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LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING!

ACDA CENTRAL DIVISION CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 24-27, 2016

THE PALMER HOUSE HILTON HOTEL

You have just finished the holiday blitz of concerts and are getting ready for spring concerts. Your list of things to do now includes:

- Find repertoire
- Listen to other choirs
- Find inspiration
- Recharge your batteries
- Find time to talk to your friends in choral music
- Make new contacts for people to work with your choirs and to work with



Where can you do all of these things? AT THE ACDA CENTRAL DIVISION CONFERENCE!!!!

The ACDA Central Division Conference planning board would like to invite you to attend an incredible conference in Chicago at the end of February. The board works to make the division conference educational, inspirational, and above all, a celebration of choral music in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.

I invite you to examine the 2016 conference schedule located on the Central Division Web site, www.acdacentral.org. You will be able to see what choirs are performing, who is giving presentations, what music reading sessions will be presented, and what amazing guest artists you will see when you attend.

Choirs from each state in our division are performing. There are Women's Choirs, a Boy Choir, Children's Choirs, University Choirs, High School Choirs, Show Choirs and Community Choirs.

Interest sessions cover subjects such as: working with adolescent singers, incorporating the operatic singer in choirs, repertoire selection, vocal pedagogy, multi-cultural perspectives, circle singing, IPA, and tips for new choral directors. College and University students will have the opportunity of participating in the [Collegiate Repertoire Chorale](#), led by Jerry Blackstone of the University of Michigan. (Contact Eugene Rogers for further information.)



**Headline Performers
VOCES8**

Special events and ensembles being featured include a special Wednesday evening performance of Bach's *St. John Passion* led by **Please see Lift Every Voice, p. 11**

WARM YOUR HEART AT THE DIVISION CONFERENCE!

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In our tech-savvy society, we have everything we need at the touch of a button. On my computer, I can easily access newspapers, encyclopedias, dinner recipes, the phone book, television, videos, Facebook conversations, TED talks, NPR podcasts, and “ACDA Radio” – all without leaving my armchair. Technology has permeated our lives, making a wide variety of information easily available to all. It is pretty exciting stuff. In some ways, however, technology has increased life stress.

I postulate that life in general has become a bit colder and less humanity-focused. I sense that I run in circles learning new technologies at my office. I regularly utilize email, Google Drive, Blackboard, Youtube, PowerPoint, Skype, Sibelius, MacGamut, Twitter, and Google Maps for work, yet I still feel behind technologically. Additionally, my iPhone beeps at me regularly, and although I could easily turn my phone off, it appears that I’m a bit addicted to my iPhone. I feel jumpier and more nervous than I was ten years ago, and I sense that technology has something to do with it.

In our device-addicted, technology-focused society, it is even more important for choral musicians to reserve time to celebrate choral music – not music we hear through ear buds, but live choral performances in front of a breathing, receptive audience. Hearing and seeing multiple people united in song is a special thing, a balm for the human spirit. The expression communicated between composer, poet, choir, and audience reminds us of our shared humanity, and makes the world a warmer place to live. We need this.

Come to the ACDA Central Division Conference in February and warm your heart. This is the place to be if you want to learn about the choral art, if you long for beauty, and if you need a boost for your spirit. Imagine sitting in a beautiful church Wednesday night, hearing *Bach’s St. John Passion* performed by the *Valparaiso Bach Institute and the Leipzig Baroque Orchestra*. Now there is an experience that will warm your soul until summer comes, and beyond! During the following three days, you will hear outstanding performances by Midwestern choirs of all levels, learn from numerous clinic sessions with topics such as recruiting male singers, creative circle

singing with your choir, a lifetime of healthy singing, and performing authentic global music.

Gather repertoire for your choir by attending *Reading Sessions* for all choir types and levels, and attend the exciting *VOCES8* headliner concert with composer *Ola Gjeilo* at the piano. That is only the beginning!

Roundtables, panel discussions, honor choirs, the *Collegiate Repertoire Chorale*, a *Children’s Choir Showcase*, the *Chicago Children’s Choir*, exhibits...you simply have to come to the conference and experience it all (see the conference schedule in brief on page 10 of this issue of *Resound*).

I believe that our biennial ACDA Central Division Conference is the best choral music celebration that the heartland can offer! I look forward to meeting you there and talking about the wonderful music that we experience together! See you in Chicago!

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



Resound

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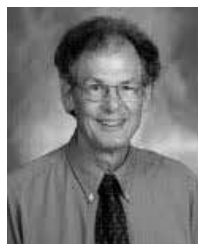
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I was captivated by the beautiful singing of the All-State Honors Choir during an open rehearsal at a recent conference of the Illinois Music Educators Association (ILMEA). One of the young singers came walking up to me during a break. He asked if I remembered him. After a moment, I did, but I was in shock. What was he doing singing in this superb choir? I thought to myself that there must be some mistake. No doubt he noticed the look of amazement on my face. Then he told me what had happened. (His high school choral director later confirmed this moving story while fleshing it out with a great many details.)

I knew this student - we'll call him "Jim" - from his years in junior high choir, just prior to my retirement. I remembered him as kind, polite, quiet, and serious. He was small in stature and walked with a slight limp due to a physical disability. While he always liked to sing, his voice was far from outstanding. In the often turbulent and high decibel world of junior high, he could easily be overlooked.

Jim joined choir in high school and auditioned for ILMEA's all-district and all-state choirs as a junior. He was not selected, even for all-district. Disappointed but realizing he had not tried very hard, he went to his choral director and said, "I want to make all-state choir next year. What do I need to do?" That was the turning point. This new motivation stemmed from his desire to accomplish something truly significant that would make his father proud of him.

His choral director responded by saying that while she would gladly provide feedback how and when she could, what he really needed was private voice lessons. Once connected with a good voice teacher, Jim worked at an after school job to pay for his lessons. He attended every scheduled school rehearsal covering the all-district and all-state music, both summer and fall. In his senior year, he was enrolled in two choirs, being elected president of one and vice president of the other. He began to assist with warm-ups and to help the other boys learn their parts. He was becoming a leader.

In the spring of his junior year, Jim's father was diagnosed with cancer. At the beginning of his senior year, Jim asked the director if the auditioned choir could sing John David's "You Are the New Day" on the spring concert, in honor of his father. She readily

agreed. Shortly thereafter, his father learned that he had only months to live. In order for Jim's father to be able to hear them sing "You Are the New Day," the choir decided to make a video. The video was sung, filmed, and edited entirely by the choir students, and featured not the choir, but pictures of his family that Jim had selected.

In October, Jim learned of his acceptance into the all-district choir, an accomplishment he shared with his father. In December, one week before his father's death, Jim was able to tell his dad that he had been selected for the All-State Honors Choir. Jim then shared with his father the completed video of "You Are the New Day" - surely a gift any father would treasure. Not many days thereafter, the video was played again, this time at his father's visitation.

I attended the spring choral concert. The auditioned choir did perform "You Are the New Day," with a public dedication to Jim's father, provided by Jim. When the student-selected outstanding choral student award was announced at the end of the concert...well, you can guess who received that award. Led by the cheering choir students, a tearful audience stood in ovation.

Often I think that it is we, the teachers, who are supposed to do the inspiring, and I suppose we should, but sometimes things go the other way around. Inspiration can come from unlikely places. Such was the case with Jim, who inspired his choral teachers, his fellow singers, and all who heard his story.

Jim is now in college, majoring in physical therapy because he wants to help others. I have no doubt that he will succeed in healing the bodies as well as the spirits of many other human beings; and, yes, Jim sings in the college choir.

- Dennis Morrissey is a retired K-12 music educator serving on the adjunct faculty of Heartland Community College and as President of Illinois ACDA.



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COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS



Thanksgiving is a time set aside each year to remind us of things for which we are thankful. It's also a brief respite before we head into the frenetic pace of December. By the time you read this, we will have begun a new calendar year and have started preparation for contests, conferences, and travel.

When I start to feel a little overwhelmed, I find it important for me to consciously consider my "blessings," those things for which I am thankful. Thinking of my blessings helps me to bear up under stress, to find joy in an overwhelming amount of daily activities, and to be able to see the big picture in the midst of personal stress that could easily get me down. Those around me - family, friends, co-workers, and students - benefit from this habit. I wish to humbly suggest a few things for which we can all be thankful.

Your choral program probably has some of the best students in your school. It's no secret that good musicians are usually strong academically. They're also highly motivated; they take choir because they want to. Indeed, some students choose to remain in choir even though their GPA takes a hit. Their motivation is almost certainly reflected in their attendance and behavior, too.

Like so many of you, I went into music because I wanted to make a living doing something that I enjoy. My father retired from the armed forces after 20 years of service. He took a job in a factory to support his family of eight. While he was grateful for the work, I'm pretty sure that he enjoyed oil painting, reading, and singing more than he enjoyed inspecting diesel engines. If you make a living doing something for which you are trained, you are in a minority. If you like your job, I suspect that you're in an even smaller minority. We can be thankful that we don't have to dread going to work.

My administration and corporation shows a good deal of support for the choir program. I realize that not all of you can say that. For those of you who have principals who attend your performances, deans who back up your difficult decisions, and guidance counselors who are willing to listen to your suggestions, count yourself blessed.

I once considered taking a job because I enjoyed eating lunch with the people in the department in which I would work. Your co-

workers can be a big asset. The same is true of your parents, and booster organizations. If you've been teaching for a while, think back to a time when you didn't have a booster group or parents who were willing to help. If you don't have a formal organization, you probably have a parent or two who volunteer to help you to run your program. An experienced teacher never takes a volunteer for granted.

It's possible to get so caught up teaching our choirs that we can forget to enjoy the process of making music. The Central Division Conference is blessed with great directors and many fine choirs. You can hear some of them at Chicago February 24 - 27. Enrich your own professional life by taking time to listen to other choirs, and to learn a little about how you can make your own choirs better. I hope to see you there.

- Rick Gamble is Choral Director at Avon High School and serves as President of the Indiana Choral Directors Association.

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ACDA-MI held a very successful fall conference at First Presbyterian Church in Flint on October 23 and 24.

Our conference headliners were Joe Miller from Westminster Choir College and Eric Johnson with Cor Cantiamo from

Northern Illinois University. Both headliners presented inspirational sessions that were very well received by conference attendees.

Miller's first session, "Learning to Dream," gave conference attendees the opportunity to reflect on the reasons why we are involved in this great profession. He drew from a number of experiences in his personal musical career to inspire conductors to dream about what could be. His second presentation, "Building Sound through Vocalise," focused on a number of tips to help to build a desirable choral sound. His inclusion of vocal pedagogy topics underlined the importance of learning as much as possible about the mechanics of good singing.

At the Friday evening concert, Miller was presented the Maynard Klein award for outstanding artistry, leadership, and service to ACDA-MI. This fall was the 15th anniversary of the fall conference - the first fall conference was held under Miller's leadership when he served as president of ACDA-MI and was Director of Choral Activities at Western Michigan University. We continue to benefit from his vision!

Eric Johnson provided a fine display of choral artistry as he conducted the headliner choir, Cor Cantiamo, for the Friday night concert. The singers, the choir-in-residence at Northern Illinois University, sang a very engaging concert program ranging from selections reflecting on World War I to Morton Lauridsen's *Mid-Winter Songs*. Johnson also presented an interest session on refining artistry through implementation of Laban qualities of movement.

Both headliner clinicians worked with student conductors from around the state of Michigan in the graduate and undergraduate conducting masterclasses. We were fortunate to have two very fine choirs serve as demonstration choirs: the Lake Orion High School Chorale, directed by Bryce Thompson, and the Eastern Michigan University Choir, directed by Brandon Johnson.

Other sessions presented by members of ACDA-MI included "Performing with Sincerity" by Brandon Johnson; "Experience + Tried, Tested, and True = Success for your MS/HS Choir" presented by Thomas Blue, Betsy Marsh, and Cheryl Gapinski; "How to Get - and Keep - a Community Choir Up and Running," presented by Ed Maki-Schramm and Diane Linn; and "In the Beginning: The First Years of Teaching," a panel discussion with Ginny Kerwin, Stephanie Gregoire, Jon Van Eck, and Ashley Ward. Along with reading sessions on sacred and secular repertoire, we were lucky to have such a wide variety of fine presentations for this conference!

Congratulations to the choirs from around the state that were selected for performance at the conference: Jackson Northwest High School Vocal Dimension, conducted by Matt Snell; Ann Arbor Skyline High School Bel Canto Treble Choir, conducted by Lindsey Ciechanski; Western Michigan University Chorale, conducted by Kimberly Dunn Adams; Owasso High School Madrigal Singers, conducted by Jessica Nieuwkoop; Carillon Women's Chorale, conducted by Karen Nevins; conScience: Michigan Tech Chamber Singers, conducted by Jared Anderson; the Holland Chorale, conducted by Meredith Bowen; and Northwestern Michigan College Canticum Novum, conducted by Jeff Cobb. The final concert featured a Music in Worship Honor Choir comprised of church musicians from around the state. The choir was directed by Bruce Snyder and the performance included a premiere of a work commissioned for the conference, Michael Mitchell's "Go Out with Joy."

I am grateful for dedicated choral conductors throughout the state of Michigan who worked so hard to make a fantastic fall conference. We are looking forward to next year's conference October 28-29, 2016 in Kalamazoo.

- Jared Anderson is Director of Choral Activities and Chair of the Visual and Performing Arts Department at Michigan Technological University. He serves as President of the Michigan chapter of ACDA.

GUCCI FOR ALL!



I don't own a Gucci suit. I'm sure many of you can identify with me – having spent my life in public school teaching and church music, I have enjoyed the services of my fine tailors at J. C. Penney and Sears. However, if, indeed, a Gucci cost the same as suits from the above esteemed clothiers, I would most certainly own more than one!

Now, consider. As choral directors, we are our singers' connection to quality. Each season, our curricular materials; our tools of inspiration; our vehicles of audience communication... all of these rest in our well-trained hands. Whether we choose great music or that which is simply serviceable, it all costs the same. Nothing's wrong with Sears, but when we can afford Gucci why not?

In Ohio, our adjudicated event for school choirs is operated by OMEA, our NAFME affiliate organization. I enjoy serving as an adjudicator, but each season find myself concerned about the quality of programs performed by many choirs. In the present school atmosphere, we are under more pressure than ever before to establish ourselves as significant and essential parts of the curriculum. Our choice of choral literature is the most important criterion in this consideration. Would we respect a teacher of literature who teaches only from magazines and comic books?

Choral music has been written through at least four centuries. To perform an entire concert of music published within the last twenty years simply does not help anyone, least of all our students, to view our art as significant in human experience. Beginning with the stylistic and historical instruction afforded through the study of choral literature, one moves on to quality of text; inspirational and emotional content; contextual possibilities for teaching across the curriculum; language exposure; and, of course, specific musical challenges appropriate to challenge the choir. All of these elements contribute to the decisions of programming a concert. No need to worry about "what the audience will like." Quality speaks for itself – there are reasons that excellent literature remains part of the musical pantheon. Audiences respond more enthusiastically to excellent literature and performance than to being "entertained" by soon-to-be-forgotten moments.

Often, in discussing this subject with colleagues, I hear concerns that high quality

choral literature is above the level of a specific choir. My freshman choir was filled with absolutely the same kind of kids who attend any school, and we performed annually in Class C – the beginning level of literature – at our state's adjudicated events. Nonetheless, every performance included some music which represented the history of our art. It was fun seeking quality choral pieces which would "work" for my freshmen! It's my conviction that music can be found in every period of music for every level of choir achievement. It takes time and effort to find, but it sure is worth the work. Quality music is always your best investment in developing a choral library. Within a school setting, a great piece can be programmed again within a decade and will remain just as strong in curricular contribution, student and audience experience.

It's a special privilege to share with all of you through this excellent choral journal. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of my ideas. Passion for excellent choral music should drive every choice we make for our choirs. In future articles, I'll continue to share some thoughts on this subject, and provide suggestions for programming which I hope will be helpful and practical to many.

Years ago, the great Daniel Moe was a clinician here in Ohio at our summer conference. Talk about literary passion! That man was a walking encyclopedia of choral repertoire. I never forgot his comment that, when choosing literature for his choirs, he only programmed music which he "couldn't NOT do!" Thank you, Dr. Moe. At that moment, I realized as a young teacher, I was still guilty of programming the occasional piece which "would work." Never again – I was sentenced to a lifetime of poring through piles of choral literature. But.... when one begins work on that pile of 100 excellent pieces, and ends the process with five chosen compositions, the passion with which you'll present the music to your choir will be palpable.

Wow. Gucci at Sears' prices! Aren't we the lucky ones?

- Loren Veigel is Artistic Director of Voices of Canton, Inc. and President of the Ohio Choral Directors Association.

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CHICAGO 2016.... HERE WE COME!

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE IN BRIEF

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Headline Evening Concert:

Bach's *St. John Passion*, performed by the Valparaiso
University Bach Institute, with the Leipzig
Baroque Orchestra

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Concert Performances By:

All-Conference Sing
Soul Children of Chicago
College of Wooster (OH) Chorus
Downers Grove (IL) South HS Madrigal Singers
Cantus Femina (Western Michigan University)
Marion Consort (Chicago)
Bienen Contemporary/Early Music Ensemble
(Northwestern University)
Western Michigan University Chorus

Interest Sessions/Topics:

VOCES8
Using Circle Singing to Enliven Choral Creativity
Raising the Bar: Teaching World Music More
Authentically
Leipzig Orchestra Conductors
Choral Techniques and Expectations for Every Age
Boys to Men: Recruiting, Retaining, and Inspiring
Boys Who Like to Sing
Collegiate Repertoire Chorale

Reading Sessions:

Children's Choir
SATB
Show Choir
Music in Worship

Headline Evening Concert:

Webern Kammerchor
VOCES8
Ola Gjeilo

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Youth & Student Activities Breakfast Roundtable

Interest Sessions/Topics:

Choral Intonation
Fun + Fabulous Sight Singing
Collegiate Repertoire Chorale
Webern Kammerchor
Adolescent Voice Change
Parlez-vous IPA?
International Conductor Exchange Program

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26 (continued)

Concert Performances By:

Bexley (OH) High School Vocal Ensemble
Saint Mary's College (IN) Women's Choir
NOTUS (Indiana University)
University of Evansville (IN) University Choir
Cincinnati (OH) Boychoir Tour Choir
University of Cincinnati (OH) College - Conservatory
of Music Chamber Choir
Fort Wayne (IN) Children's Choir
Bella Voce of Young Naperville (IL) Singers
Chicago Children's Choir

Lunchtime Sharing Session:

Lift Every Voice: A Panel of Chicago Educators

Reading Sessions:

SAB & SATB
Treble
Vocal Jazz

Headline Evening Concert:

Children's Choir Festival
Central Division Children's Honor Choir,
Rollo Dilworth, conducting

Special Event:

Choral Cabernet

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Interest Sessions/Topics:

Mentoring the New Choral Conductor
Off the Beaten Path - CPDL
From Victoria to Verdi

Reading Sessions:

Middle School/Junior High
Men's
Ethnic/Multicultural

Headline Concert Sessions:

Division Middle School Girls' Honor Choir,
Ruth Dwyer, conducting
Division Middle School Boys' Honor Choir,
Henry Leck, conducting
Division High School Honor Choir,
Joe Miller, conducting

Lift Every Voice, from p. 1



Soul Children of Chicago



Valparaiso University Bach Institute

Christopher Cock and the Valparaiso University Bach Institute, with the Leipzig Baroque Orchestra. Our headliner choir, VOCES8, a professional ensemble from England, will sing a program of unaccompanied and vocal jazz selections, with a premiere of a work and a performance by Ola Gjeilo.

The Soul Children of Chicago, under the direction of Walter Whitman, will begin the day on Thursday morning, calling all to “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” with the Chicago Children’s Choir, under the direction of Josephine Lee, featured in the Children’s Choir Festival concert. There will be luncheon meetings in the exhibit hall featuring the conductor and the founder of the Webern Kammerchor, Johannes Heimetsberger and Alois Glassner, and a panel of choir directors from Chicago discussing the urban choir. The premiere of the Raymond Brock Composition will be performed by NOTUS of Indiana University, under the direction of Dominick DiOrio.



Chicago Children’s Choir



NOTUS

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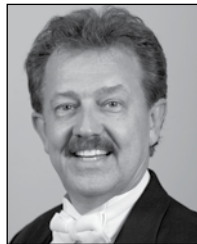
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Miller



Dwyer



Leck



Dilworth

continued, next page



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ACDA Executive Director Tim Sharp will give us an update on the state of ACDA and a report about the progress of the 2017 ACDA National Conference in Minneapolis.

An important consideration - credit toward your teacher certificate renewal is available when you attend this conference. Instead of taking a class online or attending a seminar which has nothing to do with choral conducting, you can rest assured that you will learn something that you will be able to use the next day on the podium, have the opportunity to network with other directors, gain fresh perspective on programming and most assuredly, you will be inspired!

Please contact your choral director friends in your state, and plan on attending the ACDA Central Division Conference in Chicago. The hard working Central Division planning board members will be looking for you!

- Mary Evers is Choral Director at Greenfield-Central High School in Indiana and serves the ACDA Central Division as 2016 Conference Program Chair.

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As a two-year college conductor, I frequently find myself asking some version of the following question. How can I elevate my choral program beyond the stereotype of being a pseudo-purgatory between the memories of high school and the allure of a university? So many of our students arrive with either an inflated sense of high school accomplishments, convinced that a mere community college could never further their development, or with serious musical deficiencies and a general ignorance of the larger community of choral music and musicians. It's one of the greatest challenges facing two-year college conductors and, although I may not have found the answer, I've found something that works for me!

Until recently, I had always thought of ACDA student chapters as an entity exclusive to the university setting. After all, as an organization dedicated to the choral art, it makes sense to focus energies on developing the next generation of conductors, but we generally aren't focused on developing conductors until the third and fourth years of a student's baccalaureate studies. In fact, that's one of the aspects of teaching at a two-year college where I've often felt like I'm missing out; there's no opportunity for teaching the classes that transition the student from singer to conductor. What's more, we expect them to commit upon arrival to a degree program such as music education, with little to no academic or practical opportunity for them to discover if they will even like the sensation of leading a choir. All of these concerns led me to establish an ACDA student chapter at my two-year college, and the results have been spectacular.

Having a student chapter has really opened my eyes to how limited our program was, in terms of student-driven creativity. At each point in the process of repertoire selection, rehearsing the choirs, writing program notes, and eventually conducting the concerts, I failed to recognize countless opportunities for student engagement and profound learning. However, since establishing the student chapter in 2013, I've discovered an entirely new methodology that encourages students to engage in aspects of choral music education that exceed their current academic coursework. For example, our chapter holds one hour meetings twice a month where we regularly work on basic conducting, choral warm-up techniques, and have even held

teaching workshops where a student teaches a short choral work to the rest of the chapter. At the students' request, we've also started a tradition of student-led warm-ups every Friday in Concert Choir, an established ensemble with approximately 45 singers.

One of the highlights of each semester is a competition where students vie for the opportunity to conduct the Concert Choir in an actual concert. The chosen student is then able to make interpretive decisions and work with the choir in rehearsal to see their plan through to the concert. Beyond their immediate value, all of these activities get students thinking like a conductor, which has had a truly positive impact on their achievement in our choirs.

I urge choral educators at any high school or college to consider establishing a student chapter as a means of encouraging their singers' creativity and discovering the leadership potential in every student. You never know where it may lead!

- Andy Jensen is Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choral and Vocal Activities at Southwestern Illinois College. He serves as Repertoire & Standards Chair for Two-Year Colleges.

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YOUTH & STUDENT ACTIVITIES

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Each year, I search not only for great music and performance opportunities for my choir, but also for an idea, concept or theme to inspire and “re-set” the ensemble’s vitality button. Often this becomes the focus for our fall choir retreat, but

throughout the year I periodically refer to the theme. Just mentioning our focal point brings smiles and positive comments, which can transform a “ho-hum” rehearsal spirit into a laboratory of expectant, energized imagination.

One summer, I stumbled upon a TED talk about lightning bugs. This talk enlivened my own imagination and stimulated my personal desire to live in WONDER more of the time;

It reminded me to contemplate the marvel of nature, of the brain and human body, of relationship, and of course, of the impact of music. Sharing these concepts with my choir set up a launch pad from which to share further insights that drew them into the wonder of each piece. To process and immerse themselves in this notion, the girls wrote poetry in small groups during the retreat, and shared them. Throughout the year, just an allusion to one of the poems transported us back into the initial inspirational experience.

Over the years, I’ve used for inspiration a piece of literature, a painting, an analogy, a children’s story book, a poem or simply a question. Meeting only twice weekly, rehearsal efficiency is a must for the choir, but brief references to our theme instantaneously “vitalizes” and prompts fresh imaginative passion and vulnerability. Recently, referring to one of the short quotes from our 2015 theme, “Adventure,” prompted new commitment and

expectancy about the challenging trek we are currently taking together as a choir. The promise of exhilaration at the crest of our musical mountain helped us set aside the mundane and generated a fresh focus. This process built both communal and musical bonds.

You and I have to find ways to reclaim our own vitality if we want to be a catalyst for the energies of our students. Each time I fly, I’m reminded that in the event of a sudden cabin pressure problem, I may need to help someone with their oxygen mask... but this will

only be possible if I put on my own first. The ACDA

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- Beth Holmes is conductor of the Millikin (University) Women in Decatur, Illinois and serves as Central Division Repertoire & Standards Chair for Women’s Choirs.

*You and I have to find ways
to reclaim our own vitality if we
want to be a catalyst for the energies
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LET YOUR MISSION STATEMENT HELP YOU!



In this, my first article for *Resound*, I want to share some best practices that are working for the Community Chorus of Detroit which may be helpful to you. When you hear the word Detroit, I'm sure many connotations come to mind. We are, after all, the largest city in the history of the United States to experience bankruptcy. We experienced race riots

in 1967 and have been the end of many jokes nationwide. Now, in 2015, we have emerged with a resurgence that is enviable to most other cities. Our investments in real estate, technology, and entrepreneurship are doing great things for our city. Detroit is a destination for so many reasons, not just a connecting flight.

I begin with these facts because being a community chorus in Detroit would somehow imply that we could be excused if we had relaxed some standards. We could be forgiven if we didn't deliver excellent performances, produce financially sustainable programs, all the while ignoring the diversity of our city. I am happy to say that that is not the case!

The core work of the group is anchored in the mission statement of the chorus. Anyone who has ever had one foot in the corporate world and the other in the music world will know that building mission statements is not why we went to music school. Wordsmithing is not our profession, nor is it our passion, but when a well written mission statement can be your support as a director, that is when a little hard work goes a long way.

I offer ours as a template: *The Community Chorus of Detroit is dedicated to serving the Metro Detroit area, with an emphasis on the city of Detroit, by providing opportunities for the enjoyment of musical excellence to a community of both choristers and audience members,*

richly diverse in every way. The CCD is committed to maintaining the highest levels of artistic and professional integrity through its selection of great music, its leadership and organizational development, its rigorous expectations, and its outreach, while providing an outstanding overall experience for its choristers. In its membership and in all areas of its work, the Community Chorus of Detroit embodies and celebrates diversity, tolerance, and acceptance.

I don't have to tell you that there will be times when there will be disagreements between advisory board members or among very well-meaning singers. You may be challenged as to why you are asking the chorus to be so precise. "Couldn't we be a community chorus and be more welcoming to others if we were singing easier music and simply having a good time in rehearsals?" In a word, no. In the three mission statement sentences, we have laid out the course of action: a commitment to our city, to musical excellence, and to diversity. You, as the director, now have the support you need to make musical decisions. If your mission statement is really great, it becomes your canon of ideas: how you approach singers and the audience; how you carry yourselves; how you speak about your work and who you aspire to be. It's not just who you are, but rather who you seek to be. It's not just the literal words, but also the implied words that build upon each other in a tapestry of a diverse community that transforms into family. This is the reward of your hard work in a foundational mission statement. Go for it!

- Edward Maki-Schramm, Central Division Repertoire & Standards Chair for Community Choirs, is Conductor and Artistic Director of the Community Chorus of Detroit.



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One of the wonderful things about working with developing singers is that every musical experience that they create is new and exciting. By creating an environment that fosters trust and confidence, these singers become our strongest assets, both in their training ensembles and down the line in the more advanced ensembles.

For many students in beginning ensembles, it is very likely that this is their introduction to singing and choral music. They may be shy. They may sing all the time at home and feel comfortable doing so in front of family and friends, but feel nervous about having to do so in front of many new peers. This is why it is so important to focus on building an environment that makes each singer feel safe, comfortable and valued as a person. If we build a safe space for the child to enter into, they feel comfortable opening up socially, emotionally, and vocally. This can be as simple as welcoming each singer at the door as they enter for rehearsal. In addition to learning the name of each singer, finding out personal information helps them to feel valued as a successful contributor in their choir. It's also important for each singer to get to know the singers around them. Communication between singers, the director, and each other is key to building an environment of trust.

Another factor in creating a successful choral environment is establishing clear expectations from day one. In school, students are used to abiding by a specific set of expectations and procedures to get them successfully through the day. If singers are new to a choral setting, they may not be familiar with rehearsal expectations. What comes naturally to older singers is foreign to developing singers and needs to be taught, so that they can comfortably

bridge the gap between where they are and where they are headed as choral musicians.

Additionally, with young singers, it's much easier to adjust behavior, when necessary, through positive reinforcement. By publicly acknowledging a singer who is standing with correct singing posture or efficiently getting the next piece of music ready to go, other singers around them are reminded of what is acceptable in a rehearsal setting. A simple, "I really appreciate how fast row two got out their scores and are quietly looking at me, ready to go" goes a lot farther with beginning singers than, "Everyone be quiet so that we can move on to the next piece of music." By choosing to comment on the behavior that you are looking for your singers to emulate as opposed to negatively commenting on a behavior that is disruptive, you are still relaying your expectations to your singers, but in a much more positive and loving manner.

It is much easier going into a new situation and feeling comfortable expressing yourself if you have a support system in your director and a group of "your people" around you that you can trust. The goal is always for singers to feel comfortable in both personality and voice, so that we as directors can help them to grow as musicians and as young people. These developing singers, if given the tools and materials to be successful, will grow into the singers of our advanced choirs and eventually become adults who value singing and are supporters of the arts in our communities.

- Sandy Thornton, Assistant Artistic Director of the Cincinnati Children's Choir, is Central Division Repertoire & Standards Chair for Children's and Youth Community Choirs.



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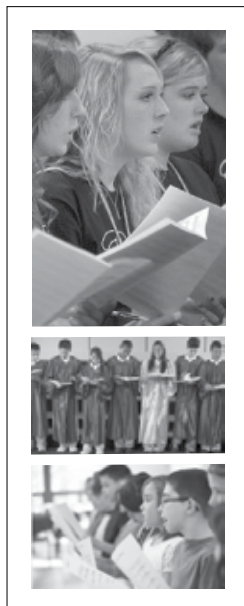
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THE LAST WORD



In reading through the articles submitted for this issue of *Resound*, I was struck by two themes - the areas of inspiration (Beth Holmes, Dennis Morrissey) and selection of quality literature for choirs to sing (Loren Veigel), and how they fit together.

We have the immense privilege (and responsibility) of selecting what amounts to new “textbooks” for our ensembles each year. In selecting the literature for choirs, we first have to know the ability levels of the singers - as I often tell students, “While a challenge is a good thing, you also don’t get extra points for doing a difficult piece but then singing it poorly.” We have to consider the personality of the ensemble - what will they like, what will they grow to like, and what will they grow to at least respect? It’s funny how this works. One year, a group will greatly dislike a piece and another year the same piece will work really well with a different group.

I had a colleague once who only programmed pieces with her choirs that SHE absolutely loved, not really considering the opinion or feelings of the groups, figuring that if she couldn’t be enthusiastic about the piece, how could the groups? While I saw a bit of her point, I think that singing in a choir is about the singers, not about the director. We can, however, help to shape singers’ taste by the literature choices we make.

When I started in my current position, the groups were largely accustomed to singing pop music with accompaniment tracks, doing more traditional literature at festival time (but sometimes just barely). After several years of listening to and working on better quality literature, the students’ tastes changed. While they may not have

selections by Mozart or Palestrina highest on their play list, they might at least give them a chance.

We probably all have a list of selections that we feel every singer should perform (or at least to which they should be exposed) during their choral lifetime. I have my mental list, and on it are the William Dawson spirituals and the Palestrina “Sicut cervus.” I played a recording of the latter for one of the choirs at my school a few weeks ago after we had read through the piece, and then put it away, as we were preparing for the winter concert and other music had to come first. At least once a week since then, different students asked when we would be singing it again or commented on how they enjoyed it. To me, that is inspiring - a piece from several hundred years ago can still touch the heart of a high school student.

I will be hosting a student teacher this spring, and I look forward to seeing what impact she will be able to have on the choirs at our school, and what she will learn from them. She came to visit one morning and I was pleased to see that she is an ACDA member already planning to attend the Central Division conference.

While the Central Division is the smallest geographically, and while other Divisions may have larger or more elaborate conferences, I would wager that the Central Division has something for everyone and on top of that, has the friendliest members. Come to Chicago February 24-27 to escape the midwinter blahs and get inspired for the rest of 2016, and lift your voice in song! You’ll be glad that you did! Thanks for reading *Resound*.

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

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Spring issue: March 15 (April delivery)

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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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