

Headliners/Special Events

Overview

Your Midwestern Region of ACDA is gearing up for its celebration of choral music in Omaha, Nebraska! From February 7 to 10 we will gather to reflect on our work in choral music, finding rejuvenation through inspirational performances and speakers, and rejoicing together in song and spirit.

The Midwestern Region Conference will feature headline performances by the professional vocal ensemble Kaleidoscope, a showcase of varied ensembles from Nebraska, and a performance of John Rutter's *Gloria* on the 50th anniversary of its 1974 world premiere in Omaha. Additionally, the conference highlights fifteen of the top choirs from across the region, twenty-five engaging interest sessions, reading sessions, and four honor choirs.

The conference will also host the R3 Choirs, a reference to the conference theme: Reflect, Rejuvenate, Rejoice. These choirs will engage you, the conference goer, in performance! Three of our region's finest conductors—Aimee Beckmann-Collier, Ann Howard Jones, and Tom Trenney—will lead the entire conference in rehearsals culminating in a gala performance: a chance for all of us to engage with, rather than simply listen to, great choral music with master conductors during the conference.

Aimee Beckmann-Collier's R3 Choir will perform choral gems of the modern era; Ann Howard Jones's R3 Choir will present masterwork choruses; and Tom Trenney's R3 Choir will focus on sacred choral repertoire. The Omaha conference will be an opportunity for all of us to Reflect, Rejuvenate, and Rejoice together, with one voice!

Headliners

Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble



The Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble presents vocal music with artistic excellence while celebrating racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. The group of professional singers from around the United States have thriving national and international solo careers, and focus primarily on presenting early and new music. In addition to performances and artistic residencies, the ensemble engages in creative educational outreach, particularly in communities of color, and promotes the study, research, performance, and recording of music from various eras with special attention to the intersection of arts and social justice.



Arianne Abela is director of choral activities at Amherst College and is founder and artistic director of Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble. She is a sought-after clinician in composition, conducting, and DEIA initiatives. Kaleidoscope has performed as a headliner at ACDA, Podium in Canada, and other renowned festivals and conferences. Abela founded the Detroit Justice Choir and Detroit Women's Chorus, as well as guest-conducted with Detroit's OperaMODO and Vancouver-based opera company, Re:Naissance. Abela holds a doctorate from the University of Michigan, master's from Yale University, and bachelor's from Smith College.

River City Mixed Chorus



For forty years, the River City Mixed Chorus—Omaha’s only LGBTQ+ community choir and one of the oldest mixed GALA choruses in the country—has been giving voice to the hopes of many who yearn for a more fully inclusive and diverse society. RCMC has grown from a group of ten friends singing at local churches and gay bars to more than 160 singers who perform multiple times a year at Omaha’s most prestigious performing arts venues. RCMC offers singers and audience members alike safe spaces to celebrate all that makes us unique, diverse, and joyful. They headlined the 2019 Iowa Choral Directors Association conference with a multi-movement commission, *Quiet No More*, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Stonewall riots.



A. Barron Breland is in demand throughout the country as a conductor, chorus-master, clinician, and adjudicator. He has prepared choruses for Grammy and Tony-winning artists and conductors. With

degrees in music theory and choral conducting from the University of Georgia and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, Breland has a diverse background in many different fields of music, including the piano and saxophone. He is dean of the Graduate School and vice provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. Besides his work with the Omaha Symphony and Omaha Performing Arts, he is also the principal conductor of *Résonance* and the artistic director of the River City Mixed Chorus.

Nebraska Showcase



Derrick Fox is the associate dean of graduate studies and creative endeavors and a professor of choral conducting at Michigan State University. Prior to MSU, he was the director of choral activities

and distinguished professor of music at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and assistant professor of choral music at Ithaca College. Fox has taught at the middle school, high school, and collegiate levels. His conducting experiences have included singers from upper elementary choirs through collegiate and community choirs. He was awarded the 2021 Bryan R. Johnson Service Award by the Nebraska MEA and the 2022 University of Nebraska Omaha Award for Distinguished Research/Creative Activity.

Meadowlark



Meadowlark is a select group of high school musicians from the state of Nebraska. Being a part of their high school’s Pop A Cappella group garnered these singers the opportunity to audition for and create Meadowlark. The music performed has been selected with students in mind—trying to sing pop songs of their age without jeopardizing the complex harmonies and rhythms necessary for an educational setting.



A. J. Reimer has been teaching vocal music since 2003 and has been at Bellevue West High School since 2006. He received his undergraduate and master's degrees in music education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. At West, Reimer helps direct the eight choirs in its program, including West High Singers, Project 424, and Concert Choir. Reimer has presented, conducted, and performed several times at state conventions for both NMEA and NCDA. In 2014 he represented Nebraska at the regional ACDA conference as a conductor of the Collegiate Honor Choir. Reimer is a past president of the Nebraska Choral Directors Association.

the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. He is an accomplished vocalist and composer with his works available through several publishers and performed by festival/honor choirs, all-state choirs, and professional and university choirs such as Seraphic Fire and the Oakwood University Aeolians. Recent commissions and premieres include Harvard University and the Turtle Creek Chorale. He regularly serves as a choral clinician and guest conductor for festival and honor choirs throughout the country.

Nebraska Festival Singers



The Nebraska Festival Singers is a new choral organization in the Midwest. The membership comprises teachers of all levels—inclusive of music and non-music areas—and community members. Providing community performances of the highest quality, the Nebraska Festival Singers is dedicated to engaging and inspiring through impassioned singing while expanding awareness and appreciation of the choral arts. In its second season, the choir is conducted by Marques L. A. Garrett, founding artistic director.



Marques L. A. Garrett is associate professor of choral studies at the University of North Texas. After completing a PhD in music education (choral conducting) at the Florida State University, he was an assistant professor of music in choral activities at

SNJ Singers



SNJ Singers is a select a cappella ensemble comprising talented high school singers from across the Omaha metropolitan area in their own school choirs, show choirs, and musicals. SNJ Singers perform repertoire ranging from classic choral literature to contemporary a cappella. The ensemble rehearses at SNJ Studio of Music on Sunday evenings for ninety minutes each week during the school year. In addition to fall, winter, and spring concerts, the SNJ Singers perform in the Omaha Symphony Christmas Celebration and hosts the annual SNJ A Cappella Festival, featuring high school and collegiate a cappella ensembles of all styles.



Joel Johnston is director of vocal music at Midland University in Fremont, Nebraska, where he conducts the University Choir and Clef Dwellers, Midland's contemporary a cappella ensemble. Additionally, Johnston teaches courses in music education and vocal pedagogy. Known for his positive and dynamic leadership, he is in demand as a vocal clinician, conductor, choreographer, and adjudicator. He has

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conducted more than forty choral festivals throughout the Midwest and is a frequent judge at show choir competitions. He teaches voice at the SNJ Studio of Music in Omaha and conducts the SNJ Singers, a select High School A Cappella Choir. He served as president of the Nebraska Choral Directors Association, and chair of choral affairs for Nebraska MEA.

University of Nebraska—Lincoln University Singers



University Singers, the University of Nebraska—Lincoln's premier and historic flagship choral ensemble, presents the finest and most versatile choral singers in the University. In 2022, they performed in many of France's most famous Gothic cathedrals. While many of the choir's singers are music majors, students from throughout the University are encouraged to audition and participate. This ensemble performs music from the thirteenth century through the present, including works written especially for them. University Singers has performed for state conventions of the Nebraska Choral Directors Association, Nebraska MEA, regional North Central ACDA conferences, and regional and national meetings of the Music Educators National Conference.



Peter A. Eklund is the current president-elect of the UNL Faculty Senate, and a Hixson-Lied Endowment Professor of Music. He was recently named one of the national quarter-finalists for the Grammy National Music Teacher of the Year and was a national finalist for the NFHS Outstanding Music Educator in 2019. Trained as a classical pianist and organist in the finest traditions of Western historical music, he is also a strong advocate for ethnic and world music spanning all genres. His academic choirs have performed on over forty-five ACDA and NAfME state, regional, and national conventions. Eklund studied conducting and score study at the University of Iowa. He divides his time as conductor, guest lecturer, editor/arranger, and teacher/mentor.

R3 Choirs



Aimee Beckmann-Collier is the Ellis and Nelle Levitt Distinguished Professor Emerita of Conducting at Drake University, where she served as director of choral studies from 1989 through 2019. A frequent clinician, adjudicator, and guest conductor for high school and college choral festivals, contests, and all-states, she has conducted in Carnegie Hall and Avery Fisher Hall. Drake ensembles under her leadership performed in major venues throughout Europe, as well as for conferences of ACDA's North Central Region. Beckmann-Collier's professional service includes terms as president of ICDA and ACDA's North Central Region. She chaired North Central's 2012 and 1992 Conferences and was assistant chair of the 2015 ACDA National Conference, as well as editor of *Sounding Board* and *Melisma*.



Ann Howard Jones is professor emerita of music at Boston University (1993), where she was director of choral activities and conducted the Chamber Chorus and the Symphonic Chorus. She was responsible for the highly regarded graduate program in choral conducting. She received the Robert Shaw Choral Award from ACDA (2011) for distinguished professional accomplishment and service, the Distinguished Service to the Profession Award from Chorus America (2014), and the Metcalf Award from Boston University (2003). She was awarded a Fulbright professorship to Brazil. Jones has written extensively on score preparation, rehearsal techniques, and healthy singing in the choral rehearsal. She was awarded degrees in vocal performance and the DMA in choral conducting from the University of Iowa.



Tom Trenney is a composer, conductor, organist, preacher, and teacher. He has been blessed to serve as minister of music to First-Plymouth Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, since 2009. In 2019 he became associate professor of music and director of choirs at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Trenney's choirs have been honored to perform for state, regional, and national conferences of ACDA, and they have been award winners in the American Prize for choral ensembles. He serves as Music in Worship Chair for Midwest ACDA. Trenney has been a featured performer at churches, colleges, and concert halls across the country. His choral compositions are published by Augsburg Fortress, Beckenhurst Press, Choristers Guild, E.C. Schirmer/Galaxy, Morningstar, Musicspoke, Pavane, and G. Schirmer. He is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Eastman School of Music.

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Performing Choirs

Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs Cantanti Singers



The Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs—Cantanti Singers is an SATB community choir with members representing thirty-six different high schools around the Minneapolis and St. Paul areas. The singers in grades 9-12 rehearse once a week and are conducted by Philip Brown with collaborative pianist Jamie Schmidt. The award-winning Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs (ACYC) program was founded in 1980 and currently has nine ensembles for singers in grades K–12, an adult alumni choir, and a music class for singers with special needs. Singers in ACYC performed at the 2018 Super Bowl.



Philip Brown is the director of choral activities at Totino-Grace High School and conductor of the high school choirs with Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs. He graduated from Bethany College (KS) and received his MME from Northern Arizona University. At Totino-Grace he conducts the curricular choirs and heads the competitive show choir program. Brown also conducts the Cantanti Singers, Treble Singers, and Tenor/Bass Ensemble—choirs of high school singers from across the twin cities as part of the Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs organization. He conducted the Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs—Treble Singers at the 2019 National ACDA Conference.

Ankeny High School Concert Choir



The Ankeny High School Concert Choir is the premier choral ensemble at Ankeny High School in Ankeny, Iowa, and is one of six performing ensembles in an award-winning comprehensive vocal music program. Students in grades 10-12 undergo a competitive audition process for selection each year. The ensemble has shared the stage with numerous collegiate and professional choirs, was the featured guest choir at the Wartburg College Meistersinger Honor Choir Festival, and was selected to perform for the 2020 Midwestern Region ACDA Conference and for the Iowa Choral Directors Association's Iowa Choral Showcase in 2018.



Ben Walters is in his eighteenth year of music education in Iowa, and eighth as director of choral activities at Ankeny High School in Ankeny, Iowa, where he oversees an award-winning comprehensive vocal music program of six ensembles involving approximately 275 singers. He conducts Ankeny's most select choral ensemble, Concert Choir, the auditioned treble ensemble Cantorei, and the varsity show choir, Visual Adrenaline. Walters is in demand across the metro and state as a judge and clinician for show choir, all-state, and solo/ensemble contest events in addition to frequently serving as an adjudicator at numerous Iowa High School Music Association Festivals and Contests.

Bowling Green State University Volaré



The “Treble Clef Club” is the oldest vocal ensemble at Bowling Green State University. Now named “Volaré” (most recently Women’s Chorus) we proudly serve treble voices across all ages and disciplines at the university. Volaré consists of sixty-five undergraduate sopranos and altos and predominantly includes non-music majors. Volaré regularly commissions and premieres new works. The chorus performs both on and off campus and has performed at several professional conferences, including Ohio MEA in 2022. Volaré last performed at ACDA thirty-five years ago and is honored to return.



Emily Pence Brown serves as associate professor of music education at Bowling Green State University, where she teaches choral music education undergraduate courses and directs Volaré. She holds a BME from Rutgers University, a master’s from the Florida State University, and a PhD from The University of Southern Mississippi. Brown’s research on teacher vocal health and job-related stress has been published in *Journal of Music Teacher Education* and *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*. Additional publications include *Music Educators Journal*, *Research Perspectives on Music Education*, and *TRIAD*.

Iowa State University Cantamus



Cantamus was founded at Iowa State University in 2000 with the principal goal to diversify the repertoire, practice, and reach of treble-voice ensembles. Our literature spans from early works to premieres by living composers, and from Western classical music canon to oral-tradition folk music and experimental contemporary pieces. Vocally, Cantamus singers learn how to healthily produce a wide spectrum of sound across the full treble range—lofted to brassy, lean to lush, crying to soaring. Embedded in this practice is both a greatly expanded definition of beauty and an active embrace of songs and singers of disparate backgrounds and traditions.



Jennifer Rodgers is the assistant director of choral activities and assistant teaching professor of voice at Iowa State University, where she directs the Cantamus and Lyrica ensembles and teaches voice in studio and classroom settings. Her career and teaching has been dedicated to building bridges: between contemporary and traditional singing and between choral and solo voice professionals. As a vocalist, Rodgers performs in a wide variety of styles. She is the lead singer for the Indigo Monks jazz band and one of sixteen singers on the inaugural roster of withonevoice, a professional choir based in Chicago and Western Illinois.

Performing Choirs

Johnston High School Cantus



Cantus is the premier auditioned choral ensemble at Johnston High School, consisting of fifty singers. Students in Cantus represent many facets of the Johnston High School academic, athletic, and fine arts programs. The core values of Cantus are independence in music literacy, a commitment to programming wide varieties of repertoire from across the globe, and captivating audience members with heartfelt performances.



Hannah Ryan teaches at Johnston High School in Johnston, Iowa, where she directs Cantus, Cantate Treble Choir, Mixed Choir, and Synergy Show Choir. Her choirs consistently earn Division I

Ratings at large group contest and solo/ensemble festival, and multiple students are selected for the Iowa All-State Chorus under her leadership. Cantus most recently had the honor of being selected for the 2022 Iowa Choral Showcase. In 2013, Ryan was awarded the “Outstanding Educator of the Year” Award from the Johnston School Foundation. In 2016, she was awarded the Aspire Award for “Best New Director” from the FAME Show Choir National Championship Series.

Linn-Mar High School Chamber Singers



Chamber Singers is the forty-three-voice advanced mixed choir from Linn-Mar High School in Marion, IA. This ensemble is one of three mixed choirs and seven total concert choirs that serve the 400 students enrolled in choir at Linn-Mar. Over 750 students are enrolled in at least one of sixteen curricular ensembles offered in the choir, band, and orchestra departments. Chamber Singers focuses on exposing audiences to a rich and diverse repertoire of styles, stories, and experiences chorally.



Trent Buglewicz is a vocal music teacher at Linn-Mar High School in Marion, IA, where he has spent the last nine years. In addition to directing the advanced mixed chorus, Chamber Singers, since the fall

of 2020, he also conducts Linn-Mar’s bass chorus, Fortis, and one of the school’s treble choruses, Cantemus. Outside of curricular choir, he is the director of Linn-Mar’s extracurricular varsity show choir, Tenth Street Edition. He received his BME from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. In 2020, Buglewicz and his choir, Bella Voce, performed at the Central and North Central ACDA Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Morningside University Morningside Choir



The Morningside Choir, the university's premier forty-member auditioned choral ensemble, has maintained a respected tradition of artistic excellence for one hundred years. The choir consists of undergraduate student musicians from various major areas of study. In addition to performing at the 2024 Midwestern ACDA Region Conference, the ensemble was featured as a demonstration choir at the 2023 ACDA National Conference Undergraduate Choral Conducting Institute Masterclass.



Ryan Person serves as director of choral activities and assistant professor of music at Morningside University in Sioux City, Iowa. He conducts the Morningside Choir, which tours and performs at continental and national destinations each year. His choirs have been invited to participate ACDA national conference, North Central ACDA conference, Dvorak Music Festival in the Czech Republic, and Iowa Choral Directors Association Showcase. Additionally, he has co-presented at the NCCO conference and been invited to conduct numerous honor choir and all-state festivals. Person earned a DMA from Texas Tech, MM from Michigan State University, and BA from Luther College.

Pleasant Valley High School Leading Tones



The Pleasant Valley Leading Tones are an extracurricular ensemble specializing in a cappella performance of vocal jazz literature. The ensemble strives for flexibility of tone through a variety of genres within vocal jazz. Their studies include exploration of standards, listening to essential recordings and artists, exercises in improvisation, and solo performance. Members are expected to prepare independently or in student-led sectionals so that rehearsals are truly a group-led effort. Students in the Leading Tones are notably self-reliant, while giving their all to a remarkably cooperative, team-based ensemble. Leading Tones members also represent PVHS in the all-state chorus, all-state jazz choir, and ACDA honor choirs.



Meg Byrne is the director of vocal music at Pleasant Valley High School, a position she has held for twenty-nine years. She directs the Chamber Choir, Treble Chamber Choir, and the Leading Tones, an a cappella jazz choir. A quarterfinalist for the Grammy music educators' award in 2022 and 2023, she also teaches AP Music Theory and has worked as music department chair and instructional lead for vocal music. Byrne sings regularly with the Augustana Choral Artists under the direction of Jon Hurty. She holds degrees from Bryn Mawr College, the University of Northern Iowa, and Western Illinois University. She is the High School R&R chair for the Iowa Choral Directors Association.

Performing Choirs

Purdue University Varsity Glee Club



With integrity and passion, the members of the Purdue Varsity Glee Club have proudly served as ambassadors of Purdue University for 130 years. Under the leadership of William E. Griffel, the Purdue Varsity Glee Club has an established reputation for musical and academic excellence, representing diverse backgrounds and hometowns, with majors ranging from engineering to education. Founded in 1893, the Purdue Varsity Glee Club has inspired audiences across the globe and been invited to perform for six presidential inaugurations.



William E. Griffel is the director of Purdue Musical Organizations at Purdue University. He directs the internationally recognized Purdue Varsity Glee Club and produces and directs the annual

Purdue Christmas Show. Griffel has traveled internationally both as a director and as a performer. As a professional vocalist, his voice can be heard on many commercial and professional recordings. In 2016, he was selected as a quarterfinalist for the Grammy Music Educator Award. He received his bachelor's degrees in music education and vocal performance from Viterbo University in LaCrosse, WI, a master's in vocal performance and a performance certificate in vocal performance from DePaul University in Chicago, IL.

St. Michael-Albertville High School Concert Choir



The STMA High School Music program prides itself on excellence and inclusion for the over 500 students that it serves. The STMA Concert Choir is one of fifteen performing ensembles offered at STMA High School. Recent performance highlights include invitational performances with American Public Media, ACDA, and Minnesota MEA. STMA has enjoyed collaborative performances with numerous high schools, collegiate ensembles and professional ensembles. Upcoming highlights for the 2023-2024 Concert Season include performances with VOCES8, and the midwest premiere of Christopher Tin's *The Lost Birds*.



Joe Osowski is one of two choral directors at St. Michael-Albertville High School. He holds a BME and MME from North Dakota State University. At STMA High School, Osowski directs four curricular

ensembles, one co-curricular ensemble, and serves as the vocal director for the annual high school musical. Osowski is also the conductor of Bring the Sing, a community singing initiative. He is in demand as a guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator. Osowski recently served as the Northeast District Chair for ACDA-MN. He was selected as a conducting delegate representing the United States for the 2017 International Conductors Exchange Program.

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Concert Choir



Concert Choir is one of six choral ensembles at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Concert Choir performed at the 1996, 1998, and 2019 ACDA Region Conferences and the 1997 ACDA National Conference. The choir has performed at five Wisconsin MEA Conventions and at the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association Convention. The Concert Choir has performed with outstanding orchestras including the Minnesota Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, and the Philadelphia Brass. The ensemble has traveled to Europe on eight concert tours, including two appearances at the anniversaries of the D-Day Invasion in France.

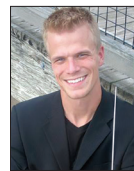


Frank A. Watkins is an associate professor of music and director of choral studies at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Watkins taught secondary choral music in Texas for six years. He holds degrees from Jackson State University (BM), the University of Arkansas (MM), Northwestern University (MM), and Michigan State University (DMA). In 2016 he was appointed conductor and music director of the Eau Claire Chamber Orchestra. Choirs under his direction have performed at the Wisconsin Music Educators State Conference (2018, 2023); Wisconsin Choral Director's Association State Conference (2023), and the North Central ACDA Region (2020).

Vocal Artists of Iowa



Vocal Artists of Iowa is a semi-professional choir based in Cedar Rapids and Iowa City whose membership draws primarily upon the region's community members, music professionals, and music educators. VAOI is a project-based group that performs five to six concerts per year, with rehearsals and performance dates dictated by the availability of its constituency. Featured and invited performances have included the Iowa Choral Director's Association Choral Showcase in 2018 and 2023, the Luther College Dorian Summer Music Festival, the ICDA Summer Symposium, and the Midwestern ACDA Region Conference.



David Haas is director of choral music at West High School in Iowa City, Iowa; founder and artistic director of Vocal Artists of Iowa, a semi-professional choir based out of the Cedar Rapids/Iowa City area; and a PhD candidate in music education at the University of Iowa. At West High, Haas directs Treble Choir, Iowa City West Singers, and leads several sections of Digital Music Production. Prior to his tenure at Iowa City West, Haas held church choir and public school teaching positions in Iowa, South Dakota, and Florida. He holds a BA in vocal performance from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and an MM in choral conducting from the Florida State University.

Performing Choirs

VocalEssence



The VocalEssence Chorus is a group of talented and enthusiastic singers from many different walks of life, united by their love of singing and community. Performing a wide variety of musical styles, premiering new works, and sharing the stage with a diverse array of guest artists, the VocalEssence Chorus is a welcome home for singers who wish to continue making music throughout their adult lives. Our ensemble seeks to live out our belief that singing is an essential form of human expression and can be a powerful tool to connect us together across the dimensions of difference.



G. Phillip Shoultz III is associate artistic director of VocalEssence and founding director of The Singers Of This Age. Shoultz uses spoken word and song to foster community and inspire action among

people of all ages and abilities. He conducts festival choirs and leads workshops across the United States and beyond. He serves on the faculty of the University of St. Thomas and guides the ministries of worship at Westwood Lutheran Church. The Minnesota Orchestra engages Shoultz to host Young People's Concerts. The winner of the ACDA Graduate Conducting Competition and multiple Teacher of the Year awards, he founded "Table for More" in 2020 to help organizations address issues related to innovation, equity, and belonging in the arts.

Wartburg College St. Elizabeth Chorale



The Wartburg College St. Elizabeth Chorale is a non-auditioned, soprano-alto ensemble that performs treble literature from various historical periods and styles. The Chorale is featured during Christmas with Wartburg and mentors the high school treble participants of the Meistersinger Honor Choirs. The Chorale takes its name from a famous resident of the college's namesake, the Wartburg Castle in Germany. Elizabeth (1207-1231) lived at the castle and carried on an active food ministry by smuggling bread from the castle kitchen in her cloak. Today, Wartburg College hosts a service week dedicated to her memory.



Nicki Bakko Toliver serves Wartburg College as the associate director of choral activities and associate professor of music (choral music education). She conducts

The Wartburg Castle Singers, a twenty-eight-voice chamber choir, and St. Elizabeth Chorale, a seventy-voice treble ensemble. In addition, she teaches K-12 music methods courses, mentors future music educators in the Teacher Education Program, and supervises student teachers. Toliver enjoyed a distinguished career in both public and private school systems in four states. Toliver holds a DMA from North Dakota State University, an MM from Arizona State University, and a BM from Concordia College, Moorhead.

Western Illinois University University Singers



The Western Illinois University Singers is the “flagship,” auditioned choral ensemble at WIU. University Singers performs diverse repertoire from Renaissance to contemporary commercial music with special focus on versatility and authenticity of voice quality. Membership is open to all university students, most of whom

receive talent grant awards. This award-winning ensemble presents six major concerts each year, including a student choral conductor’s concert and a yearly masterworks concert with the WIU Symphony Orchestra. The University Singers won the 2021 American Prize Ernst Bacon Memorial Award for the Performance of American Music (College/University Division).



Brian J. Winnie, DMA, is the director of choral studies at Western Illinois University, where he supervises the graduate choral conducting program; teaches courses in graduate and undergraduate choral conducting, pedagogy, and literature courses; and conducts the University Singers, Chamber Singers, and Treble Choir. He has worked with festival choirs throughout the United States and presented at international and national conferences on the topics of choral pedagogy, gesture, and voice training in the choral rehearsal. He is also an Estill Mentor and Course Instructor and Master Trainer of Estill Voice Training. He is the editor and contributing author to *The Voice Teacher’s Cookbook* and *The Choral Conductor’s Companion*.



Omaha, NE February 7-10, 2024

2024 ACDA Midwestern Region Conference

Interest Sessions

Beyond Repertoire Selection: Reimagining Your Whys

This session will focus on how repertoire selection can help choirs advance goals that go beyond musical standards. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, conductors and music teachers of all grade levels have reported new challenges in rebuilding their choral programs and helping their singers engage and connect in a group setting. This session will propose strategies for repertoire selection that will help conductors reflect on broader goals and choirs rejuvenate. While musical

growth should remain a core value for literature selection, the need to find text and music that help students connect emotionally and socially has never felt greater. Conductors will be invited to reimagine new “whys” in their search for music that speaks to broader programmatic needs and help students rebuild their ability to connect and form meaningful relationships.



Mariana Farah is the director of choral activities at UW-Madison, where she conducts the Concert Choir, Treble Choir, teaches courses in graduate choral conducting, and oversees all aspects of a com-

Interest Sessions

prehensive choral program. Prior to her appointment at UW-Madison, Farah served as the associate director of choral activities at the University of Kansas. Choirs under her leadership have successfully performed at the Missouri, Kansas, and Wisconsin MEA conventions and at the 2008 and 2018 Southwestern ACDA Conferences. In addition to her work at UW-Madison, Farah is often sought out for her expertise in Brazilian choral music. She has presented papers at NAFME and ACDA conventions and has served as the president-elect for SWACDA.



Liz Olson is in the second year of doctoral studies in choral conducting from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she was awarded the University Fellowship and serves as a choral teaching assistant.

At UW-Madison, Olson is the director of the Advanced Treble Choir, co-directs the University Chorus, and is Dr. Mariana Farah's research assistant. She presented her research on gender bias in choral music on a panel during the 2023 ACDA National Conference. She has earned degrees from the University of South Carolina and the University of Colorado Boulder.



Sam Speer is a second-year DMA student in choral conducting at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he is the conductor of the University Chorus and is also the TA for Chorale. A native of the

Rockies, Speer earned his MM and BM at Brigham Young University, where he conducted the University Chorale and taught conducting and sight-singing. He also sang baritone with the Madeleine Cathedral Choir in Salt Lake and was company manager for the Santa Fe Desert Chorale.

Breaking the Ice: Building Respectful Culture in the Choral Program

Since ensemble music making is inherently project-based, it is essential for students to operate healthily as a team as they reach their common goals. Team building in retreats as well as in class time will ensure that students work together respectfully. These enjoyable activities are pivotal to instructional needs because of their correlation to the National Core Arts Standards and National Institute for Excellence in Teaching Rubric. In this presentation, attendees will engage in various team-building activities designed to build community, create a healthy environment and respectful culture, and pave the way for student ownership in the choral ensemble.

Matthew Myers will be a clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 20.



Sara Bray is in her seventh year as the choral director at St. Amant High School in Ascension Parish, Louisiana. She received her bachelor's from the University of South Dakota and her master's in choral

conducting from the University of North Dakota. Bray serves as the high school coordinator for the District IV Choral Directors Association, where she organizes the Louisiana MEA round one auditions and the District IV Honor Choir. She is an active performer, singing soprano with the Baton Rouge Artists of Choral Excellence and performing on stage with Ascension Community Theatre. She has also music directed stage productions with ACT and the St. Amant High School Theatre.

Choir as Garden: Rejuvenate the Choral Ensemble through a Flexible, Person-Centered Approach

Many choral ensembles take pride in offering singers a welcoming place to belong, relate to others, and experience freedom of expression. Unfortunately, sometimes singers in choral ensembles feel judged, taken-for-granted, or marginalized. How can choral leaders help every singer feel seen and valued while supporting individual singers' growth within the larger group? This session encourages choral leaders to reflect on their practices and to rejuvenate choral ensembles using the model of choir as a garden. When an ensemble is cared for as a garden, each singer grows in a dynamic ecosystem with others. Each voice is recognized, nurtured, and valued for the qualities it brings to the group. Session attendees will explore specific practices that honor all singers' voices. These practices include teaching and learning away from a printed score, inviting democratic leadership, facilitating creative and improvisatory activities, engaging in singer-led community-building, and encouraging varied vocal tone qualities and varied choral traditions.



Jennifer C. Hutton serves as a lecturer in choral music education at the Peck School of the Arts at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she teaches graduate and undergraduate music education courses and leads *Bella Voce*, the university's auditioned treble choir. For over two decades, she taught choral and general music to individuals of all ages in public-school, independent-school, and community settings. As a researcher, she studies connection during choral singing, culturally responsive vocal pedagogy, and teacher-student relationships in music classrooms. She received her PhD in music education from Temple University and is certified as an Estill Master Trainer.

Choir Reborn: The Joy of Authentic Expression

Many choral directors would like the singers in their choirs to be more facially and physically expressive, but they're not quite sure how to facilitate that expression. This interest session will present a practical technique that can immediately transform a choir's expressiveness, leading to a new connection with Self, the music, other singers, and audience members. Based on cutting-edge neuroscience and Method acting principles, this session is applicable to singers and directors of all levels. The session will begin with the participants and demonstration choir engaging in fun and simple exercises to illustrate the basic concepts. After these foundational ideas are explored, the participants will learn how singers can play with them while they sing. Using a very simple framework, the demonstration choir will apply these tools to some of their repertoire.



Tom Carter has sung in numerous choirs, including the San Jose State Choraliers under the direction of Dr. Charlene Archibeque. A professional stage director and acting teacher as well as a singer, Carter combined his passions by working with the Choraliers and other choirs on stage presence. Although he conceived them with a college group, he continued to develop and hone his techniques while working with adult, high school, and children's groups. In 2005 he wrote *Choral Charisma: Singing with Expression*, and since then he has traveled across the country to work with choirs and present interest sessions. He previously worked as an English and drama teacher in Northern California.

Creating Meaningful Gatherings to Revitalize Music Ministries

This interactive and practical session will provide tools to revitalize ensembles in music ministry settings and enable meaningful experiences for singers and

Interest Sessions

congregation members. Based on concepts found in the book *The Art of Gathering* by Priya Parker, the first part of the session will present a framework about intentionally creating memorable events, rehearsals, and worship services to build stronger ensembles and communities. Stories from over fifteen years in music ministry will demonstrate how the concepts can be applied in a wide variety of contexts. In the second part of the session, attendees will brainstorm ideas. Attendees will have practical ideas to take back to their own worshiping communities and feel rejuvenated and empowered to make positive changes in their own context.



Austen Wilson is the director of music ministries at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Iowa City, Iowa, where he oversees a comprehensive music ministry of choral, handbell, and instrumental ensembles and works collaboratively with staff. He believes that music builds community, preaches the Gospel, helps us find belonging, and builds our faith. In addition to planning and leading worship, Wilson founded Melodious Harmony: Concerts at St. Andrew in 2023, which seeks to provide accessible, affordable, and inspirational performances for the Iowa City Community. He holds a BA from St. Olaf College and an MM from Colorado State University.

A Distant Music: Introducing Choral Music of Australia

Australian choral composers have long been active in writing music for choirs but are almost totally unrepresented by publishers in the United States. This session will introduce choir directors to this music and the themes that are reflected in this repertoire—some of which is distinctly Australian and much of which is universal. Participants will sing highlights, listen to recordings, and learn how to access these resources. Attendees will take valuable insights as well as a packet of samples. The session is intended to cover a wide span

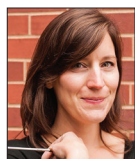
of repertoire for school, church, and community, but can be tailored to any one of these sectors.



Graeme Morton is considered one of Australia's most eclectic choral musicians. He is senior lecturer and choral fellow at the University of Queensland and director of music at St John's Episcopal Cathedral in Brisbane. He is also founder and director of the Brisbane Chamber Choir. He was the foundation conductor of The Australian Voices and artistic director of the National Youth Choir of Australia. He has commissioned many of the pieces that have become synonymous with Australian choral music, including *Past Life Melodies* (Hopkins) and *Ngana* (Leek). His compositions are published by Augsburg Fortress, Crescendo Music, and Morton Music.

Don't Fear the Reverb: Making Sound Technology Accessible

Whether you need a refresher on sound technology or to establish a foundation, join Nathan Edwards and Shannon Gravelle for a presentation and Q&A on sound technology. This all-encompassing session will provide an overview of some of the most common technical challenges that choral directors face. The goal is to capture or amplify the best possible quality of sound for the least amount of effort, complexity, and investment. This will allow directors to focus on what they care most about—the sound of the choir—while ensuring that the technical setup maximizes their sound. This presentation will provide a foundation so that directors who have sound technicians can communicate their needs most effectively, and directors without technicians can create quality recordings.



Shannon Gravelle is director of choral activities at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. Her current research examines how identity, gesture, and conducting

pedagogy intersect. Advocacy is a centerpiece of her community building. Other areas of research include silenced voices in music history, choral works of Russian composer Sergei Taneyev, early choral works of Johannes Brahms, life and works of Barbara Strozzi, and music education advocacy. In addition to conducting and scholarly activities, she enjoys singing, playing piano, collaborating with others, running, and going to baseball games.



Nathan Edwards is a professor, award-winning sound engineer, and music creator from Wisconsin. He is the director of audio production at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and previously served as assistant professor of audio technology in the digital arts and design program at Dakota State University in South Dakota. His musical work has been featured on MLB Network, WWE Network, CTV Television Network, American Public Media, Oprah Winfrey Network, and on popular podcasts and YouTube channels. He has had audio/visual work featured in numerous museums and art centers, as well as at conferences including the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music National Conference and Electronic Music Midwest.

Eco-Choral Music: Mobilizing the Choral Art for Environmental Activism

In the Western choral tradition, there has recently been a growing trend to address important social concerns through new compositions and innovative programming. One of the subgenres of this socially conscious repertoire is music that focuses on environmentalism and the growing anxiety regarding climate change. This presentation will address recent activity in the eco-choral genre, including new compositions, grassroots movements in the U.S., and current sociological and psychological research related to the topic. Musical examples from recent compositions will be shared. A case will be made for choral music's utility

in mobilizing an effective environmentalist movement within the field and strategies for achieving a synergistic course of action. With hundreds of thousands of singers participating in choral music worldwide, a coordinated campaign to address climate change through singing could produce a powerful forum for conversation, education, and action.

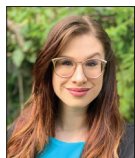


Kirsten Hedegaard has enjoyed a varied career as a singer and conductor. Currently director of choral and vocal activities at Loyola University Chicago, Hedegaard is also artistic director of Voices of Madonna and Bella Voce Camerata. As a singer, she has appeared with ensembles across the country. As co-founder of The EcoVoice Project and artistic director of the New Earth Ensemble, Hedegaard is dedicated to bringing together musicians to explore how the arts can support environmental action.

Experiences of Gender Nonconforming Students in the Choral Classroom

The goal of this session is to give current and pre-service music educators recommendations for the creation of safe learning environments from the perspectives of gender nonconforming choral students and their teachers. Traditionally, biological sex has contributed to choices that choir teachers make regarding students' voice part identification, uniform, repertoire, ensemble names, and more. People who do not express their gender in a way that matches their biological sex are known as gender nonconforming. This presentation will outline existing research on the experiences of choir students who identify as transgender, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming, provide examples of vocal exercises appropriate for trans voices, video interviews from gender nonconforming choral students, and steps educators can take to ensure they are creating a safe, welcoming choral learning space for all students.

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Jessica L. G. Steuver (pronounced STY-ver), she/her, is a PhD student in music education at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH. Her research interests include intersectional feminism in music, theater, musical catharsis, choral curriculum and assessment, and mental health and choral participation post-pandemic. In addition to her work as a graduate assistant, Steuver serves as the artistic director for University Chorale at CWRU and Windsong, Cleveland's Feminist Chorus. She holds degrees from Bowling Green State University (BM) and University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music (MM).

Gender Issues and a Brief Introduction of Choral Literature by Eastern Asian Female Composers

This research presentation focuses on gender issues in Eastern Asian choral literature and underrepresented Eastern Asian composers. This research study addresses the gender issue and bias toward female composers in Eastern Asian musical cultures and argues that the underrepresentation of female composers and compositions in the Eastern Asian Choral Canon shares astonishing similarities to the gender issue in the Western European Classical Music Canon.



Pingyi Song is the director of choral activities at Coker University, SC. As an active conductor and clinician in the U.S. and China, Song is dedicated to promoting cultural exchange between Western and Eastern Asian Music. Song's research was presented at the 2023 National ACDA Conference. Song holds a Choral Summer School Certificate from Oxford University, U.K., a DMA degree, and a PBC certificate in music education from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, and other degrees from West Virginia University, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, and Guangzhou University, China.

Improving Vocal Ensemble Intonation

Seeking to "rejuvenate" our choral sound, this session focuses on concrete tools and vocal/choral exercises to strengthen the ears of choristers for more consistent intonation and more focused vocal production. Attendees will learn the methodology behind various ensemble exercises and will participate in singing example exercises that can be brought home to their own choirs. Research behind these exercises is based partially on Edwin Gordon's music learning theory and also the research of the presenter. This session gives tools for exploring intonation without bias toward any particular choral sound or genre.



Albert Pinsonneault is director of choral activities at the University of St. Thomas, where he conducts the Chamber Singers and Concert Choir and teaches in the graduate program in choral music education. Pinsonneault is also founder and artistic director of the Madison Choral Project, Wisconsin's only fully professional chamber choir. Previously he was associate director of choral organizations at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music. He is a graduate of St. Olaf College (BM), the University of Minnesota (MM), and the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati (DMA).

Interactive Concerts and Refreshing Ways to Engage Audiences

This session proposes simple strategies for informing, inspiring, and connecting to audiences through interactive concerts. While program notes and onstage remarks do help orient listeners, actively engaging audiences leads to more soul-stirring listening experiences and builds community in the concert hall. This session will demonstrate how to engage audiences by selecting an effective aesthetic "entry point" into a piece of

choral music, connecting to what the average listener already knows, and creating an interactive experience that hooks listeners before they hear the concert in its entirety. Attendees will act as a sample audience and will leave this session with a collection of interactive concert activities, games, and unique concert formats for different types of choral pieces.



Lindsey Bruner Woodcock is director of choral activities and coordinator of music education at Meredith College in Raleigh, North Carolina. She directs three choral ensembles and teaches conducting,

secondary choral methods, and elementary music methods. Bruner Woodcock holds degrees from the University of Georgia, University of Iowa, and Iowa State University. As a singer and double bassist, she has immersed herself in community music making and has held leadership roles in numerous civic music organizations. Her doctoral research is focused on audience engagement and the ways in which interactive performances can enhance the concert experience.

Joy in the Groove: Percussion Techniques for the Choral Conductor

Adding percussion instruments into a choral rehearsal can quickly rejuvenate our repertoire and spark great joy in our singers. While many contemporary choral composers write music with percussion accompaniment, often “ad lib” is the only instruction. Whether you are playing the part yourself or helping students find success, playing technique can drastically augment or diminish a performance. This hands-on session will provide playing techniques for all levels of experience, sample repertoire from across the globe, survey a wide variety of Western and non-Western percussion instruments, and explore substitutions when instruments are not readily available. Participants will leave inspired and more confident to incorporate percussion into rehearsals and performance.



Adam Zrust is director of choral studies and assistant professor of choral music education at Northwest Missouri State University. He maintains an active schedule conducting honor choirs and is frequently invited to present at various conferences across the United States and abroad. Zrust’s scholarly expertise is grounded in rehearsal efficiency. Zrust earned a PhD and MME in choral conducting and music education from the Florida State University and holds degrees in music business and music education from the University of Nebraska-Kearney.



Will Alderman serves as the professor of percussion and music theory at Northwest Missouri State University. An avid performer and composer, Alderman has toured and premiered works in a variety of mediums worldwide. Currently, he performs with his quartet, Without Borders, which has recorded and released its own marimba quartet transcription of Béla Bartok’s *String Quartet No. 5*. The ensemble has performed the work in Taiwan, Japan, and throughout the United States.

Mind, Body, Voice: Boosting Choristers’ Potential through Body-Mind Warm-Ups

Choir singing requires energy, engagement, and readiness. To achieve the full potential of expression, vocal technique, and musicality, singers and conductors must train their bodies and minds as they train their voices and music. This interactive and practical session will provide conductors and teachers of any choir level with a systematic approach to body and mind engagement in warm-ups and rehearsals, rooted in the Alexander Technique, Yoga, Tai Chi, and workout sequences. Each activity will accompany a science-based explanation of how physical exercises can impact students’ ability to engage, focus, improve their vocal technique, enhance body presence, and build a strong community

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in the classroom. In addition, this session will provide alternative exercises to promote inclusive practice.



Leticia Grützmann's career as a conductor, singer, and active clinician spans over fifteen years. As a Brazilian artist, she has performed in Europe and North and South America. In 2023, Grützmann was appointed the assistant professor, director of choral activities at the Saginaw Valley State University, Michigan. She conducts the Cardinal Singers and the Concert Choir and teaches conducting and voice area classes. Her research is dedicated to developing mind-body-based techniques for choirs since she incorporated the Alexander Technique into her teaching philosophy.

Mirror, Mirror

Ensemble conductors often feel as though we are racing against the clock, constantly attempting to balance the needs of our students, administrators, community, colleagues, and ourselves. Often, in an effort to “save time,” conductors develop habits that unintentionally work against our best efforts for efficient and effective rehearsals. Drawing on her experience as a classroom teacher, ensemble conductor, and student teacher supervisor, Emilie Bertram will offer observations of common problems that may not be working in your favor, as well as tips to address the issue. This session is primarily aimed at teachers who are five years or less into their journey, but also offers opportunity for all conductors to reflect on their teaching behaviors.



Emilie Bertram serves as DCA, department chair, and assistant professor at Waldorf University, where she directs the Waldorf Choir, Schola Cantorum, and teaches conducting and methods

coursework. Bertram's ensembles frequently perform throughout the United States and abroad. She has collaborated with groups such as ASTER Women's Chorus, Nordkor Children's Choir, and Una Vocis Choral Ensemble. An active clinician, adjudicator, and scholar, her research “Utilizing the Principles of Storytelling to Create Engaging Concert Programs” was featured in the *Choral Journal* (2021). She holds degrees from University of Colorado Boulder, Ithaca College, and Concordia College.

Nosotros Existimos: Mexican Choral Repertoire and Resources

The goal of *Nosotros Existimos* is inclusion and belonging for the choral conductor's students and community through programming. This session's information on Mexican repertoire and resources through handouts and websites will connect our growing Chicano/a/e student population to this large body of music. By the end, attendees will have more insight on Mexican choral music history, know where to find Mexican and indigenous repertoire, and have access to resources to lead culturally responsive performances. Using this session's offerings, participants can generate deeper belonging amongst their students and community, share unheard voices, and continue to build community through music.

Raul Dominguez will be the clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 25.

Raising Up the Treble Choir

Treble choirs play a vital role in our choral community but often hold a middle role in our choral programs. In this session, we'll explore the treble choir from multiple angles—equitable structure and role, strength of community, and diversity of sound—and seek to expand the parameters and potential of modern treble ensembles. A central component will be a participatory exploration of healthy “brassy” and “lofted” timbres that can open up a palette of tone and expression to use across widely diverse repertoire. The Cantamus ensemble from Iowa State University will demonstrate distinct vocal timbres. Student leaders will present on the ensemble's community and culture, including an alum who conducted research observing the social dynamics, leadership, and practical functioning of the choir.

Jennifer Rodgers will be the clinician for this session. Her photo and bio are on page 41.

Rejoicing in Our Diversity: Teaching Traditional South African Choral Music

This session will give an overview of the traditional languages found in South Africa and how to prepare to teach traditional South African choral music to your choir. The presenter will focus on authenticity, the importance of textual research, appropriate choreography, and authentic inclusion of percussive accompaniment. Some attention will be given to clarifying social, political, and religious contexts of six to eight selected pieces. The presenter will also cover the pronunciation of the most common clicks, unique consonants, and other unusual sounds. The attendees will sing through sections and practice pronunciation with the presenter.



Gerrit Scheepers, director of choirs and assistant professor of music at South Dakota Mines, hails from South Africa. He previously served as director of choral

studies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Scheepers has worked as guest conductor and clinician for various high schools and festivals across the United States, Europe, and South Africa. He is also sought after internationally as an external examiner of master and doctoral dissertations in choral music. Recent professional engagements include presenting at the International Conference on Arts and Humanities (IICAH) in 2023 in Honolulu, HI.

A Rondo Reconciliation and Renewal: A Black History Month Concert of Connection, Healing, and Transformation

As choral artists and educators, we are called to respond to the recent issues of racial injustice and violence, yet doing so can be fraught with conflict and controversy. This session shares a process of how groups of musicians from within and beyond the Rondo neighborhood of St. Paul, Minnesota, came together to jointly heal. Activities included service projects, artist/social activist panel discussions, and a community supper with facilitated table dialogue. The collaboration grew out of relationships built over the years between Concordia University, St. Paul's music program, Walker|West Music Academy (a community music school uplifting Black musical culture), Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist Church (a prominent Rondo Black church), 29:11 International Exchange from South Africa, NUNNABOVE, and other area partners.



David Mennicke has been Concordia University, St. Paul director of choral studies since 1989, with degrees from St. Olaf College and the University of Arizona. He has conducted 300+ festivals/guest choirs in the U.S., MidEast, Europe, and Africa, including: ACDA-MN All-State Children's Choir; MMEA All-State Tenor/Bass Choir; Lutheran Summer Music, National Lutheran Choir. He was in the Grammy-winning Oregon Bach Festival Chorus and is currently a tenor section leader in the Minnesota Cho-

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rally. 29:11 International Exchange is a professional music ministry from South Africa. The ensemble has been a featured collaborator with the Minnesota Orchestra on each of 29:11's last three U.S. tours.



Carl Clomon is the music director for the Amazing Grace Chorus and minister of music at Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist Church. He composes pop, R&B, classical, and jazz tunes, specializing in gospel music. He has produced concerts at Twin Cities major venues, has performed as a keyboardist with national and international recording artists, and has led music clinics and workshops locally. He chaired the board of directors for Gospel Choirs United for over twenty-five years. Clomon completed a music composition major at Concordia University, St. Paul, in 2023 and is pursuing a master of business administration from the University of St. Thomas.

Singing Makes the World Go 'Round: A Relational Pedagogy

This session will use singing and interactive elements to invite participants to consider a pedagogy of relationships that fosters belonging, awakens artistry, empowers creativity, affirms identities, and creates a space for courageous singing that seeks to bridge across differences. Members of the VocalEssence Singers Of This Age (SOTA) will share how the "family" has shaped their lives in ways both expected and unexpected. Four SOTA case studies will provide a framework for embracing transformational relationships that nurture the development of diverse choral communities, and provide more compelling musical experiences for our singers, our communities, and ourselves.

G Phillip Shoultz III will be the clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 46.

Sounds Before Sight: Sight-Reading with Voice Quality

Research suggests that better sight-readers tend to be better performers. Yet few research studies have investigated the effect of voice quality training on pitch accuracy, intonation, and expressive sight-singing scores. This workshop will explore the commonly assessed categories of sight-singing and integrate a "sounds first" perspective using the principles of Estill Voice Training. These categories include rhythm, tempo, pitch, tone, intonation, and expression (including phrasing, articulation, and dynamics). We will answer questions about sequence of instruction and how many elements to focus on at one time and will also discuss strategies to teach students how to analyze a score before sight-singing. Participants will actively engage in a sight-singing activity and label their attractor state habits.

Brian J. Winnie will be the clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 47.

The Virtuoso Conductor: Solutions for the Most Challenging Conducting Problems

This session is a deep dive into the most challenging conducting problems and practical solutions so our gestures are clear and artistically communicate the composer's intent. Using excerpts from the repertoire, Frank Eychaner will identify specific challenges and then lead participants to effectively conduct the music themselves. Some topics to be addressed will include the four types of fermatas, tempo changes, utilizing dry beats and beats of de-emphasis to effectively communicate the artistry of a work, achieving an independent left hand and its essential role in artistry, understanding how publishers use notation to reveal the composer's intent, effectively conducting asymmetrical meter,

changing meter, how to mark difficult scores, and more. Session participants will be conducting for the majority of the session. There will be a generous resource packet with diagrams, excerpts, and links to resources.



Frank F. Eychaner is an internationally celebrated conductor, teacher, author, and clinician. He is professor, director of choral activities, music department chair, and endowed professor in the Humanities at the University of Texas Permian Basin. He has conducted honor choirs across the US, in Cuba, Korea, and Mexico. Eychaner is the author of *Foundations of Conducting Technique* published with GIA and has presented 140 sessions around the world. He has directed choirs at nine professional conferences. Most recently, the UTPB choir performed as insight choir at the 2023 National ACDA Conference, featuring commissioned works from composers from diverse backgrounds.

Vocal Pedagogy for Choral Students

This session will focus on key elements for developing the voices of choral students. The human voice is a powerful tool. Singers use their voices to express meaning and emotion in vocal literature. However, this cannot be effectively achieved without a basic understanding of how the vocal mechanism functions. Many students will enter the choral classroom with a love of singing but knowing little about healthy vocal production. Choral students who have a strong foundation in vocal pedagogy will also foster good vocal habits, prevent vocal injuries, and contribute to a balanced choral sound. Participants in this session will gain knowledge and tools to assist choral students in achieving their full vocal potential.



Tamarceo Shaw is a male soprano and voice teacher from Florence, Mississippi. He graduated from Simpson College with a BM (Voice), Austin Peay State University with an MM in vocal performance,

and Auburn University with an educational specialist degree in vocal music education. His unique soprano voice has afforded him the ability to shape a career as a solo artist. Shaw has presented his research in vocal pedagogy at conferences through MTNA, ACDA, and NAfME. In 2022 he was awarded a Teacher Enrichment Grant by the Music Teachers National Association Foundation Fund. Currently, Tamarceo is working on his PhD in vocal music education at Auburn University.

PURSUE YOUR PASSION

AUDITION DATES

Wednesday, January 24, 2024
Saturday, February 10, 2024
Saturday, March 2, 2024

uwec.ly/mus-the

Department of Music and Theatre Arts | University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire

Interest Sessions

Voices in Transition: Gender Inclusive Choral Voicings

The session will provide choral voicing options to meet the needs of both the changing transgender voice and those of cis-gender singers. As choir directors are faced with more students who identify as transgender, the need to be able to choose literature that meets those needs is imperative. In addition to existing voicings, options for adapting scores with a new “flex” part using guidelines created by Stevie J. Hirner will be included.

Roger Emerson will be the clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 27.

You Are the Voice Teacher: Teaching Technique and Authenticity of Vocal Production in Choral Singing

“Blend. Drop your jaw. Straight tone. Darker.” Most people have likely heard one of these phrases before in a choir, but do these ideas really help inexperienced singers? What terminology can we use to give clarity to singers that connects them in a relatable way and takes away some of the mystery? By bringing concepts and skills from voice pedagogy into the choral rehearsal, conductors can better support their singers in their vocal development. This session will provide practical applications of how to teach singers to find and use their authentic voices by sharing suggestions from various vocal pedagogy approaches, including Estill Voice. It is applicable to directors working with high school, college and older community singers.



Amy Johnston Blosser was the auditioned choirs chair for the 2023 ACDA National Conference and for nine years was on the national board as the R&R committee chairperson. Since 2013 she has served on the national conference planning com-

mittees. Under her direction, Bexley H.S. Vocal Ensemble has performed at NAFME and ACDA state conferences, including Central Region performances in 2012, 2016, and 2020. Blosser is the associate director of music at First Community Church and the artistic director of the Bexley Choral Society. She was selected to serve as one of fourteen conducting fellows for the 2015 ACDA International Conductors Exchange Program to Sweden.



C. Andrew Blosser serves on the voice faculty at The Ohio State University, and is the director of music at First Community Church in Columbus, Ohio. He has presented master classes, performed roles, and given recitals throughout the United States and Europe. Blosser has been a featured soloist with orchestras and ensembles throughout the Midwest. He served as cantor for services at the Berlin Cathedral, as well as soloist for Mozart’s *Missa Longa* at the Salzburg Cathedral. A recent project includes a performance on the recital *Singing Our History*, the American story told through the works of American composers, at NATS. Blosser holds degrees from The Ohio State University (DMA & MM) and Capital University (BM).

Midwestern Region Registration Information

Register at acda.org/region-conferences

Attendee \$290 Retired \$215 Student \$100

Registration after 11:59 PM CST January 17, 2024

Attendee \$340 Retired \$240 Student \$120

One-Day Registration \$190 (only available on-site)

Honor Choir Conductors

Elementary



Melissa Trevino Keylock serves as artistic director and executive director of the San Diego North Coast Singers. She taught eleven years at the Princeton Girlchoir, and previously worked at American Boy-choir School, Rider University, and the Indianapolis Children's Choir. She founded the annual Princeton Girlchoir Children Making a Difference benefit concert, raising over \$30,000 for non-profits. She has taught public and private school, including K-12 vocal music and AP Music Theory. Throughout her career, Trevino Keylock has served in state and regional leadership positions with ACDA. She holds an undergraduate degree from Wheaton College and an MM from Butler University, and directed the Butler University Women's Glee Club. She completed her Kodály studies at Capital University.

High School TB



Giselle Wyers is the Donald E. Petersen Endowed Professor of Choral Music at the University of Washington, as well as conducting the fifty-voice Concord within the Columbia Choirs consortium. As a guest conductor, Wyers has led honor choirs and all-state choirs in fourteen states and in Canada, as well as working with semi-professional ensembles across Europe. She serves as an editorial board member for *Choral Journal* as well as a member of ACDA's Standing Committee on International Activities. She has composed thirty choral works, often on texts situated around her ardent love and pervasive concern for protecting nature.

Middle School Mixed

High School SA



David Rayl recently retired as director of choral programs and senior associate dean for graduate studies and research and creative endeavors at the Michigan State University College of Music. In his twenty-one years at MSU, he mentored over 130 graduate students in choral conducting. Under his baton, MSU's University Chorale appeared at the 2007 ACDA National Conference. He also prepared the Chorale for eight sets of performances with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and regularly served as guest conductor with the Lansing Symphony Orchestra, leading large-scale choral-orchestral works. Rayl received MSU's University Distinguished Faculty Award (2013) and the Simmons-Chivukula Award for Academic Leadership (2019), and the College of Music's Withrow Award for Excellence in Teaching (2009).



Brandon A. Boyd is the director of choral activities and the graduate choral conducting program and associate professor of choral music education at the University of Missouri-Columbia. As an active composer and arranger, his music is sung regularly by ensembles throughout the United States and abroad. He is the curator and editor of the Brandon A. Boyd Choral Series, a choral series with Hinshaw Music Publications. His music also appears in the catalogs of Gentry Publications, Hinshaw Music Company, MorningStar, GIA, and Kjos Music Press. In addition, he is the executive choral editor of Gentry Publications. He holds two degrees from Florida State University (PhD and MM) and earned a BME (emphasis in piano) from Tennessee State University. Boyd also serves as a member of the National ACDA Composition Initiatives Committee.