

## Headliners/Special Events

The Southwestern ACDA Conference in Denver is right around the corner, and our team is excited to host you for a jam-packed week of choral performance, networking, and professional development. Our conference theme, #Limitless, embodies the creative and boundless potential of choral music, and we aim to inspire our attendees to push the boundaries of their own musical limits. With a program comprising nine honor choirs, including contemporary a cappella and Gospel, dozens of interest sessions, and nine separate immersion days tailored to different segments of our community, there's something for everyone at this conference. You'll have the opportunity to engage with renowned conductors and composers, share ideas and experiences with fellow musicians from across the region, and discover new tools and techniques that you can bring back to your own choir. All of this will take place in the vibrant and dynamic city of Denver, which boasts a thriving music scene, rich cultural heritage, and plenty of exciting restaurants, bars, and landmarks to explore.

ventions across the United States and the Aspen Music Festival, toured the world, and has commissioned and premiered new choral works from such renowned composers as Kim André Arnesen, Ola Gjeilo, Jocelyn Hagen, Sarah Quartel, Jake Runestad, and Eric Whitacre. In the fall of 2021, Kantorei began its three-year collaboration with M. Roger Holland II as artist-in-residence. Kantorei has released two recordings on the Naxos label. Santa Barbara Music Publishing Inc. publishes the Kantorei Choral series.



**Joel M. Rinsema**, managing artistic director, joined Kantorei in 2014, becoming the second conductor in its history. A frequent collaborator and champion of new works for chorus, Rinsema has commissioned and premiered work of many of today's leading composers, including the world premiere of the string orchestra version of Eric Whitacre's *The Sacred Veil*, led by the composer. He received the Louis Botto Award for "Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal" from Chorus America. Rinsema is music director at First Plymouth Congregational Church in Cherry Hills Village, CO, and served as the North American Choral Promotion Manager for Oxford University Press based in Oxford, England (2017-2020). He holds music degrees from Arizona State and Whitworth Universities.

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### Headliners

#### Kantorei



Kantorei is a Denver-based choral ensemble comprising volunteer singers under the direction of artistic director Joel M. Rinsema. Formed in 1997 under the leadership of six friends and artistic director Richard Larson, Kantorei has established itself as one of the nation's premier choral ensembles. Kantorei has performed for major choral con-



**Ola Gjeilo** is one of the most frequently performed composers in the choral world. An accomplished pianist, improvisations over his own published choral pieces have become a trademark of his collaborations.

Although Norwegian by birth, it is perhaps his adopted country of America that has influenced the composer's distinctive soundworld the most, evolving a style that is often described as cinematic and evocative, with a lush, harmonious sound. Gjeilo took classical composition studies at The Juilliard School, the Royal College of Music in London, and is currently a New York City-based freelance composer. He is composer-in-residence with DCINY. His music is published by

## Headliners/Special Events

Walton Music (choral), Boosey & Hawkes (wind band), and Chester Music (piano).

### University of Denver Lamont Chorale



The Lamont Chorale is the premier choral ensemble at the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music. Members include undergraduate and graduate music majors and students from across the DU campus. A winner of a number of national and international awards under the direction of Catherine Sailer, the ensemble won first place in the American Prize in Choral Performance and earned a second-place award in the prestigious Barenreiter Mårten Jansson competition. The chorale is stylistically flexible, performing diverse repertoire from the Renaissance through the present day and often in collaboration with other ensembles and composers. The Lamont Chorale has performed at conferences for ACDA and CMEA. This is their third appearance at SWACDA.



**Catherine Sailer** serves as director of choral studies at the University of Denver Lamont School of Music, associate conductor of the Colorado Ballet Orchestra, conductor of The Evans Choir, and music director of the Littleton Symphony Orchestra.

Choirs under her direction have performed at multiple ACDA and CMEA conferences. She has presented interest sessions for ACDA, CMEA, AGO, and universities and conservatories worldwide. She has served as state president and college and university chair for Colorado ACDA. Awards include the Dale Warland Award for Excellence in Choral Conducting, First Place in the American Prize for Choral Performance, and Chorus America's Robert Shaw Fellowship. Sailer received her DMA from Northwestern University and MM and BM from the University of Denver.

### University of West Indies Mona University Singers



The University Singers has distinguished itself as one of the leading choral groups in the Caribbean, noted for its versatility, spanning a varied number of musical genres including classical, American negro spirituals, jazz, folk, gospel and local and international popular music. A special feature of the choir's repertoire is the original music of Caribbean composers. Many of these composers have emerged from and are current members of the group. The choir is the premier performing arts ensemble on the Mona Campus of The University of the West Indies (UWI) and stands as the cultural ambassadors for the UWI. Presently, the choir has a full complement of over forty members, comprising undergraduate and graduate students of the UWI. The University Singers has been invited to perform at numerous state and official events, and in the presence of notable world figures including the late Nelson Mandela.



**Franklin E. Haliburton** is currently the musical director of two of Jamaica's leading musical groups, The University Singers, from The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus; and The Philharmonic Orchestra of Jamaica (POJ), the country's premier orchestra. His body of work with both groups has established him as one of Jamaica's principal choral/orchestral conductors. In his early years, he studied the piano and the cello with two of Jamaica's most esteemed music educators. Haliburton's maiden opera *1865*, an opera based on the Morant Bay Rebellion, was recognized by the guild of Jamaican actors with nine prestigious Actor Boy Awards, including Best Production, Best Score and Best Original Song. Haliburton co-founded and launched the Philharmonic Orchestra of Jamaica in 2013, a charitable organization devoted to Jamaican orchestral excellence.

## Plenary Sessions

### The Choral Music of Ola Gjeilo in His Own Words

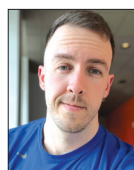
Join us for an inspiring plenary session with headliner Ola Gjeilo as he takes us on a journey through his distinctive choral music. An acclaimed pianist and composer, Gjeilo is known for his stunning choral arrangements that blend contemporary and classical styles. During this session, attendees will have the opportunity to learn more about the compositional techniques and artistic inspirations behind his music. The session will feature a choral music reading session and a Q&A, where attendees can directly engage with the composer and explore his creative process. Joining us for this demonstration will be the Arvada West High School "Vocal Showcase," under the direction of Taylor Rodgers.

**Ola Gjeilo** will be the clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 87.

### Arvada West High School Vocal Showcase



The Arvada West Choral Music program has one of the premier programs in the United States, with an invitation to perform at the 2017 National ACDA Conference in Minneapolis. Numerous choirs have also been selected to perform at CMEA conferences in the past several years, including ten appearances since 2009. The choirs also consistently receive straight "Superior" ratings at festivals and competitions. AWest choirs have performed in numerous cities and prestigious venues across the United States, and have traveled internationally, performing *High Mass* at the Basilicas of St. Peter's Rome and St. Mark's Venice.



**Taylor Rodgers**, a native of Oklahoma, is in his ninth year of educating young people through choral music. He currently serves as the director of choral activities at Arvada West High School in Arvada, Colorado. Alongside his co-director, Jesse Vanlandingham, he teaches six ensemble classes and facilitates two student-led, extracurricular vocal groups. Prior to his time at Arvada West, Rodgers was the director of choral activities at Dunwoody High School in Dunwoody, GA. In addition to his work at the school level, he has been highly involved in the Georgia MEA, serving as the District IV Choral Chair. He holds a BME from the University of Central Oklahoma. He is certified by the AP CollegeBoard to teach AP Music Theory, and he regularly collaborates as a pianist.

## Headliners/Special Events

### Gospel Music Matters: A Masterclass with Trey McLaughlin

Join us for an enlightening plenary session with headliner Trey McLaughlin as he shares his deep knowledge and experience of Gospel music. A renowned Gospel singer, arranger, and performer, McLaughlin has gained international recognition for his innovative and soulful approach to the genre. During this session, attendees will learn about the rich history and cultural significance of Gospel music, and explore the performance practice and techniques essential for a compelling and authentic performance. He will lead an interactive masterclass, providing practical guidance on singing, arranging, and directing Gospel music. Attendees will discover the power and beauty of Gospel music in this unique opportunity to learn from one of the leading Gospel artists of our time.



**Trey M. McLaughlin** is a 2002 graduate of John S. Davidson Magnet School in Augusta, GA. McLaughlin earned a BM performance degree emphasis in vocal pedagogy from Columbus State University (Columbus, Georgia). He has traveled the world conducting master classes, workshops, and performing, including the Aarhus Vocal Festival in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the L'Opéra de Massy in Massy, France. Currently, he serves as the director of Creative Impressions and is also the founder and director of the gospel ensemble Trey McLaughlin and the Sounds of Zamar. He is the director of music at The Historic Tabernacle Baptist Church and serves as an adjunct professor of choral studies at Paine College in Augusta, GA.

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### Tone and Style: Using Pop Music to Build Better Singers

Why should we perform popular music with our choirs? How can we use contemporary music to build stronger singers and diverse programs while expanding traditional technique and challenging choral norms?

This session will reveal the benefits of popular and contemporary music to choral singers and their communities while also addressing the most common roadblocks directors face while teaching it. Participants will leave with a better understanding of the importance of culturally native pop music in the choral program, strategies to successfully and authentically teach this music to their singers, and practical ways to incorporate it into their programs.



**Rob Dietz** is a multiple CARA-winning producer who has been arranging, performing, and teaching contemporary a cappella music for over twenty years. Based in Los Angeles, Dietz is best known for his work as an arranger and group coach for NBC's *The Sing-Off*. His arrangements have been showcased on several TV shows, including *America's Got Talent* (NBC), *To All The Boys: PS I Still Love You* (Netflix), and *Pitch Slapped* (Lifetime). As a performer he is an award-winning vocal percussionist. He is the author of *A Cappella 101: A Beginner's Guide to Contemporary A Cappella Singing* published by Hal Leonard. Dietz serves as the ACDA National R&R co-chair for contemporary/commercial.



**J. D. Frizzell** is the director of fine arts and director of vocal music at Briarcrest Christian School in Memphis, Tennessee. His ensembles have performed at regional, national, and international conventions. Winner of the Integrales Composition Contest, Frizzell has had many best-selling compositions and arrangements. He also co-authored *A Cappella Warm Ups with Deke Sharon* and *Teaching Music Through Performance in A Cappella* with Deke Sharon and Marc Silverberg. He is the president of the A Cappella Education Association and the founder of The National A Cappella Convention. OneVoice, his a cappella group, is a Sony Recording Artist with over 100 million downloads and streams. They have performed at the Emmys and on *America's Got Talent*.

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## What Took Me so Long?

In over four decades of directing choirs consisting of singers of all shapes and sizes, everything from elementary singers, middle school singers, high school singers, a whole lot of college singers, symphony chorus singers, and professional singers—I have figured out a few things. And, as it turns out, these are all supported in research. Perhaps I can save you a few decades by sharing what I have learned over the years. Come hear what it took me far too long to figure out!



**Betsy Cook Weber** is the Madison Endowed Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at the University of Houston Moores School of Music and is also active internationally as a conductor, clinician, adjudicator, and lecturer. Choirs under Weber's direction, including the University of Houston Concert Chorale, have been featured at multiple state and national conventions including the ACDA National Conferences in 2007 and 2017. Weber also served for eight seasons as director of the Houston Symphony Chorus, preparing programs for some of the world's leading orchestral conductors. In 2013, Weber became the first woman to receive the Texas Choral Directors Association's Texas Choirmaster Award. She serves as editor of the *Betsy Cook Weber Choral Series* with Alliance Music Publishing.

## Conducting Masterclasses

### Undergraduate



**Shohei Kobayashi** is a versatile musician with a distinguished career spanning various musical realms. He is the director of the choral program at Reed College and an associate conductor/co-artistic advisor for Resonance Ensemble. He has left a mark as a guest conductor, collaborating with prestigious ensembles on a global stage. Shohei's commitment to nurturing emerging conductors led to the creation of a tuition-

free apprenticeship program at Interlochen, promoting connections within the choral community. With a DMA and MM in conducting from the University of Michigan, Kobayashi is an active contributor to leading choral organizations and the National Board of NCCO.

## Cherry Creek High School Meistersingers



Meistersingers is an inclusive auditioned mixed choir from Cherry Creek High School dedicated to finding the fun in being serious about excellence. CCHS is a rigorous public school near Denver, Colorado, recognized as a Grammy Signature School of Excellence. The choir stresses the aesthetics of music but also an understanding of music literacy, theory, and history through the performance of choral literature. Their legacy includes performances at numerous state, regional, and national conventions. Annual performance tours include the United States, Europe, Iceland, Australia, and Asia.



**Sarah Branton** is director of choirs at Cherry Creek High School, where choirs under her direction have performed at numerous state and regional conventions, and toured around the world. She is assistant director and section leader with Kantorei, an adult chorus in Denver. Additionally, she has taught at the summer Sitka Fine Arts Camp in Sitka, Alaska, sings with ad hoc ensembles, and is a string bassist.

## Headliners/Special Events

She serves as chair-elect for Colorado all-state choir and previously served on the Colorado ACDA board. Branton holds music degrees from St. Olaf College and Colorado State University.

### Graduate

**Kristina Caswell MacMullen** will be the clinician for this masterclass. Her photo and bio are on page 85.

### University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Vesper Choir



The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Vesper Choir is internationally recognized among Historically Black Colleges and Universities for its diverse repertoire and excellent performances. This ensemble was founded in the 1946 by Professor Ariel Lovelace and conducted for more than forty years by Professor Shelton J. McGee. It has a rich choral tradition that includes numerous performances on radio and television, as well as performances across the United States and over the internet. The Vesper Choir presents entertaining and varied programs of classical choral literature, spirituals, choral jazz and commercial music, and gospel selections. In December 2022, the Choir presented

its 69th annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*, a longstanding University tradition.



**Jerron A. Liddell** is the director of choral activities at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. He holds degrees from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, University of Central Arkansas, and is currently pursuing a PhD at University of Memphis. Liddell has taught at levels from elementary to college, including Dollarway High and Robert F. Morehead Middle Schools in Pine Bluff, and North Little Rock Middle School in North Little Rock, Arkansas. He has assisted with the Voices of Central Arkansas (VOCA) Children's Choir and served as assistant director of the University Chorus at University of Central Arkansas. Liddell has an extensive background in gospel music and currently serves as minister of worship at St. Luke Baptist Church in North Little Rock, AR.



### Southwestern Region Registration Information

Register at [acda.org/region-conferences](https://acda.org/region-conferences)

Attendee \$375 Retired \$270 Student \$135

Registration after 11:59 PM CST January 15, 2024

Attendee \$400 Retired \$300 Student \$135

Guest Registration \$375

One-Day Registration \$185 (only available on-site)



## Immersion Days

Immersion Day Sessions - Wednesday, February 28  
Embassy Suites

7:30 AM - 8:50 AM: Breakfast @ Embassy Atrium

### Retiree

Mark Lawley and A. Jan Taylor, Coordinators



**Mark Lawley** is a retired choral conductor with four decades of success. He has held leadership roles that included president of the Southwestern ACDA Region, Missouri Choral Directors Association, and South Central Missouri MEA. He is High School R&R Chair at MCDA and serves on National ACDA's Education and Communication Committee. Lawley holds a bachelor's in piano from Evangel University and a master's in conducting from Missouri State University. Lawley founded renowned choral ensembles and received multiple awards for his dedication to music education, culminating in a 2018 National Federation of State Schools Associations Music Educator of the Year Award.



**A. Jan Taylor**, an accomplished educator, pianist, singer, and choral conductor, recently retired as the director of choral music activities at Prairie View A&M University. She holds a BM from the University of Houston, an MA from Prairie View A&M University, and a DMA from the University of Houston. Taylor's impressive career includes teaching music, adjudicating choral competitions, and performing as a singer with esteemed professional choral ensembles. She is a recognized authority on African American spirituals and has conducted internationally acclaimed choral groups.

### Bridging Choral Generations: Embracing Perspectives from Multiple Career Stages

Featuring Francis Cathlina and Galen Darrough, this session brings together perspectives on topics like inclusion, choral music and gender, and balanced choral programming. The session will address finding a balance between social justice works, contemporary choral literature, and all that is to glean from the historical choral canon.



**Francis Cathlina** (he/him) is a distinguished Vietnamese American conductor and educator known for innovative programming that seamlessly weaves choral music with narrative. As the director of choral activities at the University of Memphis Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music, he provides visionary leadership for the Choral Area, conducts flagship choirs, and oversees choral conducting programs. Cathlina's Eastern heritage deeply influences his teaching philosophy, emphasizing collaboration and rigor. He was named a National Finalist for The American Prize in Choral Conducting. He holds a DMA from the University of North Texas, an MM from Michigan State University, and a BME from Baylor University.



**Galen Darrough** is a distinguished professor emeritus with a wealth of experience spanning twenty-four states, several Canadian provinces, and Latin America. He has directed, adjudicated, and offered his expertise to choirs from junior and senior high schools to universities. His leadership led the University of Northern Colorado Concert Choir to be among the few choirs chosen NCCO's national conference. He received the Douglas R. McEwen Award for Choral Excellence from Arizona State University. Darrough's passion for choral music continues as a lecturer in choral music at the University of Colorado Boulder.

## Immersion Days

### I'm Retired, Now What?

Join Eph Ehly as he shares strategies to find fulfillment and happiness within the choral music profession post-retirement. This interest session will explore opportunities for retired choral directors to continue their passion through conducting engagements, mentoring younger directors, and much more! Participants will discover new ways to stay connected to the choral community while reigniting their love for the art form.



**Eph Ehly** has conducted over eighty all-state choirs and more than 600 festival ensembles. As a conductor, author, lecturer, and clinician he has appeared in forty-eight states, Canada, Brazil, Japan,

Mexico, and various countries throughout Europe. Ehly retired from the Conservatory of Music, University of Missouri-Kansas City, after twenty-seven years of service. He has additionally served at the University of Oklahoma and University of New Mexico, having supervised nearly 200 graduate students. Ehly is the recipient of numerous teaching and performance excellence awards and grants, including the Missouri Choral Directors Association Luther Spade Choral Director of the Year Award and the AMOCO Foundation Outstanding Teaching Award.



Voices of Colorado. With thirty years of public school experience, she served the Cherry Creek School District as Campus Middle School's choir director and the district music coordinator. She also shared her expertise at the Metropolitan State University of Denver teaching music education classes. Camp has served SWACDA as a past president, treasurer, and program chair for many SWACDA Conferences. She has earned degrees from Trinity University and The University of Texas at San Antonio. She also has a music specialist degree from the University of Colorado at Denver. Camp was inducted into the Colorado Music Educators Hall of Fame and received ACDA's Volunteer of the Year award.



**Jonathan Owen** retired as choral director in 2018 after thirty years as a Missouri public school music teacher. During his teaching tenure, his choirs performed eight times at the Missouri MEA Conference (1992, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2011, 2013 and 2016) and for the 2002 Music Educators National Conference (NAfME). In his retirement, Owen serves as organist/accompanist at Trinity Lutheran Church in Chesterfield, MO. He has an MM in choral conducting from Missouri State University, a BME voice emphasis (Certificate Recital) from Evangel University and an AA from Neosho County Community College (KS). Owen is currently the president-elect for SWACDA.

### How Do You Spell Retirement?

**R-E-B-I-R-T-H! That's How!**

### A Panel Discussion

Join Margie Camp, Jonathan Owen, and Mark Lawley for a panel discussion on retirement. Your rebirth is an opportunity to continue contributing to the profession with vigor. Audience participation is encouraged and welcomed!

**Margie Camp** has a rich background in music education. She recently retired from her role as administrative director and training choir director for Young

**Mark Lawley** will be a presenter for this session. His photo and bio are on page 93.



Music and Worship

Jonathan Palant and Robert T. Gibson, Coordinators



**Jonathan Palant** is associate dean of the arts and director of choral activities at the University of Texas at Dallas and is founder and conductor of both Credo, a 140-member community choir, and the Dallas Street Choir, a musical outlet for those affected by homelessness. In addition, Palant is director of music at Kessler Park United Methodist Church. His book, *Brothers, Sing On! Conducting the Tenor-Bass Choir*, and *The Jonathan Palant Choral Series* are published by the Hal Leonard Corporation. Palant holds degrees from Michigan State University, Temple University, and the University of Michigan.



**Robert T. Gibson** is a Houston native, dynamic conductor, clinician, composer/arranger, lecturer, and educator with a passion for developing future music educators. Armed with a BME from the University of North Texas and an MM from Missouri State University, he has held diverse roles in middle schools, high schools, colleges, and churches. Gibson's choral works and arrangements can be found through Walton Music and Alfred Publications. He is the recipient of the 2020 Missouri Choral Director Association Opus Award for his arrangement of "We Shall Overcome." Gibson's work has also been performed by the Texas All-State Tenor Bass Choir and the Missouri Summer All-State Choir.

Repertoire for Any Sized Worship Choir

This reading session, presented by Jonathan Palant (R&R Chair of Community Choirs), will include a mix of old and new ecumenical octavos for any size worship choir. Texts to include English, Latin, Hebrew, and Spanish.

**Jonathan Palant** will be the presenter for this session.

Rise, Shine, and Give Him the Glory: Gospel Music Workshop

Attendees will rehearse various styles of gospel music under the guidance of Robert Gibson (R&R Chair of Music in Worship). Gibson will share his insights and provide teaching strategies for successful performance.

**Robert T. Gibson** will be the presenter for this session.

Limitless: A Time for Us

Attendees will benefit from and enjoy this informal time to share ideas, strategies, and perhaps concerns. Moderated by Jonathan Palant and Robert Gibson.

**Jonathan Palant** and **Robert T. Gibson** will be the presenters for this session.

New Teachers and College Students

Micah Horton, O'Neil Jones, and Elizabeth Swanson, Coordinators



**Micah Horton** is the director of choirs at Olathe North High School, in Olathe, Kansas. He holds an MME from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music in Kansas City, Missouri, and bachelor's degrees in music composition and psychology from Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy, Massachusetts. Horton currently serves as the Youth and Student Services R&R Chair for the Southwest ACDA Region. Horton was selected as the 2022-2023 Olathe School District Teacher of the Year. He is an active adjudicator, clinician, and vocalist. He has performed with the Te Deum Chamber Choir and the Tallgrass Chamber Choir, appearing in numerous recordings.

## Immersion Days



**O'Neil Jones** is a native of Montego Bay, Jamaica. He is highly interested in Jamaican Choral Theatre and its amalgamation with the recital style of choral production practiced in the Americas. His current research centers on the nationalistic search for a post-colonial identity expressed in Jamaican choral music. Jones holds degrees in vocal performance from Alcorn State University and an MM with emphases in choral conducting and vocal performance from the University of Southern Mississippi. He is currently pursuing a DMA in choral conducting and literature at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

level courses, and serves on master's and doctoral committees. Swanson is an active conductor, clinician, and adjudicator throughout the United States with recent guest conducting appearances at Carnegie Hall and the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa. She is also vice president of NCCO Executive Board, leading initiatives for equity and diversity. She holds degrees from Northwestern University, Ithaca College, and St. Olaf College.



**Elizabeth Swanson** is the associate director of choral studies at the University of Colorado Boulder. She conducts the CU Treble Chorus and the University Choir, teaches undergraduate- and graduate-

### Things They Didn't Teach You in College!

Moderated by Dr. Leila Heil, this session explores those topics that are critical to the success of the teacher. Topics may include tips for finding work-life balance, ways to create healthy boundaries, setting career goals, and choosing the right time to get a master's degree.



Presbyterian Association of Musicians

# Worship & Music Conference

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**BRANDON BOYD**  
Adult  
Choir Director



**JEFFEREY REDDING**  
Senior High  
Choir Director



**EMILY FLOYD**  
Davis Flohr Middler  
Choir Director

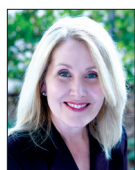


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**Leila Heil** is associate professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she teaches courses in music education. A former K-12 music teacher, she has presented sessions at numerous national and international conferences including the Midwest Clinic, the Society for Music Teacher Education Conference, NAFME Conference, ACDA National Conference, and the Research in Music Education Conference. She has authored and co-authored articles for the *Music Educators Journal*, the *Choral Journal*, *Visions in Music Education Research*, *Contributions to Music Education*, and the *Journal of Music, Technology and Education*.

### Programming for the Ensemble You Have, Not the One You Want

There are a plethora of resources available to new teachers as they program for their ensembles. Together we will explore the limitless possibilities available to conductors, regardless of the ensemble complement, providing access to curated repertoire resources for all levels. Led by O’Neil Jones and Franco Basili.



**Franco Basili** is a DMA student in choral conducting at the University of Houston. Originally from Tandil, Argentina, Basili is a choral director, pianist, and choral singer. He completed his MM in choral pedagogy at Carthage College, and his bachelor’s degrees in choral conducting and piano pedagogy at the Conservatorio de Música “Isaías Orbe” (Tandil, Argentina). He is the director of the university chorus at the University of Houston, director of the chancel choir at Grace Presbyterian Church in Houston, choral intern at the Grammy-awarded Houston Chamber Choir, and member of the multi-award-winning University of Houston Concert Chorale.

**O’Neil Jones** will be a presenter for this session.

### Teaching Workshop

Rehearsal flow and processes are demystified as participants actively explore strategies for increased student engagement and success. This session serves to empower the conductor to develop a rehearsal toolbox from which to draw within the choral classroom. Led by O’Neil Jones and Elizabeth Swanson.

**O’Neil Jones** and **Elizabeth Swanson** will be the presenters for this session.

### Literacy

This session engages ideas of literacy as critical to the developing young musician. How, why, and when to teach literacy are explored as participants are equipped with tools for immediate success in the classroom. Led by O’Neil Jones and Micah Horton.

**O’Neil Jones** and **Micah Horton** will be the presenters for this session.

### Why Can’t I Just Teach the Music?

This session explores setting expectations within the classroom, concert logistics, and management. Participants are invited to evaluate the many extra-musical tasks that a teacher must oversee as they build the program they envision. Led by O’Neil Jones, Micah Horton, and Franco Basili.

**O’Neil Jones, Micah Horton, and Franco Basili** will be the presenters for this session.

## Immersion Days

### Guiding Social-Emotional Learning in the Classroom

Join Dr. Elizabeth Swanson as she facilitates a conversation that centers on nurturing community through music making and programming. Strategies for promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within the choral classroom take center stage.

**Elizabeth Swanson** will be the presenter for this session. Her photo and bio are on page 96.

### Contemporary A Cappella

Leia Browning, Coordinator



**Leia Browning** has a BME from the University of North Texas. She also attended Louisiana State University, where she studied musical theatre. Browning has been teaching high school choir for eighteen years. She spent seven years at South Garland High School and is in her tenth year at Rockwall High.

### Sound 101 with Tony Huerta

Are you lost when it comes to working with sound equipment? Do you know how to troubleshoot when no sound comes out? Do you know how to EQ different groups? What about purchasing a sound system for your classroom or a cappella group? Tony Huerta will answer all these questions and more!



**Tony Huerta** is a versatile professional in the music industry, excelling as a singer, beatboxer, recording studio engineer/producer, and live audio engineer. He is renowned as one of the world's top acappella live sound engineers, having mixed performances for major acts like Pentatonix, Take 6, and Home Free. For over a decade, he served as the Front of House

Engineer and Production Manager for the ten-time Grammy-winning group, Take 6, traveling to forty-one countries. Huerta is also the founder of Urban Method, a finalist on NBC's *The Sing Off*. His Denver-based studio, Sonic Audio, has produced, engineered, and mastered a variety of a cappella projects. Huerta is in high demand, often incorporating his beatboxing skills into live performances.

### Using Pop Music to Build Better Singers

Why should we perform popular music with our choirs? How can we use contemporary music to build stronger singers and diverse programs while expanding traditional techniques and challenging choral norms? What exactly is happening in the vocal mechanism when we sing popular music authentically? Join contemporary a cappella clinicians Rob Dietz, J.D. Frizzell, and Christopher M. Diaz as they reveal the benefits of popular and contemporary music to choral singers and their communities while also addressing the most common roadblocks directors face while teaching it. Participants will leave with a better understanding of the importance of culturally native pop music in the choral program, strategies to successfully and authentically teach this music to their singers, and practical ways to incorporate it into their programs.

**Rob Dietz** will be a presenter for this session. His photo and bio are on page 90.

**J. D. Frizzell** will be a presenter for this session. His photo and bio are on page 90.



**Christopher M. Diaz** is a vocalist, arranger, songwriter, producer, coach and teacher from Newport News, VA. Diaz co-founded the international touring group, The Exchange, which performed hundreds of shows for audiences in over fifty countries on six continents, notably opening for The Backstreet

Boys in their thirty-two-city “In A World Like This” stadium tour and participated in three American Music Abroad tours. As a coach, Diaz has adjudicated, performed, and instructed at vocal festivals around the country and the world, and served on the vocal coaching and arranging staff of NBC’s *The Sing-Off*. Diaz is currently based in Maryland, USA.

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**More Than This:  
A Talk on Expanding Our Horizons  
through A Cappella**

Do you feel particularly “intense” about a cappella? Are you in a group you love but feel like you’re stagnating? Do you wish you had more ideas about how to take your music further? Come have a chat with Christopher Diaz about coaching, arranging, listening, producing, performing, traveling, teaching, organizing, improving, promoting, choreographing, creating, connecting and any other -ing!

**Christopher M. Diaz** will be the presenter for this session.

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## Commercial and Jazz

Jim Graves, Coordinator



**Jim Graves** is a multifaceted vocal artist, arranger, and educator. He serves as director of choral activities at Southern Nazarene University since 2008. He directs the University Singers, SNU Chorale, and Concert Choir. He also teaches courses in music theory, music education, and private and group voice. Graves has led groups at the National ACDA Convention, at the Jazz Education Network National Convention, has presented interest sessions at the national and regional level of ACDA, and was formerly the Southwest ACDA Jazz R&R Chair. Graves’s ar-

rangements have been performed by The University of North Texas Jazz Singers, UNT Jazz Singers II, University of Oklahoma Singing Sooners, and performing groups from around the United States.

## Sound 101 with Tony Huerta

Are you lost when it comes to working with sound equipment? Do you know how to troubleshoot when no sound comes out? Do you know how to EQ different groups? What about purchasing a sound system for your classroom or a cappella group? Tony Huerta will answer all these questions and more!

**Tony Huerta** will be the presenter for this session.

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## Jazz Timbre, Style, and Tuning

Led by Dr. Jim Graves, this session explores those topics that are critical to the success of the vocal jazz ensemble. We will identify timbral choices idiomatic to vocal jazz. You will learn tips and tricks for teaching swing, bossa nova, and other jazz styles. We will establish techniques for balancing and tuning tight harmonies.

**Jim Graves** will be the presenter for this session.

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## Improvisation

Led by Dr. Jim Graves, this session explores vocal jazz improvisations. You will be presented with listening aids, and tips and tricks for beginning jazz singers to approach vocal improvisation. We will explore motivic development through rhythm, breaking down melodies, goal tones, etudes, and ways of creating assessment in your ensemble.

**Jim Graves** will be the presenter for this session.

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## Immersion Days

### Secondary and Late High School

Pamela Dawson, William George-Twyman, and Jim Henry, coordinators



**Pamela Dawson**, born in Detroit, Michigan, began studying music at the age of seven on the piano taught by her father. She continued in music throughout her education and was greatly influenced by

her god-sister, Dorothy Ashby, a well-renowned jazz harpist. She graduated from Cass Technical High School as a vocational music major and holds a bachelor of arts in communications and theater with an emphasis in music and business from Eastern Michigan University. She studied harp with Ruth Myers and master classes with the late Lucille Lawrence. She is the director of choral activities at Desoto High School and the 2023 GRAMMY Music Educator of the Year.



**William George-Twyman** is a dedicated educator and seasoned choral conductor, currently serving as the head of choral studies at Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual

Arts. He has recently taken on the role of assistant director of the Music Conservatory for Curriculum/Instruction. Renowned for his innovative programming and multimedia collaborations, he has wielded the baton for musical theater productions and international performances. He is a trained countertenor, showcasing his vocal talents in a wide array of classical works. He earned his DMA in choral conducting from the University of Oklahoma, a master of sacred music, master of music in choral conducting, and a BME.



**Jim Henry**, serves as the director of choral studies at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. With a PhD in music composition from Washington University, he conducts University Singers and Vocal Point and teaches courses in choral methods, choral conducting, and choral arranging. Henry's commit-

ment to education earned him the Missouri Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. As a celebrated composer, he received awards for his songs and piano pieces. Furthermore, he boasts a rich performance career as a two-time Barbershop Harmony Society International quartet champion bass with Crossroads. He will make his Carnegie Hall conducting debut in June.

ment to education earned him the Missouri Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. As a celebrated composer, he received awards for his songs and piano pieces. Furthermore, he boasts a rich performance career as a two-time Barbershop Harmony Society International quartet champion bass with Crossroads. He will make his Carnegie Hall conducting debut in June.

### "So... what is it you say you do here?"

#### Defining the Role of the Modern Secondary Teacher

As secondary choir directors, we wear a bunch of different hats. We're so used to "making it work" that we sometimes forget what we were hired to do. During this session, attendees will work on narrowing and defining exactly what it is we do in the classroom/rehearsal space. By the end of the session, attendees will have written a full job description so that they can have more honest and productive conversations with their administrators regarding time commitment, compensation, etc.

**Pamela Dawson, William George-Twyman and Jim Henry** will be the presenters for this session.

### Developing Professionals... Artistically!

How many times have you sat in a PD session that doesn't address your teaching circumstances? How often have you been frustrated by yet another STEM presentation that forgets you exist? Don't you wish it was different? During this session, attendees will design an outline for a professional development workshop that they would like to present in their home districts. By showing the other disciplines what's really going on in the choir room, we can help our colleagues understand and develop better teaching methodology that takes the arts-minded student into account.

**Pamela Dawson, William George-Twyman and Jim Henry** will be the presenters for this session.

## Harmonizing Diversity: Best Practices in Choral Music Education

Join us for a dynamic session exploring best practices in choral music education, with a focus on diversity. William George-Twyman will guide discussions on the importance of diversity in selecting honor choir clinicians and exemplar choirs. We will delve into innovative teaching methods such as Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), and Trauma-Informed Practice. Learn how to foster an inclusive environment that resonates with all students, enhancing their musical journey. This session promises to equip educators with practical strategies to create a more inclusive, equitable, and effective choral music education program.

**William George-Twyman** will be the presenter for this session.

## Higher Education and Collegiate Directors

Yoojin Muhn, Joshua Oppenheim, and Catherine Sailer, Coordinators



**Yoojin Muhn** is the director of choral activities at the University of Texas at San Antonio, where she conducts the UTSA Chamber Singers and teaches choral conducting. She also serves as the

Music Director for the San Antonio Mastersingers, a 120-voice volunteer chorus. Muhn is in high demand as a clinician, guest conductor, and adjudicator. She received a DMA from the University of Southern California, an MM in choral conducting from the University of Cincinnati, an MM in sacred music from Westminster Choir College, and a BA in composition from Sook Myung Women's University in Seoul, Korea.



**Joshua Oppenheim** is director of choral studies at Kansas State University. Prior to that, he was on faculty at the Crane School of Music in New York. He re-

ceived his BM from Western Michigan University, his MM at the University of Mississippi, and his DMA in choral conducting at the University of North Texas. He directs Concert Choir, Collegiate Chorale, Men's Choir, and In-A-Chord. He teaches undergraduate and graduate conducting and choral rehearsal techniques. His choirs have performed by invitation at the New York State School Music Association Conference (2007), the Kansas MEA Conference (2009, 2012), the Southwestern ACDA Region Conference (2012), and NCCO (2013).

**Catherine Sailer** is a coordinator for this immersion day. Her photo and bio are on page 88.

## Bridging Choral Generations: Embracing Perspectives from Multiple Career Stages

Featuring Francis Cathlina and Galen Darrough, this session brings together perspectives on topics like inclusion, choral music and gender, and balanced choral programming. The session will address finding a balance between social justice works, contemporary choral literature, and all that is to glean from the historical choral canon.

**Francis Cathlina** will be a presenter for this session. His photo and bio are on page 93.

**Galen Darrough** will be a presenter for this session. His photo and bio are on page 93.

## Enhancing Choral Excellence through Roundtable Discussions

Join Yoojin Muhn, Joshua Oppenheim, and Catherine Sailer to share experiences, exchange ideas, and collectively elevate the standards of choral excellence in higher education. Immerse yourself in insightful

## Immersion Days

conversations on choral music education, including curriculum development, strategic repertoire selection, and the art of cultivating a vibrant sense of community within college choirs.

**Yoojin Muhn, Joshua Oppenheim, and Catherine Sailer** will be the presenters for this session.

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### Nurturing Growth through Mentorship

Experience our enriching mentorship program designed to provide additional support during the immersion day. Connect with experienced choral directors who will guide those newer to the profession (under five years) through individualized interactions in small groups of three to five. Gain invaluable advice and personalized professional development, fostering both individual growth and a choral director's community. Led by Yoojin Muhn, Joshua Oppenheim, and Catherine Sailer.

**Yoojin Muhn, Joshua Oppenheim, and Catherine Sailer** will be the presenters for this session.

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### Middle School and Early High School

Gretchen Watt and Larry Dunn, Coordinators



**Gretchen Watt** is a dedicated music educator with twenty-six years of experience at Central Jr. High School in Springdale, Arkansas. Her students excel in all-region choir, choral performance assessments, and national and regional honor choirs, having been featured three times at the Arkansas all-state music conference. She collaborates with the University of Arkansas Choral Music Department and maintains a private piano and voice studio. With a BME from the University of Arkansas, Watt is active in professional

organizations like ArkCDA and ACDA, serving as the Jr. High R&R Chair for Arkansas and the SWACDA Middle School/Jr. High Repertoire & Resource Chair.



**Larry Dunn**, coordinator, is a seasoned music educator with over seventeen years of experience in the Magnolia Public School District. He leads the Magnolia High School Chamber Choir, Bel Canto, and V (GENTS), while also serving as the director of performing arts and chair of the district's strategic planning committee. Dunn holds a BME, a Master of Education, and has completed additional coursework for certification in Educational Administration & Supervision from Southern Arkansas University—Magnolia. His choral ensembles have performed at prestigious venues like Carnegie Hall. Dunn serves as the president of the Arkansas ACDA.

### Recruiting and Retaining 101

Whether building a new choral program or maintaining enrollment, this session will give you new ideas for recruitment and competing to keep singers in your program. Led by Larry Dunn and Gretchen Watt.

**Larry Dunn** and **Gretchen Watt** will be the presenters for this session.

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### The Boy's Changing Voice

This session will demonstrate essential strategies and resources for teaching the developing boys voice, including warm-ups, customizing vocal lines, and tried-and-true literature that works! Led by Larry Dunn and Gretchen Watt.

**Larry Dunn** and **Gretchen Watt** will be the presenters for this session.

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### The Female Adolescent Voice

In a world of young singers “belting it” in their low register, this session will share vocal strategies for bringing the head voice down and supporting a healthy and beautiful sound through literature suited for the developing female voice. Led by Larry Dunn and Gretchen Watt.

**Larry Dunn** and **Gretchen Watt** will be the presenters for this session.

### Elementary and Children’s Choir

Nick Farr and Rachel Cornett, Coordinators



**Nick Farr** is the artistic director of Una Vice at Wildwood in Little Rock, AR. He holds an education doctorate in higher education and a doctorate of music education. Farr is the Maumelle High School Principal in Maumelle, AR. He has been a music educator for eleven years and enjoys impacting the arts as an administrator. Farr is the president-elect for Arkansas ACDA and has served in various other roles. He has two daughters and enjoys running and working with community theatre.



**Rachel Cornett** is an accomplished music educator with a BME and an MME from the University of Arkansas. Her career includes a decade as a middle school choir director in Bentonville, Arkansas, and leadership roles at TEP Charter School in Manhattan. Currently teachchoir for grades 8-9 at Lakeside Junior High, she also directs the University of Arkansas Children's Choir. Cornett holds a National Board Certification and an ESL Certification. She serves on the Arkansas ACDA Board and is known for her choral clinics and guest conductor roles. She also has a professional singing career.

### Meet & Greet & Door Prizes!!

This session will help us connect to other elementary music teachers and children’s chorus directors who are attending the conference. Make new friends and keep the old as we interact through fun, fellowship, and door prizes!

**Nick Farr** and **Rachel Cornett** will be the presenters for this session.



### “Unconference”

This session will cover topics that are a challenge for teachers new and seasoned. What areas of your teaching do you feel need the most support? What areas of teaching are your strengths? Great minds think alike. Join us with your thoughts and concerns for us all to workshop in real-time together!

**Nick Farr** and **Rachel Cornett** will be the presenters for this session.



### “Kids’ Songs True and New”

Tried-and-true (as well as new to you) songs for young kids that your students and audiences will love. Join us as we explore favorite children’s classics and songs that are trending.

**Nick Farr** and **Rachel Cornett** will be the presenters for this session.

## Performing Choirs

### A.C. Jones High School Varsity Mixed Choir



The A.C. Jones High School Varsity Mixed Choir started in 2016 when Cesar Galaviz was given the opportunity to bring the program back to life. Since its rebirth, the high school choral program has brought a total of sixteen Texas University Interscholastic League Sweepstakes. Travel and performance experiences in the last five years include Carnegie Hall in New York City, Universal Studios in Orlando Florida, the Pearl Harbor Remembrance event in Hawaii, and the opportunity to perform at the 2023 Texas MEA Convention. Since 2018, the choral program has had twenty-nine Texas All-State Choir Representations.



**Cesar Galaviz** completed a BM from Texas A&M University Corpus Christi and began his teaching career at Tuloso Midway Middle School in Corpus Christi. Since 2018, twenty-nine students from A. C. Jones High School have been awarded places in TMEA Large School and Small School All-State Choirs. Travel and performance experiences have included Carnegie Hall, Universal Studios in Orlando Florida, and at the Pearl Harbor Remembrance event in Hawaii. Galaviz is active as a section leader for the TMEA All-State Small School Choir, as Camp Coordinator for the Del Mar College Choir Camp, has served as a Region 14 Vocal Division officer, and UIL Concert & Sight-Reading adjudicator.

### Allen High School Varsity Treble Choir



The Allen High School Varsity Treble Choir is the premier treble ensemble at Allen HS and is beautifully and complexly diverse. The choir comprises sophomores, juniors, and seniors who all possess an incredible work ethic, a commitment to academic integrity and eligibility, and enormous hearts for making and sharing beautiful music. The students in this choir are members of Allen High School's Varsity Mixed Chorus as well as the varsity treble chorus Eagle Select. They have consistently received Sweepstakes awards at UIL Concert and Sightreading evaluations and performed at the 2023 Texas MEA Convention.



**Kathryn Zetterstrom** began her teaching career in the Lubbock Independent School District and has taught for twenty-three years—twelve of which have been as one of four directors (and friends) who teach approximately 450 choir students at Allen High School. She currently serves as TMEA Region 25 Vice-President, and her Varsity Treble Choir performed as an invited choir at the 2023 TMEA convention in San Antonio. She received both her BME and her MM (performance) degree in conducting from Texas Tech University (under Dr. Ken Davis) and her Educational Administration certification from Lubbock Christian University.

**Colorado Children's Chorale  
Tour Choir**



Over the past fifty years, the Colorado Children's Chorale has brought its artistry and charm to audiences throughout the world. With a diverse repertoire ranging from fully-staged opera and musical theater to standard choral compositions in classical, folk, and popular traditions, the Chorale performs with an innovative stage presentation and a unique theatrical spirit. The Chorale has received the Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, the Mayor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, and the prestigious El Pomar Award for Excellence in Arts and Humanities. The Colorado Children's Chorale annually trains 400 members between the ages of 7 and 14 from all ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds, representing more than 180 schools in the Denver metro area and beyond.



**Emily Crile**, artistic director, exhibits her passion for choral music through developing and conducting singers of all ages. She currently directs Tour Choir, a premier treble ensemble. During the past twenty-two years with the Chorale, she has directed prep, apprentice, and transitions choirs; worked with concert and tour choirs; prepared children for appearances with the Colorado Symphony, Central City Opera, Opera Colorado, and Colorado Ballet; and toured throughout Australia, China, Europe, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States. Crile is the past president of Colorado ACDA and is an active choral clinician and presenter throughout the United States.

**Elus Vocal Ensemble**



Founded in 2012, Elus Vocal Ensemble comprises musicians based in the Denver Metropolitan area. Under the direction of Taylor Martin, Elus specializes in singing diverse a cappella choral repertoire including contemporary works from around the world. In their eighth season, Elus has collaborated previously with The Colorado Symphony, The Colorado Chorale, El Sistema, Church of the Ascension, St. Martin's Chamber Choir, and the Choirs of Metropolitan State University.



**Taylor Martin** is associate director and conductor for the Colorado Symphony Chorus, and artistic director for Elus Vocal Ensemble. Entering his seventh season with Elus Vocal Ensemble, Martin has led performances of great a cappella repertoire through imaginative programming, and led major works such as David Lang's *the little match girl passion* and Fauré's *Requiem* to great acclaim. Elus collaborated with international EDM artist, OPIUO, to perform a sold-out show at Red Rocks in 2021. Martin lives in Arvada with his wife and pets, where he loves to spend time outside, enjoying Colorado's beautiful nature.

## Performing Choirs

### Fort Settlement Middle School Varsity Treble Choir



### Grand Prairie Fine Arts Academy Treble Singers



Fort Settlement Varsity Treble Choir is a select ensemble of thirty-eight singers in grades 7-8. Singers consistently receive 1st Division Superior ratings at UIL Solo/Ensemble, place in the TMEA Region 13 MS Choir, and earn straight 1st Division Superior ratings during UIL Concert and Sightreading contest. In 2022, Varsity Treble won their first national award for the Mark of Excellence 2022 as a Commended Winner. Many choir members are NJHS members, enrolled in Pre-AP and GT curriculum, and uphold traditions of music excellence existing at Fort Settlement.

GPFAA Treble Singers consists of advanced vocalists in grades 9-12. Joel Duarte, high school director, and Alexis Galindo, middle school director, join to lead the Grand Prairie Fine Arts Academy Vocal Music strand. The program not only nurtures the students' lives but has consistently ranked among the top choirs across the nation. This ensemble has won numerous best-in-class, overall outstanding, and grand champion awards nationwide. The program has been recognized as Mark of Excellence National Winners (2019, 2020, 2022, 2023), American Choral Prize Winners (2020, 2021, 2022), and Grammy Museum Signature School Award Recipient (2021).



**Kirsten Jordan** received her BA in vocal performance and music education from Virginia Tech in 1993, moved to Houston, and began over thirty years of teaching music, directing choirs, and singing.

After coordinating Fort Bend ISD's district honor choir program in 2014 and 2015, Jordan had the honor of conducting the 2016 FBISD Elementary Honor Choir at the TMEA annual convention. Jordan spent seven years directing the Fort Bend Boy Choir of Texas's Town Choir; created Cantate, a Sugar Land community children's choir; and started a Chamber Choir including singers in local high schools as well as adults from the area.



**Joel Duarte** has taught public school for thirteen years and has been named teacher of the year twice, most recently by The National Art-School Network as one of the 2023-2024 Teachers of the Year.

He obtained degrees from Wayland Baptist University (BME) and Southern Methodist University (MM). Duarte loves performing with the Dallas Symphony Chorus, as he feels it keeps him in the mindset and appreciation of his singers. Duarte has traveled the world through the opportunities provided by performing, teaching, and empowering his fellow educators.

### Liberty North High School Chamber Choir



The Liberty North High School Chamber Choir is an auditioned, non-curricular ensemble that meets two hours per week. Each student must first audition for the Concert Choir and then complete the rigorous audition process to be accepted into the Chamber Choir. There are strict guidelines that hold each member accountable for attendance and active participation. These students represent the best and brightest, most well-rounded, and most involved students that Liberty North has to offer. More importantly, these students express their humanity through music and explore the depths of emotions that music helps to define.



**Brian Hartman** has served as a choral music educator for twenty-three years, currently enjoying his fourteenth at Liberty North High School in Liberty, Missouri. Throughout his tenure, Hartman has enjoyed performances as a singer, conductor, and adjudicator across the United States and abroad. Hartman is active in music education organizations, having served in numerous roles with the Kansas City Metro District, MCDA, SWACDA, and Missouri MEA, serving as president for the 2022-2024 term. He holds degrees from Wichita State University (BME), University of Missouri-Columbia (MM), and Northwest Missouri State University (EdS).

### MacArthur High School A Cappella Treble Choir



Established in 2019 and consisting of twenty singers in grades 9-12, the A Cappella Treble Choir is a select varsity treble group comprising members from MacArthur High School's A Cappella Choir, the varsity mixed ensemble. The ensemble's first year in existence was during hybrid instruction at Irving ISD. In addition to their mixed ensemble rehearsals, members attended virtual and outdoor rehearsals throughout the year and ended the contest season by receiving their first of four sweepstakes, the highest accolade from Texas's University Interscholastic League (UIL) contest.



**Lauren Davis** has worked in music education for fourteen years. She began her career in Del Rio Middle School before moving to Huntsville High School and returning to Dallas six years ago to direct at MacArthur High School in Irving ISD. Choirs under her direction regularly receive sweepstakes at University Interscholastic League (UIL) competitions, have singers perform in Texas All-State choirs, excel at regional and state level solo and ensemble contest, boast members in the ACDA National Honor Choir, and are active performers in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. Davis earned her BME from Texas A&M University-Commerce. She performs with various community choirs, opera groups, and churches across the Dallas-Ft. Worth Metroplex.

## Performing Choirs

### Nixa High School Chamber Singers



The Chamber Singers, comprising forty auditioned singers, is the premier choral ensemble at Nixa High School. Under the leadership of Daniel Gutierrez, the Chamber Singers have received exemplary ratings at district and state contests, and were named the Grand Champions of the Worlds of Fun Choral Festival in the spring of 2022 and 2023. In 2023 they also performed for the Missouri MEA Conference.



**Daniel Gutierrez** is the head choir director at Nixa secondary schools. Gutierrez is an active conductor, clinician, and presenter throughout the country. He was named Teacher of the Year for Springfield Public Schools and Southwest Missouri (also a finalist for the state TOTY award), Springfield Rotary Award for Outstanding Community Service, honoree for *Springfield Business Journal's* 40 Under 40, quarter-finalist for the Grammy National Music Educator Award, and the recipient of the Missouri Choral Directors Association Podium Award. Gutierrez's speaking engagements include presenting for TEDx, presenting for regional and National ACDA conference, and other choral workshops nationally.

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### Springfield Chamber Chorus



Founded in 2008, Springfield Chamber Chorus is dedicated to acting as ambassadors, artists, and educators, integrating choral music into the life of our community through meaningful experiences for both singer and audience. The chorus, an entirely volunteer ensemble of forty members, exists to pursue artistic excellence while commissioning new works, supporting emerging talent, and promoting artistic collaboration throughout our region. Springfield Chamber Chorus has been featured at both the Missouri Choral Directors Association and Missouri MEA annual conferences on multiple occasions. Performances highlight a wide range of classic and contemporary choral pieces.



**Christopher Brammer** is an accomplished conductor, clinician, and educator. He spent twelve years teaching music in public schools before leaving to serve as the music minister at University Heights

Baptist Church in Springfield, MO. Brammer received music degrees from Lawrence University in Appleton, WI, and from Missouri State University in Springfield. He resides in Springfield with his wife, Amy, and three amazing children, Wyatt, Will, and Izzy, where he maintains an active schedule as a clinician, and is the artistic director of Springfield Chamber Chorus.

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### Stephen F. Austin State University A Cappella Choir



The A Cappella Choir, under the direction of Dr. Michael Murphy, is the premier choral ensemble at Stephen F. Austin State University. The select mixed chorus has a distinguished tradition of performing distinctive and diverse repertoire at the highest level of artistry. Throughout its rich and successful history, the choir has had many guest appearances at state and national conventions including, Texas MEA, NafME, the ACDA, and many international concert venues.



**Michael Murphy** is the director of choral activities and associate professor of music at Stephen F. Austin State University, where he teaches choral conducting, ensembles, repertoire, and methods courses and oversees the graduate conducting program. Murphy is an active clinician, adjudicator, and author. His research interests include training and developing the holistic conductor, rehearsal techniques, new choral compositions, and investing and creating impactful connections in our global community through music. His choirs have been invited to perform for several international, state, and regional ACDA and NafME conferences, and he has held several international, national, and state leadership positions.

### Timber Creek High School Chamber Choir



The Timber Creek HS choir program has been active in the competitive arena of choir for the last five years and has grown to be a consistent presence in the online choral community. The chamber choir was founded the year Adrian Kirtley started as the head director, and since then they've been awarded first place at the 2019 and 2021 Madrigal Festivals, first place at the 2022 Festival di Voce competition, and most recently performed as an invited choir of the 2023 National ACDA Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio.



**Adrian Kirtley** has served as director of choral music at Timber Creek High School in Ft. Worth since 2019. He was assistant director at Timber Creek during 2016 and 2017. All his choirs since 2019 have received UIL Sweepstakes ratings. Since 2016, thirty-eight of his students have been named all-state choir members. His groups have garnered honor choir recognitions (2020 and 2022) and were named Grand Champions (2019 and 2021) at the Madrigal and Chamber Festival. A Grand Champion award was given at the Festival di Voce in 2022, and his ensemble was selected as a 2023 Honor Choir. In the summer of 2024 he has been invited to be a guest conductor at Carnegie Hall by MidAmerica Productions.

## Performing Choirs

### Wichita State University Concert Chorale



The Wichita State University Concert Chorale is the premier choral ensemble at Wichita State University. Chorale is a highly-selective, auditioned choir open to all WSU students, regardless of major, who desire a rigorous, quality choral experience. They cultivate an atmosphere of collegiality where lasting memories and musical experiences can be gained through high artistic standards and the pursuit of excellence. Chorale performs of a wide variety of repertoire from the Renaissance through the twenty-first century.



**Ryan Beeken** serves as director of choral activities at Wichita State University, where he conducts the Concert Chorale and Madrigal Singers and teaches graduate and undergraduate choral conducting and literature. He received bachelor's degrees in music education and vocal performance from Drake University and graduate degrees from Michigan State University. Beeken's choirs have performed at state, regional, and national ACDA conferences and for state and regional NAfME. Prior to his appointment at WSU, Beeken served as director of choral studies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, taught at Michigan State University, and taught vocal music for sixteen years in Iowa.

### The Woodlands High School Chamber Choir



TWHS Choir enjoys a rich tradition of choral excellence. The Chamber Choir is a small, highly selective ensemble comprising dedicated choir students. This choir's main objective is to prepare and perform music from all musical time periods that are suitable for a Chamber Choir. In addition to their membership in the Chamber Choir, these students are also members of our Varsity Choirs. They have won top awards at festivals throughout Texas and performed at TMEA in 2020.



**Patrick Newcomb** has been a high school choir director since 2005. In 2010 he came to The Woodlands High School as the assistant choir director and became the head choir director in 2015. Newcomb is also a proud alumnus of The Woodlands High School and is humbled to be at the helm of the choir program that had such a positive impact on his life as a high school student. He earned a BME and an MM in choral conducting from Sam Houston State University. Choirs at TWHS under Newcomb's direction have earned consistent superior ratings at UIL Concert and Sightreading along with best in class/overall outstanding awards at various choral festivals. In 2022 he received the TCDA Choral Director of Distinction Award.



### Wylie East High School Varsity Tenor-Bass Choir



The Wylie East Varsity Tenor-Bass Chorus is a diverse group of ninety-five singers in grades 9-12 and represents two of the three tenor-bass choirs on campus: A Cappella Tenor-Bass Choir and Select Tenor-Bass Choir. The tenor-bass choir program has experienced rapid growth from approximately twenty-five singers seven years ago to over 130 this school year. The performance of the Varsity Tenor-Bass Choir at Southwestern ACDA not only marks the inaugural conference performance for the choral program, but is also the first choral ensemble from Wylie ISD to be selected for performance at a music convention.



**Nathan Dame** is proud to serve as director of choral activities and coordinator of fine arts at Wylie East High School. Dame has conducted choral ensembles of elementary through collegiate singers as a faculty member in the Texas public schools and at the University of Kansas. At Wylie East, he conducts the A Cappella Choir, Varsity Tenor-Bass Choir, Select Tenor-Bass Choir, Out of the Blue, the school's popular music ensemble, and oversees a thriving choral program of 375 singers in eleven performing ensembles. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he acts as vertical team lead for the Raider Area Choral Department. He was a national finalist for the Dale Warland American Prize in Choral Conducting.

### Young Junior High School Young Men



Young Junior High, located in Southwest Arlington, is a two-year school with an enrollment of approximately 800 students. The band, choir, and orchestra programs at Young all consistently earn Sweepstakes Awards at UIL Contest, and members of each organization garner numerous individual awards at city, region, and solo contests. The choirs at Young have performed at the Middle School/Junior High National Convention, Southwest ACDA, TMEA, National ACDA, and for the Texas State Board of Education.



**Christi Jones** has been teaching choir for twenty-four years, all but one have been at Young Junior High in Arlington, Texas. Choirs under her direction have performed at TMEA (2015 and 2022), SWACDA (2014), National ACDA (2019), the MS/JH National Convention (2012), and for the State Board of Education (2015). Jones has pieces published by Carl Fischer, BriLee Music, RBC, and Excelsia (UIL Sight-reading pieces), with many inclusions on the Texas UIL Prescribed Music List. She was named Teacher of the Year at Young in 2011. She and her husband, Scott, reside in Arlington with their sons, Neal (14) and Carson (12). Neal will be singing bass and Carson will be singing tenor 1 with the Young Men at Southwest ACDA.

## Interest Sessions

### The 4x4 Approach: Creative Programming for Secondary Choral Ensembles

Many struggle to find engaging choral repertoire that suits the needs of a developing ensemble. Join the clinicians as they explore literature appropriate for middle, high school, and collegiate programs that will incorporate and encompass arts standards and invigorate singers. Teacher-conductors will walk away from this session with repertoire to meet the specific needs of students, creative programming suggestions, and scaffolding techniques to support growing choral programs. In this session, we will share our philosophy of programming centered on inclusivity, variety, and engagement through the 4 x 4 approach.

**McKenna Stenson** will be a clinician for this session. Her photo and bio are on page 82.

**Kyra Stahr** will be a clinician for this session. Her photo and bio are on page 82.

### A Place for All: Diverse Perspectives in Johann Sebastian Bach's Cantatas

In order to honor a work's original context, conductors encourage participants to engage deeply with a work's text and meaning. When a student or audience member comes from a religious perspective different from the selected repertoire, achieving this goal becomes complex. The sacred cantatas of J. S. Bach offer countless opportunities for participants to engage deeply with his works while discovering themes that resonate beyond its original theological purpose. This lecture examines four cantatas (172, 56, 158, and 25) through various non-musical, diverse perspectives, and demonstrates how Bach's cantatas engage musicians/audiences with a plurality of beliefs and experiences.

**C. Michael Porter** will be the clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 10.

### Anton Bruckner Unknown

In 1824, Anton Bruckner was born in a little Austrian village. Two hundred years later we celebrate the birthday of a composer whose symphonies inspired a century and whose choral works are still amongst the best of what Western canonic choral music. In this workshop we'll take a closer look at Bruckner's lesser-known choral pieces for both mixed and male choir.



**Florian Maierl** is a German-based Austrian conductor and composer. He studied church music and singing in Vienna and taught at the University Mozarteum Salzburg and the Vienna Music University. With his choir, *coro siamo*, he won several national and international choir competitions. In 2022 he was appointed professor of choral conducting at the University for Music and Theater in Leipzig, Germany.

### Best Practices in Program Administration for New Choral Directors

This session is for new choral directors who are engaging with the non-musical realities of music education in the twenty-first century. It will inform new professionals by providing practical guidance and information regarding the professional environment. The session covers program philosophy, program development, professional development, relevant technology, and recommends other professionals with whom one should have a healthy working relationship to benefit a growing choral program.

**Joshua Cheney**, a native of Fayetteville, North Carolina, is assistant professor of music and director of choral activities at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling



Springs, North Carolina. At Gardner-Webb he directs Concert Choir, Max Gardner Singers, Handbell Ensemble, and Worship Ensemble. Cheney is also responsible for teaching music survey and courses in conducting, voice, and guitar. He holds a BME from Campbell University, an MM in choral conducting and church music from Mercer University, and a DMA in choral conducting from Louisiana State University. Cheney and his wife, Rebekah, reside in Asheville, North Carolina.

### “Brain Smart” Rehearsals

This session will explore the benefits of being “brain-smart” in rehearsals. Participants will be up and moving for nearly the entire session and will leave with resources to keep the director and the singers fired up for the entire year. Participants will experience brain-break activities and creative teaching strategies that can be used to increase focus, energy, and creativity in choral rehearsals. Participants will leave with a toolkit of more than eighty brain-break, team, and learning activities that they can use to enhance their choral rehearsals and improve the overall experience for their singers.



**Stephen Rew** holds his BME and MME from the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. He has received his district’s Teacher of the Year Award two times (Drexel, 2005, and Ray-Pec, 2013). Rew just completed his sixth year as director at his alma mater, RPHS. Under his direction, the Chamber Singers performed at the 2022 MMEA Conference. Rew is also a motivational speaker, published composer, and lyricist. He and his wife, Cindy, and their children, Mason and Chloe, live in their dream home in Raymore.

### Choral Music and Storytelling: Building Engagement through Program Flow

Through creative concert programming, choral conductors can cultivate concert experiences that lead both performers and audience members from one selection to the next with engagement and aesthetic connection. Outcomes: Consider overarching themes and connections for a concert program, explore sources of engaging repertoire from a diverse group of composers, connect music making to social/emotional learning, consider themes based on local stories or history to engage with other local organizations, consider options for flow from one choral piece to the next, explore assignments, projects, and guest lecture opportunities to engage in the music’s context.

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

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

### The Choral Music of Jamaica

Through this session, including the exploration of newly published works, participants will become equipped with the tools necessary to engage with Jamaican choral music with musical and sociocultural integrity.

**O’Neil Jones** will be the clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 96.

The **University of West Indies Mona University Singers** will be the demonstration choir for this session. Their photo and bio are on page 88.

## Interest Sessions

### Choral Singing in America Documentary Screening

Choral Singing in America is a visual representation of the breadth and depth of choral singing today. The film beautifully tells the myriad stories and sounds of American choral singers and leaders—stories that inspire, build community, foster hope, and showcase the tremendous social capital and community building of singing together. America sings in schools, in communities, in concert halls, on the streets, in churches and synagogues, in prisons, in hospice centers, and wherever hearts are moved to join in song.



**Brian Gaukel** excels in creating documentary style, short- and long-form films. An advanced training in the performing arts as a singer and instrumentalist serve him well as an emotional storyteller. He attended the Interlochen Arts Academy and the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Gaukel is the filmmaker of the feature documentary *We Are the Music Makers* (2020),

is a biopic on the topic of choral music and the profound career of Dr. Jerry Blackstone. He has recently produced creative content for National Concerts, The Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, The University of Michigan, Yale University, Amherst College, The Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble, Dallas Street Choir, VOCES8, and Chanticleer.

### Creating a Culture of Inclusion: Welcoming Singers with Disabilities

Even though choral music should be available to everyone, students with disabilities are often denied substantive, appropriate ensemble experiences in school. This session will lead participants through three philosophical and educational models (cultural model of disability, Universal Design for Learning, and culturally responsive teaching), and put the models in conversa-

tion with each other in order to help choir teachers create classrooms that are more welcoming to students with disabilities. We will then explore examples of these ideas being applied in educational settings and discuss practical ways to implement them.



**Andrew Voth** is currently in his first year as assistant professor of music at McPherson College in McPherson, Kansas. Voth completed his DMA and MM at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. During this time, he worked as a TA for both the choral and music education departments, teaching choirs and supervising student teaching experiences, as well as being selected as a Lorna Wendt Choral Conducting Fellow. Prior to his graduate studies, Voth taught singers in grades 6-12 in Goessel, Kansas, for five years following his graduation from Bethel College (KS).

### Creating the Optimal Sound: Voice Matching for the Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble

Voice match a Vocal Jazz Ensemble during the clinic to demonstrate how to improve the tone/blend using methods derived from the American Choral Tradition, mostly using the St. Olaf method.



**John Stafford II** is director of choral activities at Kansas City Kansas Community College. Stafford was a 2015 recipient of the John and Suanne Roueche Excellence Award and the 2020 Henry Louis Award for Teaching Excellence at KCKCC. He serves as the R&R Vocal Jazz Chair for ACDA and has music published by the Lorenz Corporation, Anchor Music Publications, and the Jazz Education Network. He wrote a chapter for “Rehearsing The Vocal Jazz Ensemble,” published by GIA Publications. Stafford has been a clinician for the choral music across the country, and he has conducted multiple all-state jazz choirs.

**Cultural Bridges:  
Developing International Exchanges**

Building cultural competencies for our singers is an essential and exciting part of being a choral director. When performing music from cultures outside our own, it's important that we learn about the history, culture, and performance practices. How can we as directors explore opportunities to engage in international collaborations through travel and non-travel based exchanges? Featuring the participants from the 2023 ACDA International Conductor Exchange Program to Germany, this session explores connections in the international choral community and finding ways to create meaningful experiences for our singers. What elements of American music can we be prepared to share and teach responsibly to our colleagues abroad?

**Jennifer Sengin** will be the clinician for this session. Her photo and bio are on page 79.



**Jeffrey Allen Murdock** is internationally known as a conductor and clinician. He currently serves as director of choral activities, professor of music, and founding director of the Arkansas Center for Black Music at the University of Arkansas. He is the 2016 Connor Endowed Faculty Fellow in the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Science, and 2019 Most Outstanding Faculty at the University of Arkansas. He is the 2021 Grammy Music Educator of the Year. Murdock has conducted regional and state honor choirs, and headlined conferences in twenty-six states and eight countries. He serves ACDA as president of the Southwestern Region, past president of Arkansas ACDA, and serves on the national diversity subcom-

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## Interest Sessions

mittee. Murdock holds a BME and an MM from the University of Southern Mississippi, and a PhD in music education from the University of Memphis.



**Ryan Sullivan** is the director of choral activities at Arkansas State University, where he conducts the Concert Choir, Jonesboro Chorale, and Singing Statesmen, and teaches coursework in conducting

and music education. Sullivan previously served as associate conductor for the Dallas Symphony Chorus and the conductor of Collegium Singers and Baroque Orchestra at the University of North Texas. As a fellow for the 2023 ICEP in Germany, he was an instructor and lecturer at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Stuttgart and the Hochschule für Kirchenmusik in Rottenburg. Sullivan serves as current past president for the Southwestern ACDA Region.



**Erin Plisco** is the associate director of choral studies at Missouri State University, where she conducts multiple choirs and teaches undergraduate and graduate choral conducting and literature. She is a

frequent guest clinician across the United States and abroad. She serves as the ACDA National Women's/SSAA Choirs R&R Chair and is a conducting fellow for ACDA's International Conductor Exchange Program. Choirs under her direction performed at the 2022 ACDA Southwestern Region Conference, the 2022 Missouri MEA Conference, the 2023 National ACDA Conference and Carnegie Hall. Plisco completed a DMA in choral conducting from the University of Arizona.



**John McDonald** is director of vocal studies and director of choir at Washington University in St. Louis and director of the tenor-bass ensemble, Cantus, for the St. Louis Children's Choirs. He serves on the

ACDA National Standing Committee for Education and Communication. In 2023, McDonald was selected for the ACDA International Conductors Exchange

Program in Germany. He received degrees from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, East Carolina University, and Middle Tennessee State University.

**Meg Stohlmann** will be a clinician for this session. Her photo and bio are on page 31.

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### Developing Black-Belt Choral Musicians: Transferable Lessons and Methods from Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

Brazilian Jiu-jitsu is a grappling martial art that is often used as a vehicle to impact practitioners positively, building resilience, patience, confidence, and discipline through terraced skill-building in a community of individuals from all walks of life. The benefits of this art form deserve our attention in the choral music world. We will explore the transferable lessons and methods from the jiu-jitsu mats and how they can be effectively applied in rehearsals. Not only are these skills musically and practically applicable, but they are also valuable to combat mental stress, hyper-anxiety, and other mind-body barriers in ourselves and our singing musicians.



**Jeffery Wall** serves as professor of music and director of choral activities at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. He is the co-founder and artistic director of Vox Solaris, a chamber

choir in Tulsa. He holds a BM in vocal music education from Texas Tech University, an MM in choral conducting from the University of Tennessee, and DMA in choral conducting from the University of South Carolina. Relevant to this session, Wall is a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu black belt with over thirty years of martial arts experience.

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## First-Generation and First-Time Music Students: Tips for a Successful Transition

The transition from high school to college is a daunting time for many students, and this transition is even more extreme for students who choose to study music. This can be especially difficult for our first-generation and first-time music students who have possibly never done private lessons, do not read music, and are often working many hours at an off-campus job while commuting to school, and sometimes supporting a family. Through a qualitative research study, I have identified helpful tips that music educators can use to help these students build a more successful transition to the college classroom.



**Joseph DeSota**, DMA, is an assistant professor of applied voice, vocal division coordinator, faculty advisor, and Washburn Opera studio director at Washburn University. He received his BM from Pepperdine University, and both his MM and DMA in vocal performance from University of Missouri, Kansas City's Conservatory of Music and Dance. In addition to his teaching position, DeSota is also director of vocal arts for the Bar Harbor Music Festival, artistic administrator for Lawrence Opera Theatre, and co-chair of the executive board for the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Kansas.

## Flexible Fach: Gender-Affirming Vocal Pedagogy through Science-Informed Practices

In this interactive session, attendees will be invited to sing and discuss vocal exercises from a new protocol developed by the presenter that focuses on helping transgender and gender-expansive (TGE) singers produce an aural aesthetic that better aligns with their gender identity. Created through an understanding of

the gendered associations and vocal characteristics of common fach categories and voice classifications, this protocol synthesizes practices from gender-affirming speech-language pathology (SLP) with source-filter theory and science-informed vocal pedagogy to present a healthy, gender-affirming practice routine for TGE singers who are seeking to masculinize or feminize their voices.

**Stevie J. Hirner** will be a clinician for this session. Her photo and bio are on page 23.

## Forget Sight Reading, My Kids Can't Match Pitch! What'll I Do?

Finding solutions for students to match pitch is a struggle for every teacher. Whether it is the changing voice, the inexperienced singer, or the underdeveloped ear, every teacher must spend time to help their students develop this necessary skill. We will present and challenge pedagogical approaches to help students through the voice change and match pitch. We will also present some ideas to help these specific students become successful on day one of your class. This will include vocalization exercises, repertoire choices, musicianship training, and ensemble awareness training.

**Brian Hartman** will be a clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 107.



**Sam Anderson** is the associate choral director at Liberty North High School, and the music director at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, KCMO, along with organist, Kurt Knecht. As a singer, he has performed and recorded with the Kansas City Chorale, the St. Tikhon Choir, and the PaTRAM Institute Male Choir.

## Interest Sessions

### Gaming the System: Play-Based Approaches to Teaching Music Literacy

Teaching music literacy can feel like a high-pressure exercise that creates anxiety in students. Yet, music literacy is fundamental to the efficiency of a choral rehearsal. This interactive session breaks down music literacy into three discrete elements: visual literacy, aural literacy, and performance literacy, suggesting sequential methods for instruction. For each category, activities will be demonstrated through games with assessment criteria in the domains of rhythm, melody, and harmony. The session will also outline how students can monitor their progress and set goals. This session

will suggest ideas for applying these skills through play-based projects.



**Saleel Menon** is working on his PhD in music education at Michigan State University, where he was awarded his Masters degree in choral conducting. Menon co-authored an article published in 2019 in the *Music Educator Journal* on popular music, which was recently awarded one of the journal's "most read" articles. In 2020 he received the Texas Choral Directors Association "Young Director of Distinction" Award.

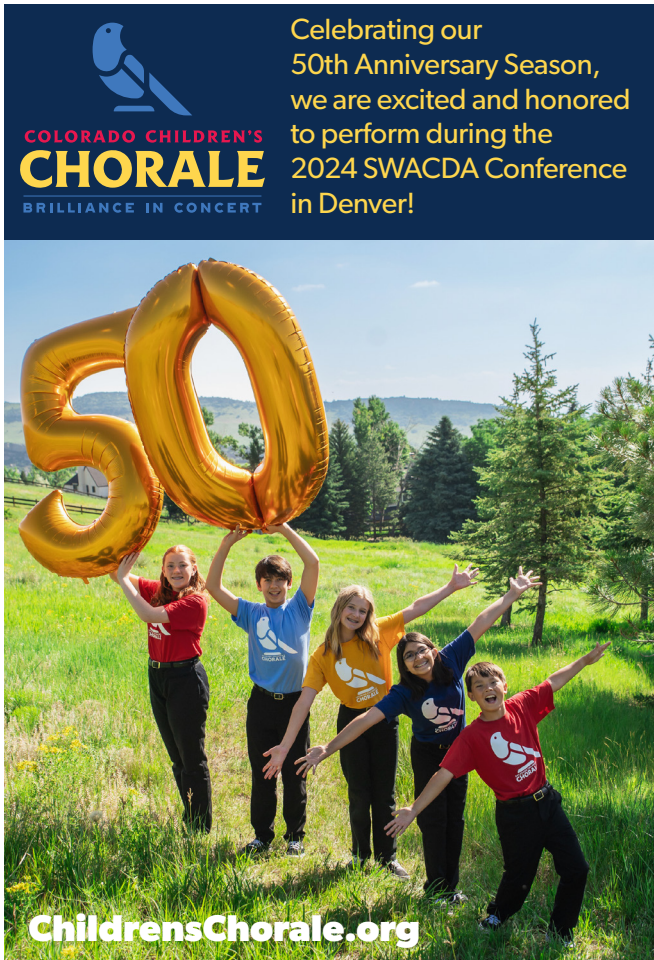
### Grades are Dumb: Growth Mindset in the Choral Classroom

Many students struggle with conventional classroom management and motivation techniques. In our program we tell all students that you don't have to be good, you just have to try! It takes the focus off the product and places importance on the act of practice. Change your rules and change the culture of your room. Culture and leadership will be addressed through officer structure and student structured talk. We will also focus on how you start class and provide warm-up practices and strategies for interdisciplinary connections.

**Har-Ber High School Choir** will be the demonstration choir for this session.



**Clint Pianto** is in his twenty-third year of teaching young people the art of choral music. Pianto has taught at all levels of secondary music education and is currently the choir director at Har-Ber High School in Springdale AR. He has served in a number of different leadership positions in state and regional levels of ACDA and ArkCDA. Pianto is a sought-after clinician and presenter and has worked with directors and choirs in six states. He lives in Fayetteville, AR, with his wife, Sarah, and two sons, Connor and Cason.



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**Michael Baker Brown** is in his thirteenth year of teaching choral music. Brown has taught at all levels of secondary music education. He holds an MME from the University of Florida, a BME from the University of Arkansas, and an associates of arts from the Northwest Arkansas Community College. He currently teaches at Springdale Har-Ber High School as the assistant choir director and AP Music Theory teacher. He lives in Springdale, AR, with his wife, Ember, and his son, Christopher.

### If I Don't Scat Sing, How Can I Teach It? Strategies to Help Choir Directors Who are New to the Jazz Idiom Demystify Vocal Improvisation

For many choir directors, the art of wordless vocal improvisation, or “scat singing,” is one of the scariest parts of teaching jazz. Few music education programs prepare choral educators in jazz pedagogy, leaving directors to ask students to “make something up.” However, proficient jazz singers call upon a variety of patterns and melodic ideas “tools” to create seemingly spur-of-the-moment solos. There are several key “tools” that we can help our students learn to use that are quick to internalize and sound really good. The handout for this session includes solo transcriptions, warmup exercises, classroom strategies, and recommendations for additional resources.



**Justin Binek** is an internationally recognized jazz and classical singer, pianist, clinician, and composer/arranger. A co-author of the upcoming third edition of Richard Lawn's “Experiencing Jazz” history textbook, Binek's compositions and arrangements are available from Kerry Marsh and Anchor Music; and his original jazz-inspired mass, *Missa Lucis*, made its Carnegie Hall debut in June 2022. He serves as an associate professor of music theory/jazz studies at Kansas City Kansas Community College, where his students annually receive numerous *DownBeat* Student

Music Awards. He also teaches on the faculties of The Jazz Harmony Retreat and the Halewynstichting Jazz Workshop (Belgium).

### Like and Subscribe: Fostering Well-Being through the Choral Rehearsal

Today, more than ever, young people are paralyzed by anxiety, and this anxiety is driven by a social-media-induced vulnerability, characterized by hypersensitivity to criticism and a constant need for reassurance. For the choral pedagogue, understanding the context for this anxiety is critical for planning effective rehearsals. Outline: (1) Setting the scene: A presentation of recent psychological studies that reveal a rise in self-fixation or non-clinical narcissism in teens and young adults. (2) The Intersection of Social Media and the Choral Program. (3) The way forward: Striking a balance for mental health. More is caught than taught.



**David Howard** is the associate director of choral activities at the University of Oklahoma, where he conducts the Men's Glee Club and Women's Chorus, and teaches graduate and undergraduate choral literature and conducting. He also coordinates the annual Young Men's Vocal Workshop and Women's Choral Leadership Workshop for secondary school singers. He is the founder and artistic director of the professional early music ensemble, Schola Cantorum Oklahoma, and is also the conductor of *Voce Fortis*, a new choir for secondary school young men. His scholarly writing and musical editions have been published in both the US and the UK.

## Interest Sessions

### Limitless Connections: How Neuroscience and Everyday Actions Can Transform a Choir's Expressiveness

Many directors would like the singers in their choirs to be more facially and emotionally expressive, but their attempts to guide them are sometimes not as successful as they hoped. This interest session provides a set of tools that can immediately transform expressiveness, leading to a limitless connection with self, text, music, other singers, and the audience. Participants will learn how to apply everyday human behaviors to singing, empowering them to transform the choral experience for all. After learning the simple skills, volunteers will take turns as the “demo choir,” applying their newfound techniques to songs they all know.

**Tom Carter** will be a clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 49.

### Limitless Ladies: Take the Limits Off: Women in Choral Music Education

This discussion is geared toward women in choral music education. Topics will be discussed like women in leadership and work/life balance. Experiences in choral music education will be shared, along with how to navigate difficulties. This session will give a safe and brave space for women to discuss topics that are necessary and healing. Attendees will leave encouraged, inspired, and empowered.



**Frances Fonza** is the director of choral activities at Southeastern Louisiana University. Fonza earned a BME at the University of Missouri-Columbia, an MME, and a doctorate in music education/choral conducting at the Florida State University. Most recently, Fonza served on faculty at the University of

Central Arkansas and Stephen F. Austin State University. She taught choral music at the middle school and high school levels in Kentucky and was the choir director and sight-singing teacher at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington DC.

### Limitless Learning Opportunities for Lifelong Singers

This session presents opportunities to support learning needs of a diverse community choir and offers a systematic approach to providing limitless learning for singers, regardless of age or ability. Key learning outcomes: Proven steps to implement into your rehearsal that facilitate improved musical skills at all ages. Ideas for implementing a culture of limitless learning into your community choir. Participants will experience creative learning opportunities embedded into the rehearsal process and will explore techniques that encourage choir members' participation in choosing repertoire, collaboration during rehearsals, self-directed learning, and rehearsal accommodations.



**Sheri Cook-Cunningham** earned her PhD in choral pedagogy at The University of Kansas and holds degrees from the University of Missouri-Kansas City (BM and MM, piano performance). She is an associate professor and the director of music education at Washburn University. She conducts three community choirs: the Johnson County Community Chorus, Enharmonics, and Carmen Sororum, a treble chorus. An active researcher, Cook-Cunningham has presented her work locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Her research interests include adult learning practices, choral error detection, choral warm-ups, musician hearing health, and historical choral diction practices.

## The Limitless Tour of Global Choral Music

This session will provide attendees with a list of diverse choral repertoire that allows their singers and audiences to explore the entire globe. Attendees will listen to recordings, explore over sixty pieces of music by underrepresented composers, and will receive paragraph summations of each piece to ascertain if a piece fits their ensemble. A list of repertoire will be distributed to all in attendance.



**John Martin Petzet** is associate professor of music and director of choral activities at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. He has conducted honor choirs across Louisiana and in Colorado, was invited

to teach at the West Texas Choral Workshop, and to teach, present, and conduct at La Universidad Autónoma De Ciudad Juárez and to work with the Anaíma Ensamble Vocal in Juárez, Mexico. Petzet has also presented in ten states. He resides in Kearney, Nebraska, with his wife, Jennifer, and his three children.

**Frank F. Eychaner** will be a clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 57.

## Look at Me! Strategies to Enhance Artistry in Your Conducting Gesture

The conducting gesture is one of the most important skills of a choral music educator. Many teachers/conductors do not continue to develop their craft after completing their degrees. We will explore various techniques to help teachers and conductors engage their singers in the rehearsal process and also in performance. Some of the topics discussed will include: a musicianship hierarchy, Laban techniques, sample excerpts to conduct, and other engaging activities to continue development after the session. By implementing

these strategies, conductors will create a greater artistry of the ensemble that will create a positive effect for the singers and audience.



**Phillip Stockton**, associate director of choral studies at Mississippi State University, received a BME from Auburn University, MME from the Florida State University, and PhD in music education from the University of Mississippi. Before arriving at Mississippi State, Stockton was DCA at MUW in Columbus, MS, and Mandarin High School in Jacksonville, Florida. He remains an active clinician and judge for choirs throughout Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Florida. Stockton is the R&R Chair for Student Activities for Mississippi ACDA.

## Maestro and Muse: A Balancing Act

Traditional ensemble management aspires to the image of the maestro: powerful, authoritative, and efficient. Yet authoritative leadership often limits creativity and musicianship and stunts student motivation. In this interactive session, directors of all levels can learn how to scaffold in freedom, exploration, and student-driven contributions to choral artistry. Directors will walk away with structures for student analysis, rehearsal activities, and a pedagogical understanding of when to instruct vs. when to inspire.



**Clelyn Chapin** serves as the associate director of choirs at University of Northern Colorado and conducts the Denver Women's Chorus, a 140-voice choir founded for members and allies of the LGBTQ+ community with a focus on social justice. As a clinician and presenter throughout the country, she focuses on a combination of rehearsal practices and leadership strategies that promote artistic singing and community building within ensembles. Chapin spent fourteen years teaching and conducting secondary, col-

## Interest Sessions

legiate, and community ensembles in Texas, Colorado, and Michigan and completed her doctorate at Michigan State University.

### Many Gifts: Educating Community and Church Choirs through Rehearsals

Church choirs and non-auditioned community choruses bring together a broad, diverse spectrum of musicians, ranging from those who cannot read music and have limited training to professional musicians. Conductors can satisfy the musical spirit of all choir members by incorporating literacy skills into church and community choir rehearsals. In addition to vocal technique, we can teach our singers score marking techniques, rudimentary music theory, performance practices, and music history, for example. The key to success is making the information taught practical, relevant, and immediately applicable. Everyone benefits from teaching these same concepts in our church and community choirs.



**Matt Caine** is director of traditional music at St. John's United Methodist Church, Aiken, SC. In addition to being an active conductor of orchestras and church, community, professional, and

symphonic choruses, Caine has served as interim director of choral activities for St. Petersburg College and Allen University. Both a Fulbright Scholar and a FLAS Fellow in Bulgarian Language of the US Department of Education, his published research in Bulgarian music is frequently cited by scholars in both Bulgaria and the United States. He has presented interest sessions at two ACDA national conferences as well as regional and state conferences.



**Jennifer Adam** is in her twenty-second year of teaching and is currently the director of choirs at Christian County High School in Hopkinsville, KY, hav-

ing previously taught in elementary through college classrooms in Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Adam possesses degrees and certifications in music education, violin and vocal performance, Kodály methodology, and choral conducting. She greatly enjoys working with a variety of musicians every day.

### Middle School Choral Students: How Do You Motivate Them?

When middle school students are motivated, they are unstoppable. How do you channel their energy so that you can guide them on a musical journey? Explore tips and ideas of various master choral music educators who teach young adolescents. Be ready to sing and move!



**Lynn Brinckmeyer** recently retired as professor of music, associate dean of the college of fine arts and communication, and director of choral music education at Texas State University. During 2006-

2008 she served as president for The National Association for Music Education. She published *Wander the USA with Warm-Ups!*, *The Wonder of Music* with John Jacobson, *Rhythm Rescue!*, *Wander the World with Warm-ups* with Hal Leonard Publishing and *Advocate for Music* with Oxford University Press. Brinckmeyer's degrees include a BME and MME from Eastern New Mexico University, and a PhD in music education from the University of Kansas.

### Real Ensemble Culture Building (Ice Breakers Not Included)

Icebreakers and team builders are great, but research indicates they actually have little impact on

organizational culture. Without an intentional plan in place, the culture of an ensemble can take on a life of its own, leaving the conductor-leader feeling helpless. Using knowledge from organizational psychology and practical experience, conductors can thoughtfully design and effectively enact their desired culture. In this interactive session, attendees will be guided through a simple, research-based and experience-tested process to define their desired culture and identify concrete actions that are unique to their individual goals, personalities, and contexts.



**Kari Adams** is assistant professor of choral music education, conductor of Concert Chorale, and coordinator of the master's in music education at the University of Missouri. Prior to her appointment at Mizzou, Adams taught secondary choir in Mis-

souri, completed her PhD in music education at the University of North Texas, and served on the faculty of the Florida State University. She is an active clinician and has conducted all-state and regional honor choirs across the US. Her research on topics such as aesthetic response, choral configuration, and music teacher identity construction has been featured in several leading journals in the field.

### Rediscovering Joy: Limitless Possibilities Begin with You

For many of us, our choral village is suffering. We are overworked, tired, and are approaching burnout. This session will explore root sources of this suffering; and

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attendees will receive specific, measurable strategies to create freedom from this anxiety, which can be implemented easily and immediately. Combining modern-day psychological concepts with the ancient eastern philosophies of Buddhism, session attendees will gain tools necessary to navigate a world of ever-increasing expectations and identify ways to shine their individual light in the classroom, thereby creating authentic, real-time teaching moments that have radical authenticity and create life-altering change.



**Ryan Board**, professor of music at Pepperdine University, has garnered international attention as a conductor, choral artist, teacher, and clinician. As director of choral activities at Pepperdine, Board

directs the Pepperdine Concert Choir and the Pepperdine Chamber Choir and teaches courses in conducting and music history. He maintains an active schedule as a professional singer, presenter, and conductor, and choirs under Board's direction have performed at prestigious venues for state, regional, national, and international events including regional and national conferences of ACDA, the Prague Choral Festival, and the Piccolo Spoleto Festival's Spotlight Series.



**Jaclyn Normandie** is a professional conductor and founder of the Modern Conducting Academy, an online learning platform that provides workshops and courses with some of the most sought-after

conducting professionals. Her study of yoga, meditation, and eastern philosophy led her to author *The Mindful Musician: Finding a Healthy Balance*, offering strategies in balance and stress management to performers. She is a prolific guest conductor, has presented lectures at over twenty conferences, and led ensembles at ACDA National, Western, and Central Region conferences. She resides in Costa Rica studying Pachamama Earth Music and leads community ensembles for youth and adults.

## Rehearsal by Design

Many of us have encountered a season in which we find ourselves bored with our rehearsals. In this session, my hope is to breathe life into your rehearsals as you consider the limitless possibilities that await your singers! Reflecting on Wiggins and McTighe's theory of Backward Design, you will be introduced to a method of literature selection that encourages diversity and energy in your rehearsals. All attendees will learn a variety of activities and strategies that pair well with our approach to literature selection and leave inspired with a plan that will help you meet your goals in the upcoming concert season!



**Jordan Cox** is the associate dean for the School of Performing Arts at Missouri Baptist University in St. Louis, MO. As director of choral activities and music education, he teaches choral, music

education, and worship courses. His choirs regularly travel regionally and abroad. Under Cox's direction, the MBU Chamber Singers have served as a demonstration choir for Dan Forrest's session at the Getty's SING! Conference in Nashville and have recorded a Christmas worship album titled, "Let it Shine Bright!" His choirs enjoy frequent collaborations with area arts organizations like Kirkwood Children's Choirs and Bach Society of St. Louis.

## Supporting Teachers: Success Strategies for America's Title I Musicians

Nearly half of public schools in the United States qualify for Title I funding. Title I support is offered when at least 40% of the student population within a school comes from low-income families. A growing epidemic, 1 in 9 Americans live in poverty today. Children affected by poverty are at a higher risk for emotional and social challenges, cognitive lags, and health

and safety stressors, all of which impact their ability to learn, comprehend, and retain information in our classrooms. Choral educators nurture student success with meaningful repertoire and an environment that helps improve cognitive function, social and life skills, and quality of life. Understanding the effects of and practicing success strategies for our Title I musicians are vital to their success.

**Katy Green** will be the clinician for this session. Her photo and bio are on page 26.

### A Tesla Upgrade for Your Choir: Creating a “Self-Driving” Ensemble

In this user-friendly session, Gary Seighman will demonstrate a variety of techniques that enhance musical autonomy and sense of belonging for our singers. Emerging brain research has uncovered many processes occurring in collaborative settings, both (1) between the conductor and the singers and (2) among the singers themselves. This information helps us to better understand our role within the ensemble, leading to greater artistic freedom and improved student musicianship. As conductors, we have always felt that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts when it comes to choir. Science has finally caught up to us!



**Gary Seighman** is professor of music and director of choral activities at Trinity University, where he oversees a comprehensive choral program and teaches courses in conducting and music education.

Under his direction, Trinity’s choral ensembles have garnered invited performances at conferences including TMEA, the College Music Society, NCCO, frequent international touring, and third place for the 2022 American Prize (small college division). Recent engagements include Nashville, New York City, Taipei, Vienna, London, and Dublin. Seighman holds degrees from Westminster Choir College, the University of Oklahoma, and the University of Maryland.

### Think, Listen, Sing! A Skills-Based Approach to Sight-Singing

Sight-singing takes more than a great voice—it also takes solid analysis skills and a knowledgeable ear. In this clinic, you will discover strategies to help your singers decode melodic material and anticipate the sounds before they sing. By isolating skills embedded in the music and encouraging them to recall the sound of each skill in their ears, singers will build a repertoire of sight-singing skills that expands as they master each skill. When they can see it and hear it, they will be ready to sing it with confidence!



**Michele Henry** is division director and professor of music education at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, where she has been the choral music education specialist since 2001. Henry specializes

in vocal sight-reading instruction and assessment, and has committed her career to understanding the sight-singing process to enable better teaching and learning of sight-singing skills. She is the co-author of the *Level Up! Sightreading Series*, which focuses on a systematic approach to individualized sight-reading instruction and assessment.



**Keitha Lucas Hamann** is associate professor of music education at the University of Minnesota, where she teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in music education, including choral methods,

arts assessment, foundations of music education, and music in adolescence. Her research interests include the development of musical skills by adolescents and middle-level music education. Since 2009, Hamann has served as chair of the Community Engagement Leadership Team for the School of Music. This team is responsible for developing mechanisms to institutionalize engagement in the research, teaching, and service missions of the School of Music.

## Interest Sessions

### 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? Choral directors are the primary voice teachers for our singers. Are we teaching them the pedagogy behind their instrument in terms that are clear and concrete? Additionally, how can we bridge what can be a disconnect between singing

in a choral ensemble and singing in applied lessons? 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** will be a clinician for this session. Her photo and bio are on page 58.

**C. Andrew Blosser** will be a clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 58.

## Honor Choir Conductors

### 4-6 Treble Choir



**Mary Biddlecombe** is director of the Vanderbilt Blair Academy, and the artistic director of Vanderbilt Youth Choirs, where she oversees six graded youth choirs. In addition to her work with the

Blair Academy, she teaches collegiate courses in music education and choral literature and conducts the Vanderbilt University Singers. Biddlecombe is a specialist in children’s voices, particularly middle school and secondary choral settings. She has conducted all-state choruses for Alabama, Florida, and Georgia as well as regional honor choirs in ten states. In 2022 she served as co-conductor of the UCTB Honor Choir for the Southern ACDA Region Conference as well as the Children’s Choir Clinician for the Montreat Music’s Worship Conference. Biddlecombe holds an MM in choral conducting from the Florida State University

and a BME from the Crane School Music at SUNY Potsdam.

### 7-9 TB Choir



**Amon Eady** serves as the director of choral activities at Central Michigan University, where he conducts four ensembles and teaches undergraduate and graduate choral conducting, and choral literature.

Before arriving at CMU, Eady taught at both the middle school and high school levels for nine years in the White Station community of Memphis, Tennessee, where he was named the 2014 Tennessee Music Educator of the year. Eady has conducted performances and given presentations at state, region, and national conferences of ACDA and NAFME. Eady serves as the



president of Michigan ACDA. He holds a BME and an MM from the University of Southern Mississippi, as well as PhD in choral conducting and music education from the Florida State University.

### 7-9 Treble Choir



**Tammy Carney** holds a BME from the University of Mississippi and an MME from the University of Southern Mississippi. She is the director of choral activities at Long Beach High School in Long Beach, Mississippi. Over the past twenty-nine years, her choirs and ensembles have been recognized with numerous awards and have performed at the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Grand Ole Opry. In 2018, Petal Middle School awarded Carney Teacher of the Year. She was selected as Clinton Junior High Teacher of the Year in 2012. In 2016 she was honored with the ACDA Ernestine Ferrell Award for Choral Excellence and the Mississippi Music Educator of the Year Award. She is an active church musician and clinician conducting honor choirs in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi.

### 10-12 Mixed Choir



**Jabarie Glass** is the associate director of choral studies at the University of South Carolina, where he conducts University Chorus and Gamecock Chorale and teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in conducting and choral pedagogy. Choral organizations under his leadership have been selected to perform at Southern ACDA Region, Mississippi ACDA, and the South Carolina MEA. Glass earned dual bachelor's degrees in business management and music education from the University of Mississippi, an MME from the Florida State University College of Music, and a doctoral degree in conducting from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

### Collegiate



**Betsy Cook Weber** is the Madison Endowed Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at the University of Houston Moores School of Music and is also active internationally as a conductor, clinician, adjudicator, and lecturer. Choirs under Weber's direction, including the University of Houston Concert Chorale, have been featured at multiple state and national conventions including the ACDA National Conferences in 2007 and 2017. Weber also served for eight seasons as director of the Houston Symphony Chorus, preparing programs for some of the world's leading orchestral conductors. In 2013, Weber became the first woman to receive the Texas Choral Directors Association's Texas Choirmaster Award. She serves as editor of the *Betsy Cook Weber Choral Series* with Alliance Music Publishing.

### Contemporary A Cappella - Collegiate



**J. D. Frizzell** is the director of fine arts and director of vocal music at Briarcrest Christian School in Memphis, Tennessee. His ensembles have performed at regional, national, and international conventions. Winner of the Integrales Composition Contest, Frizzell has had many best-selling compositions and arrangements. He also co-authored *A Cappella Warm Ups with Deke Sharon* and *Teaching Music Through Performance in A Cappella* with Deke Sharon and Marc Silverberg. He is the president of the A Cappella Education Association and the founder of The National A Cappella Convention. OneVoice, his a cappella group, is a Sony Recording Artist with over 100 million downloads and streams. They have performed at the Emmys and on *America's Got Talent*.

## Honor Choir Conductors

### Contemporary A Cappella - High School



**Rob Dietz** is a multiple CARA-winning producer who has been arranging, performing, and teaching contemporary a cappella music for over twenty years.

Based in Los Angeles, Dietz is best known for his work as an arranger and group coach for NBC's *The Sing-Off*. His arrangements have been showcased on several TV shows, including *America's Got Talent* (NBC), *To All The Boys: PS I Still Love You* (Netflix), and *Pitch Slapped* (Lifetime). As a performer he is an award-winning vocal percussionist, and his distinctive sound has been featured on Fox's *Glee* and *The Late Late Show with James Corden*. He is the author of *A Cappella 101: A Beginner's Guide to Contemporary A Cappella Singing* published by Hal Leonard. Dietz currently serves as the ACDA National R&R co-chair for contemporary/commercial.

### Contemporary A Cappella - High School



**Christopher M. Diaz** is the co-founder of the international touring group, The Exchange, which performed hundreds of shows for audiences in over fifty countries on six continents, notably opening for

The Backstreet Boys in their "In A World Like This" stadium tour. Diaz's a cappella journey began at the Florida State University, where they graduated with a bachelor's degree in vocal performance. While there, Diaz led the co-ed All-Night Yahtzee to three consecutive ICCA Finals appearances and was a two-time winner of the Outstanding Soloist Award at Finals. They have been nominated for and won numerous Contemporary A Cappella Recording Awards.

### Gospel



**Trey M. McLaughlin** is a 2002 graduate of John S. Davidson Magnet School in Augusta, GA. McLaughlin earned a BM performance degree emphasis in vocal pedagogy from Columbus State University (Columbus, Georgia). He has traveled the world conducting masterclasses, workshops, and performing, including the Aarhus Vocal Festival in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the L'Opéra de Massy in Massy, France. Currently, he serves as the director of Creative Impressions and is also the founder and director of the gospel ensemble Trey McLaughlin and the Sounds of Zamar. He is the director of music at The Historic Tabernacle Baptist Church and serves as an adjunct professor of choral studies at Paine College in Augusta, GA.



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