is so much for the students to learn! Pop music is something the students connect with and listen to on a regular basis. Many students listen to country as well. Whether you like it or not, many listen to rap, and it is incorporated into a lot of pop music and is crossing over to country and jazz. Jazz music offers amazing ear training and rhythmic challenges for the singer. It also gives the student a chance to create through improvisation.

Healthy singing is healthy singing. You do not change your approach of diaphragmatic breath support from style to style. Your body is your instrument. That means good posture, even balance, relaxed muscles in the throat and neck, a proper amount of sleep, and being aware of how your body reacts to what you eat and drink. All of

this affects the vocal cords as well as how we speak.

For pop or jazz music, let's address tone quality for the ensemble, which can vary from song to song. For example, in a gospel tune, the use of vibrato should be natural. Blend is not important; lyrics rule. Emotions should be felt with a spiritual overtone. In blues or swing, there is an incorporation of vocal inflections.

We use slides, smears, scoops, lead sound (melody may be dominant), ghosts, accents, syncopation and many other articulations to create jazz; tone can vary from dark to light. The vocal jazz ballad often uses little or no vibrato and forward placement. This gives the sound vitality and helps define the pitch when notes are close together or clustered. Regarding jazz and improvisation (another article needed!), I share the wisdom that the late great artist Joe Williams once told me when I asked for advice for my singers. He said simply, "less is more."

Pop music is very exciting because directors can choose from a variety of musical theatre to the latest hits. Musical theatre offers traditional singing (Andrew Lloyd Webber) to rock style (*Kinky Boots*, Cindy Lauper). We need to learn the style first by listening to everything out there. In order for you to bring excellence, you must incorporate healthy vocal technique along with understanding the style

In order for you to bring excellence, you must incorporate healthy vocal technique along with understanding the style through listening. This will help you with accurate inflection, diction, the use of articulations, tone color, understanding the use of vibrato, style and emotion for each genre.

through listening. This will help you with accurate inflection, diction, the use of articulations, tone color, understanding the use of vibrato, style and emotion for each genre. There are many variations within each genre as well. Get informed by listening to a variety of artists, grooves, and where that style originates. For example...there are great Latin artists to listen to for samba. You must consider the language, cultural background, rhythmic elements and style. This makes it a richer and a more authentic experience for your singers.

The pop/show/jazz director must not only listen, but also must really watch the singers. Are they breathing correctly and not lifting their shoulders? Make sure there is no tension in the neck (no veins popping out). Are the singers standing tall, with weight on the balls of their feet? Can they project the voice with great support without crossing the line by oversinging? If the singer pushes the voice, it will change the beauty of the tone and force pressure on the vocal cords, potentially causing nodules or calluses to form. This can also affect pitch and the ability to hear others, affecting balance and blend.

Diction plays a vital role in this style. Over articulating, especially on consonants, can kill the style. This is probably the largest misinterpretation that happens because of our classical training. When I was a jingle singer, someone once told me that vibrato was the kiss of death in

the studio (unless singing classical music). There are also several consonants that choral directors need to teach their singers to soften when singing pop or jazz music. One of the most common is “t.” Soften it to a “d,” as when spoken. One example is the word “matter.” Work on keeping everything natural sounding and conversational. Otherwise the style will sound classical. The exception is traditional musical theatre.

Most pop/jazz music has a forward sound that requires frontal placement, which keeps the sound vibrant and will cut through. Make sure there is still an inside space and it doesn’t become nasal. Singing can use a lot of imagery; an inside smile and sometimes even lifting the eyebrows help. Your eyes are the most expressive part of your face. Use the imagery of placement in the head and singing through the eyes to help with expression and brilliance in the tone.

What about growls, scoops, slides, chest voice and all the stuff rock singers love to do? Yep. They get to do that, as long as it is done in a healthy way (limit growls) and with your guidance as to how much and how often.

Use of the chest voice vs. head voice and falsetto has always been a sensitive issue. You can achieve a mixed voice and chest voice sound through exercises to strengthen the vocal cords. There are wonderful exercises that emphasize

how to strengthen both registers which advocate register flips, yodels and models that truly work in a short amount of time with regular practice. This also prevents vocal fatigue for our students who sing in multiple groups or have multiple hours of rehearsing. (A “shout out” and thank you to my voice instructor, Dr. Ronald Combs.) He wrote a book that is co-authored by jingle singer and choir director friend Bob Bowker titled *Learning To Sing Non-Classical Music*. It offers a great guide for singers and was developed after years of studying rock stars in the business and how they manage to keep their chops.

Hopefully this article has given you some ideas to consider as you take your journey into playing with the greatest instrument of all, the human voice!

- 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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READING THROUGH REPERTOIRE



I frequently hear from choral directors who are struggling to incorporate sight reading into their class/rehearsal time. Seldom is their issue the need for sight reading – rather, they cite the difficulties of having the time to include sight reading in the daily rehearsal or having the money to purchase sight reading materials for their students. My response is always that they simply need to change their approach to sight reading.

Singers are building reading skills any time they interpret (through singing) gestures, patterns, or musical symbols without hearing them first. Basic reading skills can be incorporated into your warm-up time by pointing to different syllables on a solfege chart and having the students sing the pitches back. You can teach a melody to a song this way before students even open the music. When they then see the pitches notated, they will be reading it another way, reinforcing the tune in their mind. I use this technique frequently, and find it to be one of the most effective tools for novice music readers to learn their music by “reading” it.

As much as possible, pull your reading activities from the actual repertoire on which you will be working. This promotes efficiency in the rehearsal, it doesn’t cost any more money, and most importantly, it is relevant, which is often something we have to prove as educators. If you start doing this from day 1, students will learn that this is the way musicians operate. In time, you will be able to spend more time with artistic elements and less time teaching parts, and they will leave your program with valuable skills which will enable them to function as singers without you or anyone else having to teach them notes.

Choose something for the start of school that students can learn almost, if not entirely, by sight reading it. Look for folk song arrangements or anything that is mostly homophonic and diatonic. Some of my tried and true start-up pieces are “The Road Home” by Stephen Paulus, “Requiem” by Eliza Gilkyson, “O My Love’s Like a Red, Red Rose” by René Clausen, “Esto Les Digo” by Kinley Lange, and Mozart’s “Ave Verum.” These pieces are great not only for teaching reading, but they have such expressive phrasing and texts, they are great for many programming scenarios.

Will it take longer to learn a piece this way? Yes, probably, at first. As the year progresses, however, you will find that singers’ reading abilities improve and you will move through the note learning process much faster than before, yielding more rehearsal time for artistic elements and even more repertoire.

Obviously, you will want to program pieces that are more difficult than their reading abilities can handle. Still, try to find “readable” passages in those selections, small segments that are within their grasp. It could be as simple as the whole choir reading the alto part or the bass part, so that they grow musically through their awareness of the

other sections. Maybe the pitches are too hard for them to read, but the rhythm is not. Isolate the rhythm of a passage and have the singers chant the rhythm on text or a neutral syllable. Anything which you can pull from the music to have your students sight read is going to benefit you and them in the long run.

If this concept is new to you, and you’d like more suggestions for implementation, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would welcome the opportunity to assist you in this endeavor.

- Angela Vaughn Hampton, Central Division R&S Chair for High School Choirs, is Choral Director at Floyd Central High School in Floyd Knobs, Indiana.

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THE LAST WORD



What's your say/do ratio? A number of years ago, a student of mine wrote a brief essay on leadership and responsibility. He showed it to me, and I thought it so insightful that I made a copy and kept it.

He wrote, "Do what you say you will do, when you say you will do it. ...A responsible person only promises to do those things he/she can reasonably deliver. Once making the promise, the responsible person will act in a timely manner. A responsible person has a high say/do ratio."

As we all know, choral directors and other musicians in general are very busy people. Over the past year, I have been impressed by how many people have a very high say/do ratio - especially the members of the Central Division Conference planning team. When the group would get together, each person would report on what their assigned tasks had been, what they had accomplished on those tasks, and then what it was with which they needed help from the others in the group. It was really refreshing to see how, mostly in isolation, each person on the team had taken on certain responsibilities and then fulfilled them.

Unfortunately, I have also seen (less frequently) colleagues who have the best of intentions but fail to do the tasks assigned to them, often leaving others in the lurch. It is sad to watch these persons rationalize failure by saying "I'm not making an excuse, but this is why I didn't..." We all have learned that some colleagues will come through (albeit at the last minute), and that others won't.

I have established with my students that if they need me to do something for them (find a piece of music, look up a grade, etc.), then I require that person to physically write

down the request on a piece of paper and give to me that paper. I am much more likely to remember the task if I have it in front of me, and it also places some responsibility on the person making the request. If at a later time the student asks me "Did you...", I will reply, "No, did you write it down and give it to me?" If their response is, "No," then I remind them to do so (and I don't feel guilty about not having done the task). Sometimes a miracle happens and I remember without having it written down, but...

In today's ever-busier world, we all need ways to keep our sanity - the above is one way I can do so and also maintain a relatively high "say/do" ratio. Try it and see if it works for you!

We all learn from each other - through publications, through ChorTeach on the ACDA web site, through state, division, and national conferences, and through one-on-one interaction with colleagues. The Central Division is one of the few (if not the only) divisions to keep its newsletter in print form, although the spring issue in national conference years is online-only. Please consider writing for *Resound*! As editor for the past 12 years, it's always been my goal to keep the articles of a practical nature, leaving the "scholarly" topics to *Choral Journal*. Do you have a technique that really works for your singers? Do you know of a special resource that would be of help to new teachers? The Ohio mentoring program (page 14) sounds like a great plan, and I look forward to hearing about how it works.

Please keep in touch, and thank you for reading *Resound*!

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

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