

# Resound

CENTRAL DIVISION  
AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION



Spring, 2017

*Resounding Through the Central Division!*

Volume 40, Number 3

Just back from the 2017 national ACDA conference in Minneapolis, it is time to look ahead to "Unite in Song," our 2018 division conference that will be shared with our neighbors in the North Central Division. As I mentioned in an article in last spring's issue of *Resound*, Chicago's 1500-seat Harris Theater will be our primary performance venue for the conference. Interest sessions and honors chorus rehearsals will be held at our conference hotels, the Fairmont and Swissôtel.

This is going to be a great conference, and as usual, you are invited and encouraged to send applications and proposals to have one of your choirs perform or to present an interest session. A new part of our conference will include sessions featuring choral pieces written by Central and North Central Division composers. Details for all submissions and the appropriate links can be found at our Central Division website <[www.acdacentral.org](http://www.acdacentral.org)>.

There is an exciting lineup of guest conductors for the honor choirs: [Francisco Núñez](#), [Judith Herrington](#), [Ryan Beeken](#), and [Jefferson Johnson](#). [René Clausen](#) will serve as director of the Collegiate Repertoire Chorale. I would encourage all active members to nominate their talented students for participation in these choirs. Mark your calendars now for February 14 - 17, 2018. We'll meet in the Windy City to "Unite in Song!"



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## PERFORMING CHOIR APPLICATIONS

Deadline: May 26, 2017

## INTEREST SESSION APPLICATIONS

Deadline: June 15, 2017

## CALL FOR SCORES: DIVISION COMPOSERS READING SESSIONS

Deadline: May 12, 2017

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Open: August 15, 2017

Close: September 29, 2017

**Go to <[www.acdacentral.org](http://www.acdacentral.org)> for the links!**

- *Mark Munson is Director of Choral Activities at Bowling Green (OH) State University and serves the ACDA Central Division as President-Elect.*



DO YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO HAS DEMONSTRATED PASSION, KNOWLEDGE, AND INTEGRITY IN WORK AND IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ACDA CENTRAL DIVISION? NOMINATE THAT PERSON FOR THE STACE STEGMAN AWARD - THE FORM IS ONLINE AT <[WWW.ACDACENTRAL.ORG](http://WWW.ACDACENTRAL.ORG)>. IT WILL BE AWARDED AT THE 2018 CONFERENCE!

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Volume 40, No. 3

William G. Niederer,  
Editor

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It's the music, no, it's the people, the music, the people, music, people...OK, the muple! Whatever we call it, it is the special combination of people coming together to make music that makes choral music, and ACDA, special.

Sometimes, on the path to becoming professionals, we can forget how important the relational aspect of our work is. Some 30 years ago, when I was in graduate school, my work focused on gathering, applying, and expressing my knowledge of the choral art; relationship-building somehow became a side conversation. I now believe that building relationships is the cornerstone of my work as a conductor. In the planning of an academic year, a concert, or a rehearsal, when I focus on the singers' needs, desires, and relationships, life-changing music follows. It's the people.

Ostensibly, an ACDA conference is about hearing amazing choral music and learning how to achieve excellence in one's own choir. However, I am just as moved by the people who serve our division. The volunteers who plan and work behind the scenes at a division conference are among the finest I have worked with. At the end of the 2016 Central Division Conference, Editor Bill Niederer and I talked about the privilege of working with the Conference Planning Committee, each individual a caring, energized, positive, dependable, team player. Our hearts were full. As we considered the gifts of this team, Bill said, "It restores your faith in humankind." Indeed. Brett Goad, Mary Evers, Kathy Walker, Bill Niederer, Jason McKee, Cyndi Orr, Mark Munson, Gabriela Hristova, Puja Ramaswamy, Eric Stark, Amanda Morris, Marie Palmer, Jane Brewer, Katheryn Vukson, Eugene Rogers, Rich Schnipke, Tom Tropp, Jonathan Busarow, Rob Sinclair, Jared Anderson, and Jim Yarbrough, you're the best. It's the people.

On July 1, I will complete my term as Central Division President and begin my term as Vice President. My deepest thanks go to the Central Division membership for the honor of serving you in this capacity. The very capable and calm Mark Munson will take office as President on July 1, and he will be a wonderful Division President. Mark is already working hard planning the next division conference, to be held in Chicago February 14-18, 2018. You won't want to miss it! The cover page of this issue gives important upcoming deadlines.

I am pleased to announce that Karyl Carlson will take office as President-Elect on July 1. Karyl served as President of Illinois ACDA 2013-2015 and is Director of Choral Activities at Illinois State University. Welcome to the Division Executive Board, Karyl!

On July 1, Vice President Brett Goad will complete his term on the Executive Board, six combined years as President-Elect, President, and Vice President. Brett, you are wise, warm, witty, and a fabulous "Yoda." Thank you for your outstanding leadership of the Central Division!

R and S Chairs will complete their terms in July as well – Bradley Koloch, Sue Moninger, Dan Andersen, Karyl Carlson, Beth Holmes, Eugene Rogers, Edward Maki-Schram, Sandy Thornton, Robert Jones, Raymond Wise, Debra Detwiler Brubaker, Mike Martin, Eric Richardson, and Debora Utley, thank you for sharing your repertoire expertise and articles!

The best is last - please join me in thanking *Resound* Editor Bill Niederer, who will retire as Editor on July 1. Bill has painstakingly and patiently created *Resound* since 2002 and Division Conference program books since 2008. Bill has had the unenviable job of being patient with the board as we juggle our busy work lives and article deadlines, and works on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (!) to meet program book deadlines. Bill, we are grateful to you for your many years of dedicated service. Thank you for facilitating the voice of the Central Division!

If you feel you need to find an extra ounce of hope in the world, and if you want to restore your faith in humankind, re-focus toward the people in your choirs. Work toward making other's lives better as they sing together. I encourage you to volunteer to help at an ACDA conference. It's the people!

*- Gayle Walker is Director of Choral Activities at Otterbein University and serves as President of the ACDA Central Division.*



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\*Coming Fall 2017, pending approval

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As I'm nearing the end of my presidency of Illinois ACDA, I've been reflecting upon the past two years. To the members of the Illinois ACDA Board of Directors I am especially indebted. I've had many opportunities to work

with, learn from, and be inspired by so many dedicated choral directors at the state, division, and national levels. I've encountered new colleagues and made new friends along the way, all of whom share a passion for enriching the lives of others through choral music. In return, our own lives become enriched. Thank you for the privilege of serving.

Two overarching ideas stand out to me as I look back, one from the beginning of my presidency, the other from near the end. Though neither is really new in Illinois ACDA, somehow they seemed that way to me at first blush, and I'd like to share them with you. The first I call intentional caring. I wrote the following paragraphs about it in the spring issue of our Illinois ACDA newsletter, the *Podium*, and hope that our editor and my fellow Illinoisans will pardon the repetition.

One beautiful evening two summers ago I was out for a walk in my neighborhood. I stopped to visit with a couple I know. The woman is a music colleague and fellow member of ACDA. I had just become president and, at one point in our conversation, expressed the hope that we in Illinois ACDA could somehow increase our membership. Her husband then mentioned a new approach to membership in his church, something they were calling intentional caring.

The idea behind intentional caring was simple: the members of the church believed that they genuinely cared about other people and wanted new people to join and share, but had come to realize that they were not taking the initiative to invite people. Rather, they had been waiting to be asked about the church. The intentional part meant that the church members needed to make the first move, to show that they cared and were welcoming. I thought, "I think that's the key for Illinois ACDA: a genuine display of sincerity, warmth, and openness to other choral directors."

All throughout the past year in ACDA I've witnessed intentional caring manifested by each and every member of the board, many times over. Our membership has responded in kind, and that has been very rewarding to see.

We mean to continue to genuinely welcome others.

The need to continually grow as musicians and teachers, and to strive to be better, seems obvious. Equally important is the need to celebrate successes along the way to the ultimate goal. One choral director I know says that his singers need to be aware of and celebrate their incremental successes as they journey through the year in order for them to be refreshed, to trust his leadership, and to be willing to continue the journey.

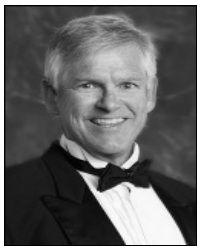
Sometimes striving and celebration are not in balance. For example, a friend of mine sang in a women's barbershop quartet that set its sights on the state quartet championship, which they soon won. Only hours after winning, she was already concerned about the next competition - the hard work to come, the need for great new arrangements, finding the time and money for additional coaching, and on and on. Before we even finished talking, I was feeling completely overwhelmed with all the work that lay ahead - and I wasn't even in the quartet! I felt truly sorry for her and her seeming inability to live in the moment and enjoy her success.

Another example of unbalance is about celebration after only limited striving. My wife and I got to watch our almost-two-year-old granddaughter this morning in her first day of ballet dance class with four other little girls. A talented instructor provided an array of creative activities, but rarely were all five of the little ones engaged in any one activity at the same time, even with the help of the mothers standing nearby. (Can you imagine a choral rehearsal like that?) Watching those little beginners trying to figure it all out was priceless, heartwarming, and sometimes even hilarious - a joyful experience to behold. Yes, there were many moments of celebration, but to the casual observer, seemingly little in the way of actual accomplishment.

Like winning quartets and beginning ballet classes, choirs need to balance effortful striving with meaningful celebration. Directors must plan for both in meeting the needs of their singers. Neither can sustain a choir without the other. My choral friends, go forth, strive, and celebrate.

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





Most people I know place great emphasis on punctuality, being “on time.” My school has strictly regulated passing periods. Our performing arts department has a saying, probably not original: “to be on time is to be late.” We order our days and weeks based on a schedule. All of us have to complete projects within a certain amount of time.

Time passes quickly when you’re having fun – and goes slowly when you’re not. I try to teach that to my students as an inverse relationship: the more they throw themselves into the moment, whatever they are doing, the more quickly time seems to pass. If they insist on stealing glances at the clock or staring at a wall, time seems to move slowly.

One of the benefits of growing older is that our experience broadens our perspective (“perspective” here means one’s sense of the passing of time). An older person can often recall similar emotions of someone who is younger, having experienced many of them already. I usually find this very helpful as a conductor. I’ve either seen or experienced many of the storms and successes that my singers are experiencing, so I can sometimes provide a useful point of view.

Time may feel cyclical, as in “the time of year.” The seasons pass in regular succession. We notice the weather and the changing length of daylight, and it adds variety to what would otherwise be an unvarying pace in our lives. The book of Ecclesiastes says...“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” Our daily interests and activities are in large part based on our time of life—whether we are young or old, working or retired, married or single. There are a variety of joys and struggles that are appropriate to our life’s seasons.

Musicians deal with time in a unique way. We not only establish the tempo of a piece of music, we must also keep time in music – within the measure, within the phrase. It can be stretched, but it must be measured. That acute awareness of time can extend to our surroundings. I often create

an underlying rhythm to my car’s turn signal, and I clearly remember noticing that my oldest daughter’s heartbeat was M.M. 120 while she was in the womb.

Busy people must “make” time. That’s a curious but apt expression. We can’t literally create time, but we may have to consciously build time into our schedules for important things such as our family, our friends, and ourselves. Some people, though, even busy people, automatically make time for these things. They seem to sense intuitively how to prioritize a given moment. They realize that though a schedule is important, one should always leave room for things that might otherwise be constricted by a strict adherence to a schedule.

Using time wisely can mean many things. We may have been told this as children with a view to encouraging us to study or practice. Now my ideal is to do a little of both—keep a strict schedule when I have to, and be sensitive when the situation calls for a little flexibility. As we approach the end of a “season,” I hope that you find enough time to take notice of the things you truly care about.

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

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I recently had the pleasure of attending another superb ACDA National Conference. ACDA leaders and conference planners are to be commended for their work in our behalf. The conference in Minneapolis was refreshing and renewing in many ways—how wonderful to see old friends and to make new acquaintances! The interest sessions and concerts were first rate. I was moved by a number of performances by choirs from around the world.

At the beginning of most concert sessions at the conference, presidors read a statement about important mentors who influenced the conductors of the performing choirs. These statements were so refreshing! It reminded me of the many reasons that I love ACDA. Most of these reasons lead back to the relationships that I have been able to develop with so many mentor conductors. We all have important individuals who have had great impacts on our musical careers and our personal lives.

I am impressed with the humility displayed by my choral mentors as they approach their work. Indeed we serve a very gracious art—singing in harmony, together in community. I am reminded of a quote from C.S. Lewis that seems to describe the ethic behind the fine work of the members of our association:

*“If in your working hours you make the work your end, you will presently find yourself all unawares inside the only circle in your profession that really matters. You will be one of the sound craftsmen, and other sound craftsmen will know it.”*

(C.S. Lewis, “The Inner Ring” the Memorial Lecture at King’s College, University of London, 1944.)

There are so many sound crafts -men and -women who have influenced my career. From Ronald Staheli I learned the primacy of quality texts in our music and the many ways that these texts might be performed to affect the hearts of an audience. There is great reward in truly understanding the text being performed. When I sang under his leadership, he shared a choral mission statement written as an “ideal review:”

*“The power of their performance style derives from a purpose so pure, so profound, so focused as consciously to risk total commitment. They personify a tact, a consequence of thorough preparation, and a confidence resulting from their faith in each other and heavenly power. Such tact and confidence allow them to perform their art at a tempo sufficiently serene to permit an inherent, glorious beauty to emerge eloquently, with a statement so astonishingly precise and assertive as to lend their every action a surpassing moral force.”*

From Dale Warland I learned the importance of carefully preparing a score as an essential process for rehearsal and performance preparation. He always had a carefully laid out plan for rehearsal and exactly what he wanted from his singers, in all areas of a musical performance. He was kind, yet demanding, always expecting the very best from his singers. I observed him in his careful audition process, a hallmark of how to form an ideal sound through audition. From Tom Lancaster I learned the importance of understanding the history, theory, and context of the music that we perform to help it come alive for our singers and for our audiences. In Kathy Romey I observed the ways that choral music can be a powerful tool to bridge different communities.

I am so honored to be able to share choral experiences with the singers that I direct. Together we explore the wonderful excitement of a new composition—cultivating beauty as it emerges through careful work and attention to important detail.

Let’s continue to reach out to the younger generation of singers and conductors. Take a young conductor under your wing. Make her or him feel welcome at conferences and other meetings in ACDA. This association is such a blessing to our lives; we can help make it a blessing in the lives of the rising generation of conductors.

*- 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.*

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The Ohio Choral Directors Association warmly invites colleagues from other states to participate in our Summer Conference, to be held June 19-21, 2017 on the campus of Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio. Headliner clinicians Stacey Gibbs and Tim Sharp will share tremendous insights; seven choirs will be heard in performance; five reading sessions will provide a wealth of new materials; and lots of time is available for valuable mentorship and collegial sharing with your professional choral community. Full information on this great conference can be found at <www.ohiocda.org>.

Since retiring from directing high school choirs, I've enjoyed adjudicating choirs, serving as a clinician, overseeing student teachers, and mentoring younger directors. These opportunities have brought me to observe more choral rehearsals than I'd ever imagined visiting. I'm honored by all of these experiences; and I've learned much from wonderful teachers and students.

It would seem that many directors are still striving to maintain healthy participation in their programs, and especially with regards to male/female balance. I taught in four school systems and enjoyed great students and successful choirs in each. Finally, teaching in my fourth school system, I achieved satisfaction with regards to our number of students, attrition rates, and male balance. Serving more than 300 singers in six choirs, we often had a roster of more than 90 men in the volunteer, extracurricular men's chorus! I admit that I worried constantly about the balance, and "worked the issue" every day. One year, we were happy to bring in a freshman choir numbering 100 – 50 guys and 50 girls. That class graduated four years later still perfectly equal in its balance of men and women. (No one else noticed, but it meant a lot to me!)

Good natural balance makes it easy to perform excellent literature and to keep a choir of happy students. Here are some strategies which help:

- **Build a healthy and inclusive choir culture.** Every school has a culture, and many sub-cultures within it. It's the director's job to promote, to recruit, and to care for the choir culture. If you sense the choir is perceived badly, go to work. If you hear choir students joking or ridiculing choir, point out

that they are speaking of and damaging their own group. By producing the best music, the most efficient and productive rehearsals, and by including everyone in your sphere of awareness (entire school system, community, region, state!), you'll feel your culture grow – and it becomes self-supporting. It's not easy – it takes time! A big brother/sister program between upperclassmen and choir beginners can help involve and endorse every singer. Encourage and espouse the reasons younger students should look up to their more experienced upperclassmen; tout the opportunities which will come their way. Make sure upperclassmen respect and have high levels of contact with younger students, especially as examples of musicianship, vocal development, and good citizenship.

- **Never allow gender-based standards.** It's disappointing to see some school choirs taught with a double standard – boys dare not be allowed to behave, respond, or perform on a different level than girls. There is no pride larger than the male ego. Your singers are smart – they will discern a double standard very quickly. Make sure that expectations are equal – and met – and the choir culture will grow to include men.

- **Accept the things your students care about.** Never fight with other classroom teachers about scheduling or the "importance" of choir. Build alliances around the school. Voluntarily work with the coaches; we employed a Board-approved policy accepted by every athletic team which removed the pressure from each student when schedules collided. Communication is the responsibility of the students; sharing is necessary and worked out by the advisors. An all-school activities calendar also helps. Take the time to talk with your students about sports and their other interests, and attend events to support them. This approach is important for all activities important to the students, from church to Scouts to jobs. If you insist that choir comes first in their lives, you'll have very small ensembles!

- **Be visible!** Perform in every district school building at least once each year. With neighborhood elementary schools, this took two full school days for us – so we did a tour at Christmas with the traditional choir, and one in the spring with show choir. The schedule alternated so everyone got a Christmas concert every other year and show choir every other

**Please see Numbers, page 13**

## TRENDING NOW... CHORAL MUSIC

Our world is flooded with a plethora of music. You can hear all types of music on YouTube, Pandora, and Spotify, to name only a few. Standard choral literature choices can occasionally feel outdated when compared to the type of music that attracts our singers today. What is trending in choral music and where are we going? How can we help our newer conductors and educators search for programming ideas and find quality choral music? What is quality choral music? These are all questions we should ask ourselves.

Are our choral programs relevant? In some educational settings, music relevancy is at stake when trying to fit into the course offerings in our schools. The effort to pursue college credit while in high school is on the rise and the competition to excel in ALL things has reached a high point. High school should be a time of great memories, fun, and exploration. Our choral classrooms can be just that, while still preparing them for the future and providing them with a quality music education.

Are we really helping our students by implementing accelerated agendas? Given the effect of music on the human race, are our music choices delivering the message we want to send? Are we satisfying the need to communicate through song with thought provoking and reputable texts that offer hope, healing, and reassurance? It is our responsibility to breathe life into all music and provide an emotional outlet for our increasing, non-emotive society while still being an advocate for the composer and their intentions. The result of this process

should manifest gratitude in the heart and soul of each singer and conductor alike.

It is my belief that the technology component is isolating our youth and obstructing human interaction. Music is now even more than before a true escape. Although the popularity of instant messaging and emojis have allowed face-to-face conversation to be optional, choral music is offering an alternative to these obstructions. The human heart still craves for love and acceptance. Is our music meeting the educational and emotional needs of our students?

Do our music choices have lasting appeal? Will this new octavo be around in 25 years? Rather than programming a selection that takes weeks to perfect, adding complex rhythms or concepts that frustrate your singers and impede classroom pacing, why not teach three Brahms or Haydn pieces in that amount of time? There are countless pieces available online that potentially have greater appeal to the singer or audience than a piece which might leave the listener questioning what they just heard, or even worse, leaving with a feeling of dissatisfaction. We are doing a disservice to our singers if we only program the latest composition or prepare a concert that will not engage the audience through a journey of emotion, passion and spontaneity.

### *Choosing Music of Quality.*

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*Continued, next page*



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research, I found the highest selling octavos by some of our major publishers contained texts, although humorous in nature, are simply banal. Students should want a challenge; although many would never admit it. Whenever programming a larger work, my singers never wanted a daily diet of count singing or weeks of preparation. However, when it was over, it was always by far their favorite choir memory.

The other factor of choosing quality music would be in the examination of the composition itself. Are there awkward leaps in voice leading? Does the piano accompaniment (if applicable) support the choir or detract from it? Is it within the performance capabilities of your ensemble? Our impulse might be to buy the newest, catchiest piece, but we need to represent all genres of music and begin to consider if this piece resembles other styles or if it has lasting appeal.

**Looking Forward.** The teaching profession has become substantially more stressful. We are not only directors of music but also many times a guidance counselor or a parent figure in the lives of our students who might otherwise be lost in the shuffle. I find that it helps in rehearsal when you know the hearts of your singers. In addition, we often are buried in paperwork to the point where we cannot allot enough time for score research and preparation. Remember, we must be protective of our personal time for family and for ourselves. When we are out of balance, the entire program suffers.


Involve and combine your local church or community choir together. For example, preparing an all-Mozart program or the Dvorak *Requiem* is a great way to build exposure for your program and stretch your students without stretching them and yourself too much. Feature each choir in a festival type setting separately so that each group can hear one another or possibly pull together resources for a small orchestra. The dividends of this experience will pay off greatly for years to come.

**In Perspective ...** Knowing I was to write this article, I asked my own students about their perspective on what we do. Here are a few of their responses: "Choir has helped me find my voice in more ways than one...." ♦ "Music teachers should try and find balance between being too serious about the music and having fun doing it." ♦ "I think some teachers have a hard time really knowing who we are. If they did, we would do better." ♦ "Singing in choir is unlike any other experience in school." ♦ "All of this pays off in the end."

If your students take AP classes, they can sing challenging music, as long as you put the effort and passion into it. We can all strive to be better musicians and aspire to something greater than ourselves. In this seemingly technological and self-absorbed culture, let us offer something old, yet new by exposing them to the breadth of reputable works by composers of the past. Let us not forsake great choral composers whose music has been forgotten or even worse, replaced by the temporal.

Rest assured, what you do each day is making a difference in the lives of your students. Let us each give of our best, be excited to teach each day and pay forward with quality.

*- Michael A. Martin is Director of Choral Activities at Hilliard (OH) Darby High School and serves the Central Division as Repertoire & Standards Chair for Senior High School Choirs.*



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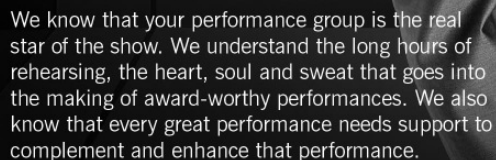
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# FINDING YOUR VOICE IN JAZZ



There is nothing like singing in a vocal jazz ensemble. Your students have the opportunity to sing so many different styles and grooves while putting a bit of their self and inner creativity into the process.

Your challenge as a director is to find the different colors, palettes, textures, and role models for your students to develop your sound. Each group takes on a bit of their director's influence, but clearly it is who you teach them to listen to for ideas and style that influence them for a lifetime. The students can also share with you who they are listening to in all genres that are adding to their soundscape. This will open up your ears to new influences that you may choose to incorporate in perhaps a jazz fusion piece.

In vocal jazz, not only do we need to have them listen to jazz singers and vocal jazz ensembles but more importantly, to instrumentalists. One of the first styles we teach is swing feel. Some great examples are The Count Basie Orchestra, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey and Harry James. Many of the songs that are arranged for vocal jazz are jazz classics and you can easily find several versions for your students to hear. Even better, the students can find them for the class to listen.

You will learn jazz phrasing and horn articulations. It will teach your sopranos a lead sound when they hear the lead trumpet. It will teach your band many things. The drummer can learn how to help bring in the singers and lead better into new sections of a piece. They can learn how a rhythm section supports the group and needs to be tight as the foundation for the ensemble.

Bebop is challenging to teach because the music is so fast and singers have lyrics. The chord changes are complex and singers need to learn to hear the roots, thirds, fifths, dominant sevenths and find a way to improvise around it. Listening to the bands will help you and your singers with phrasing. It will teach you how to sing the horn lines.

Our role models for vocal jazz diction and soundscape come from groups like The Four Freshmen, the Hi-Lo's, The Singers Unlimited, Manhattan Transfer and The New York Voices. Then there are wonderful groups made up of top vocal jazz educators... True North and Vertical Voices to name a few. The great thing is that we can take groups to festivals to hear the different styles of other groups, usually hear a professional top vocal jazz group or artist, and receive a critique and clinic.

Each artist/clinician has a personal opinion on what they like in a vocal jazz group sound. It varies from piece to piece based on groove and style. Another challenge is the number of singers in our groups. We are educational institutions that want to give as many students the opportunity to learn this beautiful art form. Unfortunately, our role models have an average of four singers with one on a part. Try blending 16 singers to sound like four.

Finding your voice, allowing the students to keep their individuality in their sound, yet finding the beauty

in the sound of unified vowels and blending, is our daily challenge. It is important to address making the diction sound natural, like our speaking voice.

Many of our singers study classical music and learn to articulate consonants and develop their natural vibrato, as well as placement for various resonances. Be aware of the differences, while always using good breath support and healthy vocal technique. Vocal jazz arrangements often have notes that rub up against each other and need a straighter tone. A sound system and the use of microphones really make the difference. A singer can use the natural beauty of their instrument without oversinging or forcing. Your sound tech is critical but you as the director need to know what you want. A bright singer might need more mid-range frequency rather than highs in the equalizer settings and a dark voice might need more highs in their sound. You are the producer and must find your voice. Experiment with the knobs and hear the difference. Take the time.

Trust your instinct and decide what you like best. This makes a big difference in the performance. Make sure the singers practice on mic as soon as possible. Mix up rehearsals, singing off and on mic. Make sure you mold your sound off mic and by sections, so they know what a good blend sounds like. Know when you pick a song where blend isn't as important, like a rock/jazz fusion or gospel influence.

Lastly, improvisation is the real opportunity for each singer to express themselves as individuals. The creativity, personality, use of ear, and all musical components combine to bring an excitement to a group like no other element. Take the time to teach and encourage improv thru circle singing and tools such as Michele Weir's new app called *Scat Ability*. You sing exercises and call/response etudes and it gives you the chance to practice with tracks and record yourself. There are demos using some of the top singers in the business and this app can be used with your iPhone or iPad. They can sing with the Jamie Aebersold recordings and start with the basic blues scale and develop from there. Improvisation is the heart and soul of jazz.

Hopefully, some of these ideas will help you to find your own voice as you explore the incredible world of vocal jazz!

- Susan Moninger is Director of Student Choral Activities at Elmhurst (IL) College and serves the Central Division as Repertoire & Standards Chair for Vocal Jazz.

**The Central Division is pleased to announce the results of the recent election for President-Elect. Karyl Carlson of Illinois State University will be the Central Division President-Elect, and will take office July 1, 2017. We know that you will join in welcoming Karyl to this position!**



## Numbers, from page 8


spring. In addition, seek out television appearances, church performances, community organizations, and public events - become known and appreciated – and therefore respected. With the support of administrators and coaches and band directors, our top choir performed the national anthem and the alma mater at one football game each fall. Singing for thousands who normally didn't hear us was valuable, but the biggest impression made was seeing football uniforms, band uniforms, cheerleader and majorette outfits, and usually even the mascot standing on those choral risers. As you learn about the community in which you teach, you'll learn what's important – and, that's where the choir should be heard!

• **Don't forget the fun.** A formal end-of-year choir dance is appreciated by older high school students, while a trip to a theme park is loved by the younger ones. Singing the national anthem for professional sports teams is terrific exposure and a fun trip for the kids. The spring choir awards night was an honored and dignified ceremony for us, with the seniors enjoying a "private" dinner prior to the ceremony. All of these things were earned by participation and good citizenship. The top choir traveled annually; this became such an attraction that we achieved five European tours!

Students know when they are doing well, and when they are part of a strong program. Working hard every day to achieve high expectations, and then performing excellently builds pride in the choir. Pride is not the same as conceit. With pride an important part of your identity, your students will spread the word that choir is a great place to be, and a great place to learn and belong.

This article represents my final opportunity to submit to *Resound* as President of OCDA. Allow me to express my appreciation for the opportunity to serve this wonderful organization, which has been the single greatest influence on my own growth as a choral musician. I have loved ACDA for more than 40 years, and will continue to be active as a member. It's truly been an honor to serve as state president.

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



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# THE POWER OF THE "RIGHT-SCHOOL" RULES



As I write this, there are nine inches of fresh snow covering the ground, but winter's on the wing, and another show choir season has come to an end as well. Spring may not be in the midwest air, but it is on its way. As we usher in a new season, it is often a time of reflection. I have been in a constant state of reflection as of late. This has been a particularly difficult school year and as it comes to a close, I have been evaluating the structure of my program and what it offers to students. In my ten years at Buffalo Grove High School, I have seen a dramatic shift in our demographic and the needs of the community we serve. Does show choir still have a place at Buffalo Grove?

Just when I'm about to let the winds of change usher in a new era, I am reminded that show choir gives my students those intangible things are not easily measured or instantly appreciated; the lessons that prove invaluable as they move on to college and beyond. I call them the Right-School Rules. I am firmly planted in Generation X. I still believe that hard work is required for excellence. I am what my students refer to as "Old School." I often laugh when they use the term and correct them immediately. "You mean Right-School!" I retort with a comedic air, but a serious tone so that there is no mistaking my correction. Over the years, I have narrowed my show choir instruction to reinforce five basic Right-School rules that have proven the most beneficial to my students as they move on to the collegiate level and beyond, and would like to share them with you.

## 1. The Power of Punctuality

"To be early is to be on time; to be on time is too be late; to be late is to be DEAD." My dear collegiate professor, Judy Grimes, drove this concept home for four

undergraduate years. It has been an invaluable lesson for me and one I have passed on to 21 years of young musicians. I use this Right-School rule to instill the concepts of DISCIPLINE and CONSIDERATION OF OTHERS. Through punctuality, our students learn how to manage their time and understand that when others wait for them, it is inconsiderate. Whenever I see one of my alums, this is the first thing they recite to me and let me know how important this little rule has been in their adult life.

## 2. The Power of Thank You

As show choir directors, we have to constantly assess and correct at a very quick pace. When a student needs to be corrected, it is our job to guide them toward success. Therefore, when we take the time to help them to be the best that they can be, the only response from them should be "Thank you." My students are trained from day one to only respond with "Thank You" whenever a student leader or I correct them. This teaches the Right-School Rule of ACCOUNTABILITY. You have made an error, you have received help to fix it. Be accountable for the error and grateful that you have someone who cares about your success enough to help you. Always say "Thank you."

## 3. The Power of Manners

Manners - so simple, yet we know as teachers and parents that this takes constant and consistent work to instill the importance of good manners: saying please, thank you, excuse me, and not having phones out during a performance. The Right-School rule this drives home is RESPECT - respect for others, for your director and his or her wishes, and for yourself.

## 4. The Power of Peer Leadership & Stakeholders

Ultimately, our success and the success of our students and program lies with US - what we model, what we



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demand and expect. We need to make sure every last kid in our program feels like a stakeholder. We create stakeholders by allowing our students to take on leadership roles as well as important jobs in our organization. Leadership roles include officers, dance captains, section leaders, and more. Some of the jobs in our program include being in charge of the medical kit or making sure the table in our room is cleaned at the end of the day. Everyone has a job. This creates an environment of stakeholders and reinforces the Right-School rule of RESPONSIBILITY.

### 5. *The Power of the Grind*

Being able to grind is working until the job is done; doing everything you can plus even more than you think is possible or necessary to really achieve excellence. The ability to grind is a choice. This aspect of Right-School thinking is WORK HARD. At Buffalo Grove, we strive to teach "Pride of Ownership." Do the work so that you can be proud of your product. Strive for excellence. Don't settle for average. GRIND!!!

I wish you all the best as you reach the end of this school year and start planning the next!!!

*- Debora Utley is Director of Vocal Music at Buffalo Grove (IL) High School and serves the ACDA Central Division as Repertoire & Standards Chair for Show Choirs.*

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# PLAYING FAVORITES: SELECTING, PROGRAMMING, AND REVISITING MEMORABLE PIECES



Growing up with three siblings, I was keenly aware of how Mom and Dad seemed to play favorites, giving some of us special nicknames, allowing some to stay up later than others to watch TV, or seeming to give one of us the extra scoop of ice cream. Now that I have nine children of my own, I find it quite a challenge to treat each one exactly the same. Each one is unique and each has their own special set of wants, needs, personalities, and character qualities. Although playing favorites can be frowned upon when it comes to children, playing favorites is to be encouraged and embraced when it comes to music for our choirs. Not all pieces are created equal. Like children, each song has its own set of needs and requirements, has its own personality, and has unique character traits that require special attention. Furthermore, there are certain songs we encounter that we select more readily than others, we devote more rehearsal time toward, we program more than once in a blue moon, and are at the top of the list when it comes to selecting tour repertoire or choosing music to record for an upcoming CD project.

Having two decades of experience with boy choirs, and particularly with Kantorei, I thought that I would share some of my favorites. These are selections that have left an indelible impression on me, pieces that boys have enjoyed learning and performing, and all (except one) have proudly found their way onto one of our CDs. Although our choir retains changed voices and programs everything from SSAA to TTBB, I have only included pieces for treble voices. It can be difficult to find music written especially for boy choir but these have all worked well for our boys. They include a wide range of key, tempo, and expressive qualities, and represent a variety of different languages and cultures. Most are appropriate for advanced levels and many are adaptable for those with lesser experience. Finally, these are listed in no particular order, lest I be accused of playing favorites among my favorites!

- “Who Can Sail?” - Norwegian folk song, arr. Jeanne Julseth-Heinrich (Hal Leonard 43019015). With its haunting minor-key melody, this 2-part arrangement of friendship and parting was the closing track of our *Heart & Voice* CD.

- “Niska Banja” - Serbian folk song, arr. Nick Page (Boosey & Hawkes OC4B6517). A lively and energetic tune that dances with an irregular 9/8 rhythm.

- “J’entends le Moulin” - French folk song, arr. Donald Patriquin (earthsongs). Along with its spirited rhyming text, this one also employs a vigorous and challenging piano accompaniment.

- “Arirang” - Korean folk song, arr. Paul Basler (Colla Voce 18-96770). An enchanting arrangement of Korea’s most popular folk melody, providing a rare opportunity for an audience to hear authentic Asian text.

- “Ku Ku” - Polish folk song, arr. Robert DeCormier (Lawson Gould 52795). A charming, rustic setting of a popular Polish tune, imitating a bird calling for its mate.

- “Al Shlosa D’Varim” - by Allan Naplan (Boosey & Hawkes OCTB6783). A simple, but elegant two-part song that relates a popular Jewish morality law pertaining to truth, justice, and peace.

- “The Butterfly” - by Charles Davidson. From a song cycle titled *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* (Ashbourne 1227-53), the text was written by a child interned in the Terezin concentration camp during WWII. Despite its desperate and hopeless origins, this piece is one of hope, beauty, and freedom that leaves the audience with tears in its eyes and a chill in their hearts. It is profoundly moving and a song you can never forget. The whole song cycle is ambitious but very rewarding to those who select it. Our boys toured Eastern Europe and visited the site of the Terezin camp, making a lifelong impression on their hearts.

- “Blow Away the Morning Dew” - English folk song, arr. John Leavitt (CPP Belwin SV8912). This spirited dance-like melody takes you on a jubilant stroll to an old English countryside with a playful text and a light-hearted poke at life on the farm.

- “Cantate Domino” - by Nancy Hill Cobb (Santa Barbara SBMP 282). A festive setting of the text of Psalm 95, this was a favorite of our preparatory choir.

- “Shine on Me” - traditional spiritual, arr. Rollo Dilworth (Hal Leonard 08551556). This lilting gospel tune arranged for SSA has simple yet rich harmonies and a piano accompaniment that creates an irresistible desire to bounce and sway along.

- “Ahay Tuburan” - Filipino folk song, arr. Ruth Dwyer and Martin Ellis (Hal Leonard 08745209). With a gentle, flowing minor melody which alternates Tagalog and poetic English, this exotic piece relates a childhood reminiscence of the Philippine homeland.

I could list several others voiced for SATB and TTBB that have worked well for our particular choir, but that will have to wait for another time. What do you think? Any questions or comments? What are your favorites? I would enjoy hearing from you and getting your feedback on these selections and others that have left an impression on your boys as well.

- Brad Koloch is an Elementary Music Specialist in Rockford School District #205 and Associate Director of Kantorei, The Singing Boys of Rockford (Illinois). He serves as Repertoire & Standards Chair for Boychoirs in the ACDA Central Division.



# ENSEMBLE RHYTHM AND TONAL UNITY: THE YIN AND YANG OF GREAT CHORAL PERFORMANCE



In early February, the University of Dayton Chorale was extremely fortunate to have composer Stacey Gibbs in residence for two days. While rehearsing his powerful arrangement of “Witness,” the piece grooved effortlessly, thanks to the singers’ response to his infectious leadership. Observing this ‘in the pocket’ rhythmic feel, I recalled the rhythmic response of developing ensembles from my past. When their text and rhythm were not aligned, tone, tuning, and diction suffered greatly. The technical suggestions below have helped my choirs to achieve greater rhythmic clarity over the years.

In Renaissance vocal styling, rehearsing the polyphonic texture on a neutral syllable in a staccato style assists in aligning the independent polyphonic rhythms. Tonal energy should focus on the front end of the note, requiring singers to tune quickly and accurately. This carries over when the text is reinserted. Maintaining the ‘inner pulse’ (the smallest rhythmic figure that is felt below the rhythms of the piece) is critical in rendering each line correctly in time. To strengthen breath support and accurate onsets, instruct the singers to repeat each syllable of the text rapidly on the inner pulse. (For ex. “Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, Jeh, eh, eh, eh, su, us, us.”) Best to be judicious here. Ask for gentle onsets at a moderate tempo so as not to wear out the singers.

In choruses of the Baroque and Classical periods, slowing *allegro* tempi slightly and requesting a *legato* diction style allows singers to hear the vertical harmonies longer and more clearly. Tone and tuning will improve simultaneously with careful monitoring by the director. Once perfected, the conductor may revisit the original tempo and ask it be sung in a swing style, a la the Swingle Singers’ Bach recordings, with finger snaps on the off-beats. Choristers of all ages enjoy the feel of this concept. Be sure that singers ‘lift off’ and do not ‘sit’ on pitches. ‘Laughing on pitch’ can promote a similar dance-like feeling as well.

In Romantic choral music, longer phrases benefit from count-singing, with singers instructed to fill every portion of the

beat with sound. Count-singing solidifies the pacing of rubatos and *ritardandos*, typical of the period, as well. Brahms folksongs and part-songs improve noticeably when this technique is applied. Once the count singing is mastered, ask the singers to conduct and count-sing. This should construct an image of what the conductor will do in performance. Adding this eurythmic aspect of conducting to singing, as well as walking and singing, helps set and internalize the tempo and pacing of phrases.

Contemporary choral music, utilizing extremes in dynamics, tempo, and diction (Rytmus – Hrusovsky) treats texts in multiple ways. In many instances, reciting the words in rhythm, with attention to vowel formation and consonant placement, is an economic and effective teaching concept. For variety, the conductor might say ‘stop’, meaning don’t speak audibly but continue speaking the text ‘mentally,’ until the conductor says ‘ready, speak.’ Conductors may go a step further by calling out specific dynamic levels, remembering to do this prefaced by the word ‘ready’ in tempo as a preparatory command, aka ‘ready-forte.’ While this may require practice to master, I find that groups love the challenge.

When rehearsing accompanied selections, always sing the piece unaccompanied several times to develop ‘ensemble rhythm and tempo’. This cultivates the choir’s inner sense of rhythms and tempo tremendously. As we know, singers often lean on the accompanist’s leadership, if one is present. A compromise technique may be to have the piano play only introductions, interludes, and endings, allowing the choir to sing the texted sections unaccompanied. Singers can then listen for proper tuning, vowel unity, and consonant placement as well.



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For more information, contact Andrew Crow at [arcrow@bsu.edu](mailto:arcrow@bsu.edu).

I believe that directors who desire great tone quality must strive for absolute rhythmic unity. Contest lists include selections of all eras that require ensemble rhythmic acuity (medium length Baroque choruses), or have slow, lengthy phrases calling for breath management (Renaissance motets and Romantic and Contemporary part-songs and motets). Wise selection of literature will yield a variety of technical challenges and, if successfully rehearsed, will result in tonal growth and an improved rhythmic acumen.

- Dr. Robert Jones is the ACDA Central Division College/University Repertoire and Standards Chair. He directs the University of Dayton Chorale and Choral Union and teaches courses in vocal music education.

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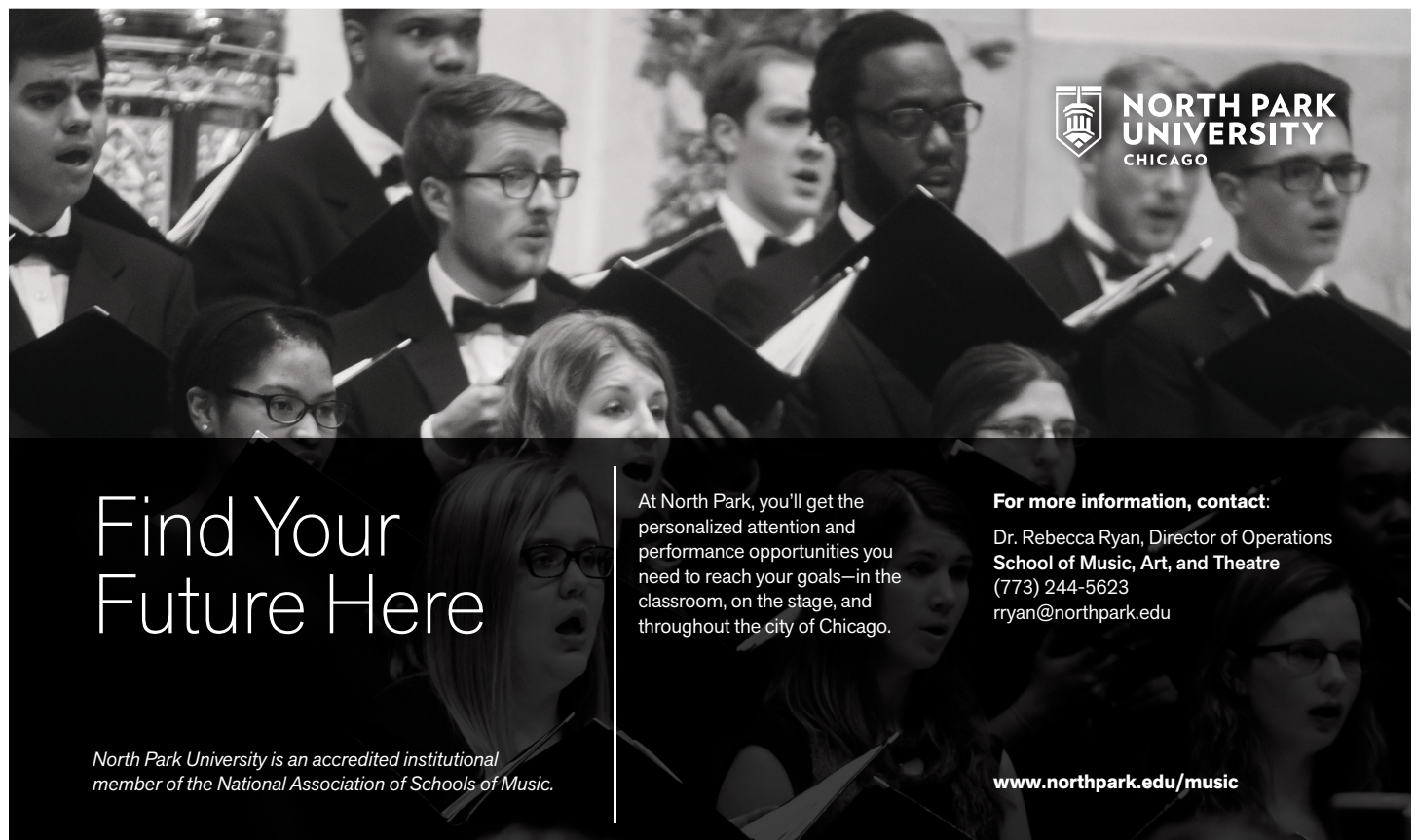


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# THE LAST LAST WORD



Change. It's not something which everyone embraces, but it is something which is inescapable. Whether it's a new colleague, a new position, a new administrator, or just a new teaching schedule, change must occur in order for us to grow.

A few articles in this issue relate to time (page 5) or standards to be upheld (pages 9 and 14) throughout time. We all set for ourselves our own rules by which we live and what standards in our choral ensembles we expect and cultivate.

It is important to recognize those who have influenced us through their work or their writings (page 7), and in that way, I hope that you will take the time to submit a nomination for the Stace Stegman Award. The nomination form is available at <[www.acdacentral.org](http://www.acdacentral.org)> and clicking on "Forms." Many people in the Central Division have given of their time and talents to make the Division a better place for choral music and deserve to be recognized.

I have taught in four different school districts over my career (31 years so far), and each had a different school climate. My decision to change positions was always mine, and usually had more to do with changes which had occurred in the school than with my position itself. Although the grass isn't always greener (it's just different grass!), it was time for me to make a change.

I must admit that change does not always come easily to me, and that Michael Martin's article really hit home with the topic of selecting literature that will last the test of time. Over the past few years, I have made it a goal that my students will experience selections which I feel should be sung by every high school singer. I have found, as I'm sure that you have, that students today still recognize quality literature when they are exposed to it. They don't

need a diet of the latest "flavor of the month" composer or a pop tune which, while popular now, will go onto the shelves of the choir library and never be sung again (or remembered in five years).

As indicated in Gayle Walker's article (page 2), this will be the last issue of *Resound* for which I will serve as Editor. There were a number of factors contributing to my decision to not request reappointment as Editor (the position is an appointment made by the Division president), factors which don't need to be discussed here. All I will say is that it related to changes being made which I couldn't support, so it was time for me to move on.

I have greatly enjoyed the process of putting together *Resound* and conference program books and serving on the conference planning committees from 2006 through 2016. The people are what makes it enjoyable - the relationships and camaraderie found within the committee are terrific. I have appreciated the trust placed in me to do these jobs and the patience shown by board members who were pestered by me to send in their articles on time (or even early!).

Finally, as Editor, I'd like to thank all of you who have written articles, have made suggestions to improve *Resound*, have contributed advertisements (a few, such as Musical Arts Indiana, have advertised in nearly every issue since 2002 - thank you!!!), or have simply read the articles. Putting together each issue and the program book are things I have greatly enjoyed, as it is a challenge in a very different way from my "day job," but it's time for a change.

As always, thanks for reading *Resound*. See you next February in Chicago!

- 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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