The Gift of Mentorship

When we are in college pursuing our music degrees, we are consistently surrounded by a vast support system of college professors, advisors, and peer colleagues. We get instant feedback on all that we do as choral directors and get the opportunity to work as collaborators with others. Often, upon graduating and landing that first job, be it in a music classroom, church, community choir, or elsewhere, the guidance from others becomes difficult to find.

This absence is why it is so important to establish a program of mentorship with a trusted, experienced colleague. When I graduated from college, I knew an awful lot about conducting patterns and repertoire selection, but very little about rehearsal management and absolutely nothing about classroom management. It wasn’t until I was thrust into my first teaching position that I realized exactly what I didn’t know, which, at that time seemed like a lot! I was very lucky to have a veteran teacher at the same school who was willing to take me under her wing and “show me the ropes” of what it really meant to be a school choral director and to run a successful choral program. She let me observe her most advanced classes, her beginning classes, and her most challenging classes, and then I had the opportunity to have her observe my teaching and give feedback on what I was doing and how I was doing it. She was a sounding board for me, gave me honest responses on my directing, and provided many ideas that helped me to move forward in my own teaching.

I often think back to that first year of teaching and am very thankful to have had such a great mentor. Today, when we are so often losing very good educators and choral directors in the field due to burnout, it is imperative to establish a mentorship program for new choir directors and music educators. Many school districts and regions have mentorship programs for new teachers, but for those that are not in a school setting, there are also many resources available. ACDA has its own mentorship program, open to members across the nation. Information can be found at <https://mentoring.acda.org>. Additionally, many state choral director associations and education associations have established mentorship programs.

Ultimately, as a new choral educator, we want to be as successful as possible in those first, formative years. It’s important to know that the struggles that we all face are not singular only to our experience and to find an ally in our professional growth. However, mentorship is not something that is useful only for beginning choir directors, but for directors at every stage in their professional journey. It is a life long collaboration and connection between you and someone that you respect and look up to in the choral field. I have been fortunate to have such an ally in every step that I’ve taken professionally and know first hand the impact that it can make in shaping the path that we take.

If you are new to this wonderful and challenging field, or even if you are a seasoned director, I would encourage you to reach out and find a mentor, be it someone in your community or in the ACDA community. There are many superb choral musicians and clinicians out there who would love to help to guide you in your growth as a choral director.

- Sandy Thornton, Assistant Artistic Director of the Cincinnati Children’s Choir, is Central Division Chair for Children’s and Youth Community Choirs.
Lessons from Robert Shaw: Cleveland Orchestra Chorus Notes 1957-1964

For over 50 years, Robert Shaw (1916-1999) was a choral conductor of the highest caliber; he was a forward-thinking individual who was forward-thinking in American choral music. His recorded performances, especially of choral-orchestral works, were seminal, and his choral arrangements remain staples of choral programming. Many choral conductors working today utilize concepts and rehearsal techniques taught and codified by Robert Shaw.

A few years ago, a colleague shared with me a folder containing copies of elaborate notes that Shaw wrote to the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus during 1957-1964, when he served as guest conductor. I often read these communiqués when I need motivation; Shaw’s discussion of rhythm, diction, and phrasing remind me how to do choral music well, and his philosophy of choral singing reminds why I love what I do. The notes contain numerous gems of wisdom that I would like to share.

Shaw wrote to the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus energetically between rehearsals, sharing in-depth descriptions of rhythm, phrasing, and diction, as well as discussions on the intersection of music and humanity. Each inter-rehearsal note was lengthy, 3-5 single-spaced, typed pages. The fact that Shaw wrote such long notes is instructive; he used written notes to extend his teaching and deepen his connection with the choir.

Many of Shaw’s notes celebrate the coming together of community in choral singing. In January of 1957, he wrote a paragraph that is still meaningful today, perhaps even more so:

“All of us are variously split and fissured...Still, on a Monday night it happens that whatever each of us essentially is, is openly and freely given to the other outside us — and to the common work and joy, discipline and freedom. For a while we do not fear knowing or being known. We trust — perhaps even love — our neighbor, nor feel obliged to hate ourselves.”

Shaw dedicated large portions of his notes to motivate the singers toward a high standard. He repeatedly emphasized the importance of individual responsibility on group success. In November 1957, while preparing the Bach B Minor Mass, he wrote “In the main, the jumble rumble jungle of choral imprecision need not exist if each entire person will accept a whole responsibility.” In January of that year, he wrote that a choir is a group of individuals “who accept personal responsibility, and bring to a performance of the whole each his utmost endowment, preparedness, and sensitivity.”

Shaw emphasized the importance of commitment to the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus, saying, “You don’t join the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus. You believe it...either you feel the fellow next to you is an important human being, and you like him, and you try desperately to understand how he feels about what you are singing about, and pool your creative passions to make something bigger than either of you could make alone – or it isn’t your kind of choir.”

It is interesting to see how passionate Shaw was when discussing commitment to the ensemble. It is easy to imagine that his message played an important role in motivating the singers to be at their best.

I find it reassuring to see that even Robert Shaw had to scold his singers with regards to rehearsal attendance and focus. Shaw sharply addressed singer tardiness in a note from 1961, saying, “This chorus has been and will continue to be understanding and sympathetic to occasional and unavoidable absence. — But it cannot tolerate tardiness and inattention and remain true to its aspiration, or valuable to the probable majority of its members to whom the experience has some meaning. A little tardiness is inexcusable. — And since it is also lethal -- as witness Monday evening — it merits the most stringent of remedies and penalties.”

Later he expands on this by suggesting that singers come early enough to prepare their minds for rehearsal, saying, “I cannot see that five to ten minutes prior to the beginning of rehearsal spent in one’s proper place, reviewing or examining the materials to be rehearsed, is too much to ask, but [would] add enormously to the joy and accomplishment of rehearsal.”

In his notes, Shaw dedicated a great deal of space to rhythm, which he felt to be the most primary element in music. In September 1960, he explained that all aspects of choral performance, including enunciation, intonation, and tone quality, are based on rhythmic cohesion. “Good enunciation happens when 200 people make intelligible, attractive sounds at the same time. Good intonation is the result of singing in tune in time.” Shaw

Please see Shaw, page 13
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Detroit, Michigan
I am writing this at home as the fall semester is at an end and winter has nearly arrived. Outside, the sky is gray, patches of snow dot the ground, and the temperature nears single digits. This is a time for honest reflection. This afternoon, my reflections center on Illinois ACDA - our recent past and immediate future.

Fall 2016 was a good time for our organization. At its September meeting, the board voted to hold a state conference in the fall of 2017 in the Chicago suburban area. Chairman Brett Goad and his team will soon announce the location, dates, and events.

The third annual Honor Show Choir Festival sponsored by IL-ACDA was held in October at Wheaton North High School in Wheaton. R&R Show Choir Chair Kassy Krause and assistants Sara Langley and Debora Utley selected an auditioned choir of 48 talented high school singers from 13 schools who worked for two and a half days with clinicians Dwayne Davis (vocals, Indiana University), Nancy Bocek (choreography, Chicago), and accompanist Seth Durbin. This festival was again highly successful, both musically and financially.

The following week, a first-time festival was held to encourage and inspire chorale singers from the often underserved populations of the Chicago public schools. This free one-day festival, called Join Voices, Chicago!, was intended to draw choirs together in song. Over 500 singers from 13 schools met on the campus of Xavier University on Chicago's southwest side. The choirs sang for one another and then workedhopped with guest clinician Raymond Wise of Indiana University (Central Division Chair for Ethnic American Music). Perhaps the highlight of the day was the performance of a gospel tune by the combined choirs which included a soloist from each of the choirs. Energy was high, faces were bright, the excitement was palpable. This festival was clearly a success!

The attendees at the Join Voices, Chicago! festival deserve recognition. Directors are listed, with schools in parentheses: Anne Grey (Franklin Arts Elementary), Andrew Holly-Jones (Air Force Academy), Richard Nunley (Kenwood High School), Ladawn Adams (Kennedy High School), Andrew Sons (Solorio Academy High School), Sharon Quattrin (Hubbard High School), Gabe Foster (Morgan Park High School), Grace Jeong (Whitney Young High School), Casey Fuess (Lindblom High School), Tim Cooper (Lincoln Park High School), Brian Pavloff (Pritzker College Prep), Nancy Bieschke (Kelly High School), Whitney Covalle (Jones High School), and Ron Korbitz (Hills Middle School, invited performance headliners).

This festival was conceived and chaired by Karyl Carlson (Illinois State University and Central Division Chair for Youth & Student Activities). Karyl is to be thanked and congratulated for her vision and perseverance. For many years, she has dreamed of making such an event a reality and over time has successfully involved the board in sharing her dream.

Karyl was ably assisted by Grace Jeong (Whitney Young High School), Laura Bogan (St. Xavier University), and Lee Kesselman (College of DuPage). For providing financial support, recognition is due to ACDA’s Fund for Tomorrow and to Illinois ACDA.

Reflecting on IL-ACDA in 2017, ILMEA’s Illinois Music Education Conference (IMEC), held in Peoria each January, comes to mind. IL-ACDA events include a board meeting, a choral directors’ reception, and a reading session. The one-hour reading session is attended by some 550 choral directors who are provided with 20+ pieces of free choral music by Kidder Music Service (Peoria). Each R&R chairperson conducts one or two pieces during the session. This is a wonderful opportunity for our R&R chairs to be seen and heard, for us to cultivate potential collegiate members, and for IL-ACDA to present a welcoming face.

February will witness the presentation of the 2017 Women’s Choir Festival for high school choirs on the campus of the College of DuPage just west of Chicago. Four excellent clinicians will work with the various participating choirs. Female Choir R&R Chair Aubrey Dunham is excited to again oversee the festival.

The National Conference in Minneapolis will have Illinois ACDA representation from our four selectees for the National Conference Collegiate Scholarships offered through National ACDA, and from Illinois State University (Karyl Carlson, director), the university selected to send an SATB quartet to participate in the 200-voice Collegiate Honor Choir which will perform at the conference.

Please see Illinois, page 13
This may seem like an odd time of year to write on this subject, but it’s uppermost in my mind right now. I recently replaced a colleague as the conductor of a 70+ person beginning female choir, grades 9 - 11. They had already worked together for about three months and had performed in a concert before I took over. In spite of that, it quickly became evident that the choir lacked community.

In my experience as a high school choir teacher, it’s not unusual for a beginning choir to lack community. Nevertheless, I still had to decide how to create it. That led me to ponder what “community” is, chorally speaking. Of course, there are some shared aspects for any community. Briefly, a community should (at least)

- create shared norms and values
- create opportunities for fellowship
- create an environment of trust and reciprocity

Every good organization and classroom values community. If the members of a class or a team don’t know each other well enough to experience trust and reciprocity, it will lack community. Classroom routines, such as being in your seat at the beginning of class, prepared to sing, represent a “norm.” A good teacher has to find a way to encourage and enforce those norms without creating an oppressive atmosphere within the choir. A rigorous approach to rehearsals, working bell-to-bell, with little down time for transitions are both a norm and a “value.” Students eventually comprehend that teaching music is important. Like many of you, my beginning choirs include students with special needs, students who move in from other school systems, other states, other countries, and several who have never taken choir (last year, I had young men enrolled who had never sung a note in their lives!). It can certainly be a struggle to impart these building blocks of choral community to individuals who are unfamiliar with choral standards.

Once you establish a routine, you can create an atmosphere that leads to something more than mere community. Every good choir is a breeding ground for strong friendships. Routines give way to shared experiences, including travel, concerts, and perhaps contests. Singers who share the heightened emotional and physical pleasure of singing during a performance want to re-create those experiences. It’s not surprising, therefore, that singers may want to pursue outside opportunities to perform with each other or simply to hang out. An advanced choir, or at least some individuals within the choir, should achieve fellowship. For beginning choirs, you will probably have to create opportunities for community. Seasonal parties or decorating your room gives a welcome break from routine and allows the students to see each other and you in a different light.

ACDA strives for community and fellowship among its membership. Our experiences mirror our students. We meet at conferences and contests, and in between the times we are working at our craft, we spend time chatting, eating, and listening to other groups. A session leader can present great information and tools in an organized and inspirational manner, but your strongest impressions and most important decision may be made while you are having a conversation with a friend as you walk to lunch.

The Indiana Choral Directors Association runs our high school All-State Honor Choir. The choir performs each year as part of the Indiana Music Education Association conference that is held in January. The conference presents yet another opportunity to expand our professional community as we interact with our band and orchestra colleagues. Just as importantly, though, conferences such as this allow us to meet our friends “in the bleak midwinter,” a time when most of us need a strong dose of community.

- Rick Gamble is Choral Director at Avon High School and serves as President of the Indiana Choral Directors Association.
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Greetings from snowy Michigan! This past calendar year has been a great year for ACDA-Michigan. Here are a few highlights.

On October 28 and 29, we held the ACDA-MI Fall Conference at First United Methodist Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan. We were honored to host Z. Randall Stroope (Oklahoma State University) and Carol Beynon (University of Western Ontario) as our conference headliners. Stroope presented thoughtful interest sessions on a variety of subjects: Music and Memory, Practical Medicine for Pitch Irregularity, and a session on rehearsal arch from first rehearsal to performance. Beynon presented a moving interest session titled, “Singing my way back to you: Reflecting on the singing and learning journeys of persons with Alzheimer’s Disease, caregivers, high school singers and choral directors in an intergenerational choir.” The research that she presented was compelling, showing the real ways that singing in an intentional intergenerational choir can have meaningful impacts on singers in all stages of life. More about this project on intergenerational singing can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5oQNh6ydbo>.

The headliner choir at our conference was Primus: Amabile Men’s Choir, under the direction of Carol Beynon and Mark Payne. The men presented a varied concert with a number of selections by Canadian choral composers. As a part of this concert, the Maynard Klein Award was presented to Karen Nevins for distinguished service to choral music in Michigan. Congratulations to Karen for her many years of service to ACDA-MI.

Another highlight of the fall conference was the final concert session that featured an honor choir made up of singers from community colleges throughout the state of Michigan. We were thrilled to have more than 200 singers gather in the sanctuary to present a concert under the direction of Gabriela Hristova (University of Michigan-Flint). Many thanks go to Stephen Barton for his vision to make this experience a reality. I also want to thank the individual conductors who brought choirs to participate in this community college honor choir: Grand Rapids Community College Concert Choir and Madrigal Singers (Stephen Barton), Kalamazoo Valley Community Chorus (Michelle Bauman), Lansing Community College Singers (Kelly Stubble-Clark), Macomb Community College Chorale (Stuart Scott), Muskegon Community College Singers (Thomas Clark), Mott Community College (Matthew Packer), Northwestern Michigan College Chamber Singers (Jeff Cobb), Southwestern Michigan College Select Voices (David Carew).

The conference also included interest sessions presented by Thomas Blue (Junior High/Middle School R&R Chair) and Greg Jasperse (Vocal Jazz R&R Chair). Other sessions included a student interest session on job interviews, a multi-repertoire reading session, and two conducting master classes (undergraduate and graduate). Congratulations to the performing choirs at the conference: Berrien Springs Middle School 7th and 8th Grade Choir (Carrie VanDenburgh), Rockford High School Advanced Women’s Ensemble (Mandy Mikita Scott), Grand Valley State University Arts Chorale (Ellen Pool), Michigan State University Young Women’s Chorus (Kyle Zeuch), Lake Orion High School Chamber Choir (Bryce Thompson), Central Michigan University Chamber Singers (Nina Nash Robertson), and Measure for Measure (Steve Lorenz). So many individuals worked tirelessly to make the fall conference a success. It is an honor to work with a dedicated ACDA board in Michigan.

We have had great success in our Sing UP! membership drive in Michigan, thanks to the work of Erin Colwitz (Membership Chair) and Kimberly Adams (Student Activities Chair). We have seen an increase in active membership (14.8%) and student membership (17.4%). We have a number of active student chapters throughout the state with a lot of exciting work being done by our student members.

Also in October, ACDA-MI hosted a Male Choral Festival on the campus of Eastern Michigan University with Eugene Rogers as guest conductor. Many thanks go to Brandon Johnson (College/University R&R Chair) and Susan Matych Hager (Men’s Choir R&R Chair) for their work in organizing this festival. It is a great time to be a choral musician in the state of Michigan. Our talented conductors and singers are touching many lives and creating such beautiful music!

- 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.
BEFORE I JUMP DOWN …

It’s getting windy and cold up here on my choral literature soapbox, but I hope you’ll allow me to shout out one last time from this vantage point. The view’s great from up here! Over my presidency, I’ve encouraged all of my choral colleagues to return to the well of great literature, fortifying our significance within the curriculum, deepening the quality of our students’ learning experience, and “classing up” choral libraries which will remain valuable for generations.

In my last article, I submitted suggestions of music from all periods which are accessible teaching pieces for choirs of any level. For this last article in this series, I want to share some personal favorites. When my choral mentors (Bruce Browne, Rodney Eichenberger, Daniel Moe) lit the fire of passion for choral music within me, I realized there’s no time to spare in doing “usable” music – every programmed piece must be of the highest artistic caliber. This sent me on the lifelong mission (and curse) of constantly looking for new music.

The search is worth it. Allow me to share with you some pieces through which my students and I had “mountaintop” experiences. I’m sure some are already part of your repertoire, yet some seem to be seldom performed.

• “Revecy venir du printemps,” Claude le Jeune (Bourne B210930). Take your students to our roots and dance.
• “Music, Spread Thy Voice,” Handel (Belwin MC4132). A “theme song” for singers, it brings to your choir the glories of the Baroque and the joy of music over centuries.
• “Singet Dem Herrn,” Pachelbel (AMSI 329). Without overwhelming difficulty, the choir experiences psalmody in German and double choir antiphonal singing.
• Mount of Olives: “Hallelujah,” Beethoven. This is a lost “chestnut” of great value. Once a staple of every “big-school” choir, it’s worth dusting off!
• “Valse avec choeur,” Bizet (Schott AP518). It requires a top-notch pianist, but what sheer French joy!
• Quatre Motets: “Ubi Caritas,” Maurice Durufle (Durand 312-41253). Beauty beyond words.
• The Masque of Angels: “Gloria”, Dominick Argento (Boosey & Hawkes OCTB5932). Contemporary, fugal, manic – the best of compositional art. It allows the teaching of fugue, augmentation, diminution, and retrograde.
• “Hymne au Soleil,” Lili Boulanger (G. Schirmer 12352). Featuring great piano scoring and soloists, it is soaring and ethereal.
• “Requiem: In Remembrance,” Eleanor Daley (Gordon Thompson). This uses a priceless, moving text.
• Search Me O God and Know My Heart,” James Fritschel (Hinshaw HMC200) – compositional genius.
• “Walking On the Green Grass,” Michael Hennagin (Boosey & Hawkes OCTB5443). This one may be even more fun for the audience than the choir.
• “Let the People Praise Thee,” William Mathias (Oxford A331) Composed for a royal wedding, it is a great example of English cathedral writing of the twentieth century.
• “Venii,” Knut Nystedt (Jenson 427-23014) – challenging and deep.
• “The Boy Who Picked Up His Feet to Fly,” Joshua Shank (Santa Barbara SBMP450). A story-song of great delight; it gives a younger choir a chance to do some cool contemporary techniques.
• “Holiday Song,” William Schuman (G Schirmer 8927). Every choir should sing this one!
• “Kas Tie Tadi,” Steven Sametz (Alliance AMP 0087). Text and background very important.

I wish for you great joy as you continue to experience the wonders of our choral repertoire. Never stop searching for new or “new to you” music to teach and perform! Enjoy the experience of bringing historical perspective, cultural context, textual interpretation, and brilliant poetry to your students’ lives. Allow them to grow, think, emote, and create their own impressions of music which moves people to great lives, and … thank you for changing lives for the better, every day!

- Loren Veigel is Artistic Director of Voices of Canton, Inc. and President of the Ohio Choral Directors Association.
One of my favorite activities in rehearsal, which often transforms the notes on the page into engaged musical language with my students, is to invite singers into a “conversation with the composer.” I find this a very exciting step once the notes and rhythms are learned, utilizing questions which come from my own inductive study of the text and parallel study of the composer’s musical choices. Whether the composer is a contemporary or from a past century, this habit of studying his or her ideas and techniques as they relate to the text will not only deepen our insight as conductors, but whet the appetites of our singers to think artistically.

The goal of the questioning process is neither to take a speculative tangent nor to obtain the “right” answer, but to generate ideas about how to recreate the music, understanding the original intent of the composer. Try using these ideas for your own study:

**Overview:** Read the text aloud dramatically. Discover its context, note inflections & contrasts, mark the important words & color-meanings. Define any unusual words. Study the musical time period of the composer, his life and most common compositional traits.

**WWWWh questions:** Use questions like investigative tools that promote active discovery.

**WHO:** …is speaking, and does that change in the piece? …are the characters in the drama, or does the speaker narrate the story? …is the character addressing? …wrote the poem, and when/why? How does the composer characterize each character in the drama, musically speaking?

**WHAT:** …is the main message? …is the musical drama and setting? …are its key words/phrases? …part does silence/dissonance play in inflection? …do you learn about the composer from this piece? …dramatic part does the piano/obbligato instrument play? …is the historical context of text/music? …hinds do this composer’s choices show about her setting/interpretation of the poem?

**WHEN:** …was the poem/music written? Are there time words in the text to consider? Is there a time lapse in the drama of the piece, and what musical choices signal those time elements?

**WHERE:** …did the text come from, and if from a larger work, what happened before or after this portion? …is the climax of the text, according to the composer - what musical indications do you see?

**WHY:** …is the character speaking? …do you believe the composer choose this text? …did he/she choose this accompaniment, style, voicing, or tonality?

**HOW:** …is text painting used? …does the text relate to what I know of the composer/
poet's life? ...is musical punctuation used by composer (rests, interludes, fermata, rubato)? ...does the form of the piece relate to the form of the poem? ...does the composer’s choice of tessitura, instrumentation or mood reflect the text? ...how did the composer build/construct dramatic tension and/or climax?

Once you have unearthed some of the “jewels” beneath the surface of the notes on the page in your own study, you are ready to ASK singers some of the key questions day by day. Just choose a few at a time, and wait for their answers - don’t tell them your ideas too soon! As they experience this dialogue with the composer, they will come up with some wonderful ideas you may have missed. This process will take time in rehearsal, but I have found it to be well worth the precious minutes invested, in terms of the musical rewards.

The longer I teach, the more I realize that I can only get so far through direction (telling). So much LIFE in the music will only be revealed as we invite our students to experience moments of collaborative observation. Much like Magic Eye illusion puzzles, these moments of discovery are surprising and sudden, bringing delight to the process of singing and learning in community. So, pick up your tools - the questions - and have fun digging!

- Beth Holmes is conductor of the Millikin (University) Women in Decatur, Illinois and serves as Central Division Chair for Women’s Choirs.
Shaw, continued from page 2

compared the dimension of space in art and sculpture with the dimension of time in music. Time, he said is music’s “canvas,” and every moment must contain dramatic drive. Shaw frequently complained that singers abuse rests, treating them as “time-outs” instead of communicative, rhythmic silences.

Perhaps the most meaningful Shaw notes are those that describe the unique, special quality of the choral experience and remind choral singers and conductors why we devote our lives to this art form. In February 1961, Shaw wrote this eloquent “creed” regarding the purpose of choral music:

“We believe that the great music of great men is within the ken and affections of common people who mean to make it so. We believe that there is a community of creative spirit no less than a community of political system. And it seems to me that this union of spirits before goodness and beauty and truth is as close as men come in this life to the ends for which they were born. This establishes their humanity.”

There is much we can still learn from Robert Shaw. Although Shaw worked with outstanding adult singers, he still needed to motivate them, to develop a group purpose, and to teach the responsibility of the individual. He placed a high value on constant, close communication with his singers. He taught detailed lessons in his communiqués, so that singers continued learning between rehearsals. He devoted a great deal of time to sharing his view on music, aesthetics, and life with his singers. What a great model for us to follow.

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

Illinois, continued from page 4

The Illinois Community College Choral Festival will take place in April. It will be hosted by Harper College (Palatine) and Illinois ACDA. Choirs will perform for each other, then combine to rehearse and perform Rollo Dilworth’s “Shine on Me.” This no-cost festival has become an annual event under the leadership of state Two-Year College R&R Chair Tom Stauch.

As I finish writing, the sun has set and night has fallen, but tonight, as I reflect, I see no darkness falling on Illinois ACDA. Thanks to so many of our members who care deeply about their singers and each other, I am comforted to know that our organization is alive and well and is making a difference in the lives of others.

- 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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Freshman Visit Days:
- Friday, March 3
- Friday, April 14

Transfer Information Sessions:
- Monday, March 13
- Thursday, March 23
- Friday, April 7
- Thursday, April 20
- Monday, May 22

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Majors
- Music Education (choral or instrumental track)
- Music Performance
- Music Composition
- Music (liberal arts track)
- Jazz Studies

Scholarships available for majors and non-majors

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As we head into another Midwestern winter, it’s important to remember that we are all part of a community of singers and directors. We need to continue to recognize and to celebrate this status!

In reading over the state presidents’ articles written for this issue of *Resound* by Dennis Morrissey (page 4) and Jared Anderson (page 9), we see recognized many individuals doing service to singers and to ACDA members; in Rick Gamble’s article (page 5) we are reminded of the need for community for our choirs and ourselves. A great way to witness these contributions is by participating in ACDA and state music education association events and conferences. Many of these take place during the months when we all need a recharge of our batteries to fight the grey days of winter. They are great ways to see our colleagues, to discuss current trends and happening, and just to be with others who “get” what we do.

The ACDA National Conference will soon be taking place in Minneapolis, helping attendees to remember that there truly is “A Life of Song” present in our organization. We can sing all of our lives, and should do so, whether it be in a children’s, school, college/university, community, or house of worship choir. Using our built-in instrument is part of being human and a great source of creating community between people who otherwise might be strangers. If you are able to attend the ACDA National Conference, by all means, do! The inspiration is priceless.

Keeping in mind that time, location, and cost can often impact the ability to attend such a great event, I would also encourage you to find out when ACDA state conferences will take place and to make the commitment to attend. These conferences help to establish a feeling of community within a state or region and open up new resources of mentoring (page 1) as well. In my first two teaching positions, I was the only choral person in my building/s and sometimes felt very isolated. There was no program of mentoring and I frequently considered leaving the profession. I would encourage younger directors to seek out possible mentors and encourage more experienced directors to seek out the newcomers in your area, to share experiences and to learn from each other.

While most of us entered this particular profession to bring the beauty and inspiration of choral music to singers under our direction, we need to remember that we are also here to help each other! Give of your time, your talents, your experience, and sometimes of your choral library to help others—it’s a way to leave a different kind of legacy and one which can impact even more singers. I often tell my singers that I rarely come up with any new ideas—instead, I just “steal” (borrow?) from my colleagues. Isn’t that true of you, too?

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Thanks for reading *Resound* and for your contribution to choral singing in the Central Division!

- 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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