



ACDA NATIONAL  
**2025**  
 March 18-22 Dallas, TX

# 2025 ACDA National Conference

## Interest Sessions (Open to Both Tracks)

### Adolescent Voice Pedagogy: Guiding Singers through the Voice Change

Friday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
 First United Methodist Church  
 Upper Room (3rd Floor)

Working with singers during the voice change is one of the most daunting challenges of teaching adolescent-aged ensembles. This session will provide a brief overview of the leading research in the physiology of the voice change and focus on what we can do as conductor-teachers to guide our singers through this tumultuous time. Attendees will leave the session with a research-based method of voicing and grouping singers and a toolbox of vocal exercises tailored to helping singers develop healthy singing habits and avoid the pitfalls of fighting biology.



**Kurtis Heinrich** is the choir director at Pattonville Heights Middle School and the director of Cantate Youth Choir at Manchester UMC in St. Louis, MO. He has a decade of experience working with

adolescent singers in both the studio and classroom. This experience, paired with the research he completed in his master's work at Webster University, have made him an emerging expert in working with the changing voice. He holds BA degrees from Lindenwood University in vocal performance and vocal music with a minor in education and an MA from Webster University.

### Africa Rejoice: Sing and Dance the South African Way

Friday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
 First United Methodist Church  
 Sanctuary

Join Michael Barrett and the University of Pretoria (Tuks) Camerata for an engaging workshop that delves into the vibrant world of South African singing and dancing. We will explore cultural nuances, language, and the art of movement in performance, including the joyous practice of ululation. This is also a chance to connect with the incredible students of Tuks Camerata. This interactive experience celebrates the rich cultural diversity of South Africa and examines the profound connection between peace and the unifying power of music. Together, we will journey through the past, present, and future of South African traditions, immersing ourselves in Tuks Camerata's beloved repertoire. Don't miss this unique opportunity to experience the spirit of South Africa through music and movement!

**Michael Barrett** will be the clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 16.

### American Roots: Pedagogical Approaches and Performance Practices of Negro Spirituals

Wednesday 3:30 pm - 4:20 pm  
 First United Methodist Church  
 Sanctuary

There are comparable performance practices that exist in the singing of choral and solo art song spirituals that stylistically contextualize these timeless American



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songs of resistance. Approaches to performance pedagogy will be considered within the categories of the spiritual and discussions about: (1) text-dialect coupled with International Phonetic Alphabet; (2) ornamentation and embellishments; and (3) African rhythmic adaptations synthesized in Western art traditions. Participants will engage in exercises to demonstrate an understanding of these skills. These perspectives reflect the affirmation and cross-cultural sharing about the universal message of the human experience that is embedded in the Negro Spiritual.



**Melody Gamblin-Bullock**, choral music educator and conductor, is passionate about promoting the artistry of the choral art form. She is director of choral activities at Dallas College-Brookhaven, where she conducts Pegasus Choral Society and Viva-ce Madrigals. She has conducted and performed in international choral performances in Europe, Asia, and South America. While serving in her previous position as assistant director of the Dallas Symphony Chorus, Gamblin-Bullock prepared that ensemble for noted performances with conductors Thomas Wilkins, Lawrence Loh, and Jaap van Zweden. She also prepared Pops concerts for James Newton Howard and Marvin Hamlisch.



**Jammieca D. Mott** is assistant professor and coordinator of voice at Prairie View A&M University. Her students have performed roles in university productions, and summer programs, including The Glimmerglass Festival, The Chautauqua Institution Voice Program, and Miami Music Festival. Mott's students have also participated in Los Angeles Opera's HBCU Opera Career Comprehensive, The Song Continues with Marilyn Horne at Carnegie Hall, Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Finals, Mostly Mozart Festival, as well as the Houston Grand Opera's Young Artists Vocal Academy. Mott is active as a performer and conducts masterclasses and clinics for young singers.

**Demetrius Robinson** will be a clinician for this session. His photo and bio are on page 37.

At Any Level:  
Developing Comprehensive Music Literacy Skills

Wednesday 3:30 pm - 4:20 pm  
First United Methodist Church  
Upper Room (3rd Floor)

This session aims to provide directors (in any setting of the ACDA collective) with tools and tricks to increase the music literacy of their choral program. The main focus of the session will be the step-by-step process of teaching fluent music reading skills through the consistent development of sight-reading skills, use of music theory, and ear training in the rehearsal room from day one. Session participants will be taken through mini lessons designed for every skill level of singer from novice to expert.



**Chantae D. Pittman**, director of choral activities at Campbell High School and adjunct professor at Georgia College and State University, boasts an impressive background with degrees from Tennessee State University, VanderCook College of Music, and the University of Georgia. With fifteen years in choral music education across various levels, her expertise makes her sought after as a clinician, adjudicator, and music education consultant. Additionally, she excels as a soprano soloist and chorister, contributing her talents to the Grammy-winning Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus and the Atlanta Women's Chorus, underscoring her commitment to musical excellence and education.

**Beyond the Score:  
Exploring Colombian Cumbia in Choral Spaces**

Saturday 10:00 am - 10:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Upper Room (3rd Floor)

Through experiential learning and discussions around cultural understanding, this session aims to examine the significance of Colombian cumbia and proposes an exciting approach to music education that expands on Western European choral perspectives. We will explore the Black and Indigenous rhythmic components of cumbia through movement and vocal

percussion, experience call-and-response singing, and learn a representative song. Following this practical exploration, we will discuss the origins and transformations of cumbia and look at a classroom application through a personal case study. Session participants will receive all pedagogical materials and a list of repertoire by representative composers and arrangers.



**Mariana Romero Serra**, a versatile music educator and choral conductor from Caracas, Venezuela, brings a global perspective with international experience in Colombia, Japan, and the United States.

She has served as adjudicator and clinician at vocal and choral festivals worldwide, including Tokyo and Michigan. An active arranger, her work was featured at the 2021 VMEA Conference. She was awarded a graduate assistantship at Michigan State University, where she



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is a doctoral student and serves as conductor of the Treble Glee Club. She holds a BME from The Florida State University and an MM from Michigan State.

### Brain Smart Rehearsals

Friday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm

National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe Sanctuary

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 MME from UMKC Conservatory of Music. In over a decade as a public educator, he has received his district’s Teacher of the Year Award two times. He is the past president for the Missouri Choral Directors Association. Rew is a vocal music teacher at Raymore-Peculiar High School and is also entering his twenty-fourth year as a professional church musician, serving as the music director at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church nearby the location where he and his wife, Cindy, and their children, Mason and Chloe, live in their dream home.

### Building a Better Voice Care Toolkit

Friday 9:00 am - 9:50 am

National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe Grand Salon

Join Singing Voice Specialist Philip A. Doucette for an interactive lecture/demonstration designed to help choral professionals of all levels and backgrounds demystify dysphonia. Attendees will learn about current best practices in the prevention of voice injury as well as effective approaches for the care of the professional voice user based on current research and years of clinical experience. Participants will also engage in guided group practice of voice-optimization exercises for singing and speaking as well as a Q&A. Attendees will leave empowered to advocate for themselves, educate others, and implement strategies to optimize healthier voice use.



**Philip A. Doucette** (BM, MM, MA, CCC-SLP, SVS) is a licensed speech-language pathologist and singing voice specialist whose clinical work focuses on assisting high-demand voice users in successful management of voice changes related to injury and illness. He has been a featured presenter on issues that bridge the medical and performing arts communities, especially preventative care of the professional voice, demystifying care for the injured voice, and developing effective approaches for optimal singing during life-stage related voice change. He is an active choral conductor and has served as the associate director of the Wilmington Children’s Chorus since 2009.



**Celebrating Accessible Artistry:  
Repertoire and Practices for  
Open-Enrollment Collegiate Choirs**

Friday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Atrium

Programming concerts for beginning mixed-voice collegiate choirs can be a daunting task, especially with small ensembles, uneven voice part distributions, and a varied spectrum of familiarity with choral musicianship. How do we create an artistically meaningful and intellectually fulfilling experience for our young adult singers while also building foundational skills and vocal technique? This interactive session explores methods for nurturing artistic integrity in the beginning collegiate experience through creative programming practices and the inclusion of extra-choral artistry. Participants will receive a useful database of flexible repertoire for their ensembles in SAB, SSAB, SA(T)B, and SATB voicings.



**Aaron Peisner** is the director of choral activities at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, where he conducts the Chamber Singers and University Chorale and teaches courses in choral

methods, aural skills, conducting, and voice. He is the artistic director of Cape Fear Chorale and serves as chorus master for Opera Wilmington. Peisner received his BA from Wesleyan University, his MM from the Yale School of Music, and DMA from the University of Maryland.



**Stephanie Tubiolo** teaches at Rutgers University, where she won the Irene Alm Prize for Excellence in Performance and Scholarly Research upon completion of her DMA. She directs the University Choir and Voorhees Choir, teaches conducting, and

works collaboratively with Opera Theater Rutgers and New Brunswick Schools. From 2011 to 2023 she taught with the Yale Music in Schools Initiative, where she founded a free choir for New Haven students and received the Distinguished Teaching Artist Award. Tubiolo holds a BA from Yale College and an MM from the Yale School of Music.

**Championing Inclusive Choral Futures:  
Navigating Disability Perspectives**

Thursday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Sanctuary

Do you read IEPs of your students and feel lost on how to support them? We have collaborated with our Office of Disability Resources to identify practical approaches to an inclusive choral ensemble experience. Join us as we offer solutions, resources, and insight on how to lead every student. This session identifies pragmatic ways to champion the needs of your students and educate yourself while advocating for your program that is inclusive and equitable for all. Walk away from this session with a renewed sense of empowerment for making your choir a successful, educational, and meaningful experience for all students.



**Maxwell Trombley** is an MM student in choral conducting at Western Michigan University. He directed secondary vocal music in Michigan and currently serves on the summer voice faculty at Interlochen Center for the Arts. An active singer, Trombley serves as a Seraphic Fire Scholar in the ensemble's Early Artist Program and has sung in the chorus with many of the country's premier orchestras. He maintains a robust career in sacred music, directing and singing in various congregations throughout Miami. He holds a BME from Eastern Michigan University.



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**Kyra Stahr** is a DMA candidate in choral conducting at the University of Miami Frost School of Music and the associate conductor of the Master Chorale of South Florida. She earned her BM from Miami University and completed her MM in choral music from the University of Southern California. Stahr is the co-founder of *conduct(her)*, a podcast amplifying voices of women conductors while exploring the gender divide. Stahr has participated in the ACDA Eastern Graduate Conducting Masterclass and presented at the World Symposium on Choral Music, ACDA Southern, and SWACDA.

terian elder, with additional experience in Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, DOC, and Mennonite traditions, Kroeker came to Dallas from the University of Notre Dame, where she held a faculty research position in church music. She is the author of *The Sounds of Our Offerings: Achieving Excellence in Church Music*, editor of *Music in Christian Worship*, and has published numerous articles on church music.

Choral Pioneers:  
A Conversation with  
Charlene Archibeque and André Thomas

Choose Inspiring Sacred Choral Music  
for the Liturgical Year

Friday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
Fairmont Dallas Hotel  
Venetian Room

Thursday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
First United Methodist Church  
Atrium

“Informed by the Past, Committed to the Present, Preparing for the Future” describes a session presented by Church Music Institute that will journey through the history of sacred choral music to highlight significant events from early music through the latest sacred music. The session will answer questions about how history informs current practice and how resources like the Church Music Institute libraries can help choral musicians effectively lead church music programs. Attendees will leave with ideas for how to use the best sacred choral music to challenge and inspire their choirs and congregations.

This panel session is designed to convey the wisdom and past experiences of a group of noted choral conductor/educators. We will have an in-person discussion with renowned choral pioneers Charlene Archibeque and André Thomas interwoven with impactful quotes from the late Peter Bagley and the late Joseph Flummerfelt. Also, Maria Guinand, Eph Ehly, Ann Howard Jones, and Henry Leck’s advice on choral pedagogy and programming will be shared. These choral conductors are pioneers of diversity, artistry, conducting technique, music publication, and educational innovation.



**Charlotte Y. Kroeker** (she/her) is author, professor (university and seminary), pianist, organist/church musician, and executive director at the Church Music Institute, Dallas, TX. Ordained Presby-



**Gregory Gentry** has taught at three R1 institutions—Arizona State University, University of Colorado, and University of Alabama—and has served as chorus master for the Phoenix Symphony, Tuscaloosa Symphony, Colorado Music Festival, and Boulder Philharmonic. He has prepared more than thirty world and regional premieres, is founder of Southwest Liederkrantz, and curator of *The Gregory Gentry Choral*

*Series* (Fred Bock/distributed by Hal Leonard), which includes historic choral gems such as “Prairie Sunset” by Cecil Effinger, “Sing Unto the Lord” by George Lynn, Hall Johnson’s stirring arrangement of “The Star Spangled Banner,” and Wray Lundquist’s “Johnny’s Gone Marching.”



**Charlene Archibeque** served for thirty-five years as director of choral activities at San Jose State University, where she trained hundreds of today’s choral conductors, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. She was the first woman to earn the DMA in choral conducting in 1969 from the University of Colorado. Archibeque helped put SJSU on the world map by winning seven international choral competitions with the famous SJSU Choraliers. Known as one of America’s top choral clinicians, she has conducted hundreds of honor choirs in forty-five states and six provinces of Canada and her choirs have performed at twenty-five state, divisional, and national conventions. Her degrees were earned at the University of Michigan, San Diego State, and the University of Colorado.



**André J. Thomas** is a professor emeritus of music at The Florida State University. He was visiting professor of choral conducting at Yale University from 2020 to 2022. He also served as a faculty member at the University of Texas, Austin. He is presently an associate artist with the London Symphony Orchestra. He is in demand as a choral adjudicator, clinician, and director of honor/all-state choirs throughout North America, Europe, Asia, New Zealand, Australia, and Africa. Thomas has conducted choirs at the state, region, and national NAfME and ACDA conferences. He has led numerous prestigious orchestras and choirs around the world. Thomas is a distinguished composer/arranger/author and the immediate past national president of ACDA.

**Collaborative Arranging  
for Contemporary Choirs**

**Thursday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Crossroads**

Choral singers have long been trained to read written music accurately and carefully. What happens when we flip this modality over and create full and complete choral arrangements aurally? The collaborative arranging model helps to empower singers from diverse backgrounds with strong aural traditions, and encourages groups of all ages to have honest conversations around identity, brand, and messaging, leading to strong buy-in, attendance, and tradition and relationship building. This session will break down the pros and cons of collaborative arranging, and then detail the process of how to build a piece from start to finish with examples from award-winning collaborative arrangements. Attendees will also build a short collaborative arrangement together.



**Erin Hauger Hackel** is an associate professor at the University of Colorado, Denver. She has founded two award-winning a cappella groups, MIX and Lark, who have been praised for their innovation and have been singled out for their boundary-changing work in collegiate a cappella. Both groups have been BOSS and SoJAM champions, are recipients of multiple performance awards, and have won several contemporary a cappella recording awards. Hackel has published widely on the topics of healthy belt voice singing and historic female singers at the turn of the twentieth century.



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#### Connect and Co-Create: Engaging Singer-Led Artistry with Young Singers

Thursday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
First United Methodist Church  
Crossroads

This interactive repertoire session responds to the challenge of co-creating artistry with elementary singers while managing behaviors, accomplishing goals, and building community. The presenters will offer a values-based framework that harnesses the creativity of young singers and their artistic agency in the rehearsal process. Through engaging directly with repertoire, this interactive, responsive, and singer-led approach to rehearsal will be modeled and explored collaboratively. Participants will leave this session with innovative strategies to access and enliven creativity in young singers, supplemental lists of quality treble repertoire, and resources for rehearsal activities and games.



**Nicky Manlove** (they/them) is the community engagement director for the Tucson Girls Chorus, where they also serve as associate conductor and accompanist.

Manlove is a committed advocate of equity-centered and liberatory choral practice, and supports a number of justice-focused choral initiatives nationally. Manlove's research on gender diversity has been featured on *The Choral Commons* podcast, as well as at choral and music education conferences around the country. Manlove holds a BA from Seattle University and an MM from the University of Arizona.



**Krystal Morin** (she/her) is a New England-based conductor, singer, and educator who is passionate about leading singing experiences rooted in empowerment, co-creation, culturally responsive

pedagogy, and interdisciplinary storytelling. Morin's background includes ten years as a public high school choir and music teacher, providing artistic development and ensemble leadership, multi-modal artistic work in incarceration settings, field leadership, and experience performing in community and professional ensembles. She is the associate director of Choirs for Boston Children's Chorus, sings with VOICES 21C, and is a teacher for Boston University's Prison Arts Initiative.

#### Decolonizing Choral Music of the Philippines

Saturday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Grand Salon

Despite a robust culture of choral music, Filipino musical perspectives are invisible in U.S. curricula, and our musical culture remains vulnerable to miseducation. This session provides choral conductors with an exploration of underperformed repertoire, authentic pedagogical approaches, an introduction to pronunciation (Tagalog), and how to find repertoire and resources. This is an interactive session, so be prepared to dance, sing, laugh, cry, and learn as we broaden our musical perspectives, ensuring a brighter future for all.



**Reagan G. Paras** is associate professor for Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. Paras has directed performance tours across the U. S. and abroad. He is the artistic director for Many Voices: Mechanics Hall's Youth Singers, music director for The Nashua Choral Society, and conductor of the Massachusetts Kodály Music Institute Choir. Paras regularly presents at research symposiums across the U. S. He serves on executive boards for music associations across the northeast. He is a guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator for music festivals nationwide.



**Developing Embodied Sound:  
Enhancing Rehearsal and Performance  
through Movement**

Thursday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Upper Room (3rd Floor)

Incorporating movement into the choral rehearsal and performance can feel daunting and uninspired. This session will focus on how to organically incorporate movement into rehearsals and performances to enhance, expedite, and ignite musical ownership in your singers. Movement will be divided into three categories—free form, guided, and choreographed—to provide various points of entry for each director and ensemble. Participants will be active in the session as we develop a vocabulary of gestures and teaching strategies. These movement techniques will support an embodied choral sound and engaging choral experience that translates from rehearsal to performance.



**McKenna Stenson** is an innovative conductor, teacher, and vocalist who has built a career inspiring students to sing confidently and motivating communities to create lasting change through song. Her energetic demeanor permeates positivity throughout the ensemble, creating a community of compassion, trust, and resilience. Stenson serves as an assistant professor on the choral faculty at The Florida State University, where she teaches undergraduate choral methods, graduate conducting, and graduate seminars. She enjoys serving as a guest conductor, clinician, presenter, and adjudicator for choirs throughout the United States and abroad.



**Bryan Hiroto Stenson** was born and raised in Tokyo, Japan, and seeks to share a global perspective with the students and collaborators he works with. Intent on

fostering cross-cultural communication, his research centers on Japanese choral music and folk songs. He teaches the Vocal Jazz ensemble and music education courses at The Florida State University. Past organizations include the U.S. Army Band “Pershing’s Own,” the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir, the Tacoma Youth Chorus, the Children’s Chorus of Washington, and Columbia College in Missouri.

**Divisive Concepts and Choral Spaces:  
Strategies for Navigating Challenging Landscapes**

A session hosted by the  
ACDA National Diversity Initiatives Committee

Friday 4:45 pm - 5:30 pm  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Grand Salon

In this session, the ACDA Diversity Initiatives Committee will examine how divisive concept laws are impacting choral spaces across the country. As these laws attempt to restrict conversations around race, gender, and social justice, music educators, conductors, and leaders in choral communities can find themselves in precarious positions. In this session, the presenters will provide insights into where divisive concepts are currently under scrutiny, share strategies for navigating these policies, and foster a space for open dialogue and peer support.

Presenters for this session are the members of the ACDA National Diversity Initiatives Standing Committee: Arreon Harley-Emerson, Verena Lucía Anders, Noel Archambeault, Ramon Cardenas, Joshua Palkki, Melanie E. Stapleton, Mari Esabel Valverde, and Kimberly Waigwa.



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### Every Student Matters: Crafting Inclusive Spaces for LGBTQIA+ Students

Friday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
First United Methodist Church  
Upper Room (3rd Floor)

This session empowers music educators to foster inclusivity for LGBTQIA+ students. We will explore proactive strategies for creating welcoming environments in music classrooms, addressing unique challenges faced by that community. Participants examine how inclusivity enriches learning and cultivates empathy, while also gaining insights into the needs of LGBTQIA+ students. Interactive discussions provide actionable insights and resources to celebrate diversity, ensuring every student's voice is heard and valued. By the session's end, educators will leave equipped to create supportive spaces that embrace diversity in music education.



**Joshua Donaldson** is the director of choral activities at Emporia State University, where he leads three ensembles and teaches classes in conducting, choral methods, and music theory. He is an active choral artist, singing with KC VITAs. He clinics choirs across Kansas and most recently was the clinician for the SEKMEA District Honor Choir. His research focuses on creating inclusive choral classrooms as well as emphasizing women composers and LGBTQIA+ composers. He holds a BME and MM in choral conducting, an MM in vocal performance from Pittsburg State University, and a DMA in choral conducting from the University of Kansas.

### Getting Comfortable Being Uncomfortable about Race in Choral Music

Thursday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Sanctuary

Considering the current socio-political climate, we as choral conductor-teachers are faced with some uncomfortable truths about choral music. We as artist citizens can, and must, leverage coalitions to dismantle systems of oppression. Utilizing Intercultural Dialogue and Whiteness as Property as frameworks, the presenters will equip attendees with tools and language needed to become comfortable engaging in uncomfortable conversations surrounding race and contemporary choral culture. This uncomfortability may be seen as growing pains for a choral community grappling with difficult and long overdue conversations about equity, "inclusion," and access.



**Joshua Palkki** (he/him) is fortunate to serve on the faculty at Arizona State University. After high school he was too afraid to leave the Midwest to pursue an undergraduate degree. After completing a master's degree, he could not secure a teaching position in California, which resulted in an unplanned sojourn to the East Coast. After being rejected from one of the two doctoral programs to which he applied and finishing a PhD, his application failed to advance in job searches at more than twenty universities. We are as much a product of our failures as our successes. Palkki often sings to his two rescue cats, who begrudgingly tolerate his shenanigans. He is co-author (with Dr. Matthew Garrett) of *Honoring Trans and Gender-Expansive Students in Music Education* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

**Arreon A. Harley-Emerson** is a conductor, composer, nonprofit strategist, and equity coach. He is the president and CEO of Equity Sings and the CEO and ar-



tistic director of Elevate Vocal Arts. Committed to the principles of equity and justice, Equity Sings assists organizations in remaining relevant in the twenty-first century. Harley-Emerson’s work includes longitudinal studies, strategic planning, board governance, resource and asset development, and board diversification. Harley-Emerson is a University Fellow and doctoral candidate at the Boyer College of Music Dance at Temple University, where he is pursuing a PhD in music education with a cognate in choral conducting and has completed a graduate certificate in Diversity in Higher Education.

the *International Symposium on Research in Choral Singing*, Desert Skies Symposium, ACDA national conference, and the Texas MEA convention.



**J. Christine Le** has served as conductor, clinician, adjudicator, and collaborative pianist throughout the United States. She taught chorus in Florida and Louisiana public schools for nine years. Choirs under Le’s direction have performed at state, regional, and national ACDA conferences. Le is currently at the University of North Texas working toward her DMA in choral conducting.

**Good Treble:  
The Case and Place for Treble Choirs**

**Great Stuff I Never Learned  
(or Forgot) in Choral Methods**

Friday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
First United Methodist Church  
Atrium

Friday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Grand Salon

In choral music, the hierarchy of different voicings of ensembles has long been a topic of discussion and contention. In this presentation, we aim to uncover historical biases specific to treble choirs, acknowledge both the growth and challenges remaining in contemporary treble ensembles, and provide suggestions for choral directors to keep treble ensembles moving forward within the choral landscape. Through a close look at historical context, present-day challenges, and future aspirations, we advocate for tangible changes to reshape and uplift all voices for generations to come.

Central to the celebration of the Choral Art: Past, Present, and Future is the training of experienced and emerging choral educators who change students’ lives every day through music. Great teaching inspires great music making. This fun, engaging, and light-hearted session will explore effective choral rehearsal techniques including effective pacing and sequencing, integrating musicianship into the choral rehearsal, performance assessment tips, and engaging techniques for warming up the choir while turning off the choral “autopilot.” Experienced and emerging conductors will enjoy this practical session as a guide or refresher for techniques they forgot (or never learned) during their choral training.



**Julianna LoBiondo** serves as a teaching fellow in the college of music while pursuing her PhD in music education at the University of North Texas. LoBiondo taught high school chorus in New Jersey public schools before earning her MM in choral conducting at Ithaca College. Recent research presentations include



**Christopher W. Peterson** is a teacher, conductor, author, and choral arranger of music and books published around the world. In his over thirty years of teach-



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ing, Peterson has taught in elementary, middle, high school, church, community, and collegiate settings. A professor at California State University-Fullerton, he trains choral music educators and conductors, and directs the Concert Choir and Singing Titans Chorus. He has served the profession in many roles, including president of the California Choral Directors Association. His choral methods textbook *RESONANCE: The ART of the Choral Music Educator* is used widely to train pre-service music teachers.

#### Help! I Have to Teach a Jazz Choir

Thursday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
First United Methodist Church  
Upper Room (3rd Floor)

This session will address basics of vocal jazz pedagogy with a slightly different emphasis: What do I need to “un-learn,” leave behind, or modify when I go from choir to jazz choir? Choral educators are well trained to teach choir but not necessarily jazz choir. Choir directors develop their tried-and-true, cherished techniques to develop choral tone, but many of those techniques are out of place or do not work well when teaching jazz. There is no need to despair. Your musicianship and instincts will serve you well.



**John Hendrix** accepted a teaching position at Shorewood High School that included vocal jazz after he had already been directing choirs for twenty years. Having no jazz experience in his background, he needed to become a student again. After a couple of “awkward” years, his jazz choir began to “hold its own,” and then became competent, competitive, and reputable (of course, it was the teacher who was growing). Hendrix has enjoyed a career that includes church music; secondary music education (public and private) in Minnesota and Washington; and

serving as an associate conductor with the Seattle Children’s Chorus.

#### “Hidden Flowers” — Persian Choral Music

Thursday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
First United Methodist Church  
Sanctuary

We will examine the history of choral music in Iran; historical and contemporary Iranian choral composers, conductors, and ensembles; repertoire from “early” Persian choral music to today; and performance practice(s) associated with sound production and Persian diction. The SDSU Chamber Choir, led by Arian Khaefi, will demonstrate excerpts of works, discussing challenges and successful approaches to this repertoire with American ensembles from a conductor’s point of view. Attendees will gain a knowledge of potential repertoire within a living database of Iranian works, as well as a toolbox of methods to employ when approaching Persian choral music.



**Daniel Reza Sabzghabaei** is a creator who is interested in looking at time through different lenses: unpacking notions of tradition, exploring memories of those past, and investigating nostalgic frameworks that lean forward. His music has been presented by New York Youth Symphony, JACK Quartet, National Sawdust, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, American Composers Orchestra, Beth Morrison Projects, New York Festival of Song, Guerilla Opera, Moab Music Festival, Chorus Austin, Young New Yorkers Chorus, Pro Coro Canada, The Esoterics, and VocalEssence. He recently completed his doctorate at Cornell, where his dissertation focused on Persian Choral Music.





**Arian Khaefi** is an Iranian American conductor. He is director of choral studies at San Diego State University, where he directs the choral program and the graduate choral conducting program. In 2017, Khaefi was appointed as director of the Cornish American Song Institute Choral Scholars Program through Oxford University. In 2022 he was appointed Sally and Einar Gall Music Director and Chorus Conductor of La Jolla Symphony & Chorus, and now helms the symphonic chorus through performances of canonic masterworks as well as commissions and new music. Khaefi is in demand as a clinician and guest conductor nationally and internationally.



The **San Diego State University Chamber Choir** is a twenty-four-member advanced ensemble that performs six to ten concerts annually. Their repertoire consists of a diverse array of languages, styles, and time periods, including major works. Chamber Choir collaborates with living composers, has commissioned new works, and hosts guest artists from around the world. Alumni currently teach throughout the state, sing with professional companies. The ensemble tours nationally and internationally, and has performed at CMEA and ACDA conferences.

"I Am a Musician!"  
Fostering a Child's Musical Identity

Friday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Crossroads

The children who first experienced choral singing on Zoom five years ago occupy the ranks of children's choirs today. This interactive session highlights the educational needs of today's youngest choristers—some of whom first experienced in-person ensemble singing in middle childhood. Through storytelling and song, participants will learn to apply the concept of "Musical Identity" to rehearsal design and organizational revitalization. This standing room-only session from the 2024 Northwestern ACDA Region Conference instructs the future practice of all through thoughtful consideration of the past.



**Kendra Kay Friar** is an associate conductor of Pacific Youth Choir (PYC) in Portland, Oregon, where she directs resident and neighborhood choir programs serving singers in grades K-5. She is the academic editor of NAFME's *Journal of General Music Education* as well as a frequent presenter at state, regional, and national conferences. She received Oregon's 2021 Outstanding Elementary Music Educator Award. Her work as collaborative pianist with Portland Phoenix Chamber Choir can be heard on the group's upcoming Centaur Records album showcasing the choral and vocal works of Margaret Bonds. Friar's compositions for beginning choirs are available through Pavane Publishing.



ACDA NATIONAL  
2025  
March 18-22 Dallas, TX

## 2025 ACDA National Conference

### Interest Sessions (Open to Both Tracks)

#### In Her Voice: Spotlighting Female Choral Composers

Saturday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Sanctuary

This session focuses on the work of female choral composers who represent a span of several centuries, multiple countries, and various genres of music. In a new book, over forty authors wrote about more than 200 composers, giving information about their lives and music. Each entry includes the titles of several compositions with details about voicing, instrumentation, duration, publishers, and a bibliography. The project raises awareness of women choral composers and their output for various voicings. A panel of four people involved in the book's creation will describe the context of the project and share video recordings from additional contributors.



**Hilary Apfelstadt** is professor emerita of choral studies at the University of Toronto. She remains active as a guest conductor, clinician, masterclass presenter, and author. She has served ACDA as interim executive director, national president, Central Region president, NC-ACDA president, and has received leadership awards from both ACDA and Choirs Ontario. She has taught public school, community, and church choirs and was a faculty member at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro and the Ohio State University. Her ensembles have performed at conferences of ACDA and Choral Canada. She curates a choral series by Canadian composers for Hinshaw Music.



**Alan Davis** is a conductor, music educator, tenor, and voice teacher. He has completed the coursework for the DMA at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is currently working on his doctoral docu-

ment. He holds an MM from California State University-Los Angeles, an M.Ed. from Portland State University, and a BMA from Pacific Lutheran University. He has taught in public high schools in Oregon, Colorado, and California, and directed church and community ensembles. His research interests include choral intonation, vocal pedagogy, Renaissance and Baroque performance practices, and choral repertoire by women composers.



**Lynne Gackle** is professor emerita at Baylor University, where she served as the director of choral activities and ensemble division chair. An active choral clinician/conductor nationally, she has held several positions within ACDA, including national president, Southern Region president, Florida ACDA president, and TCDA VP-College/Community Choirs. Internationally recognized for her research on the female adolescent voice, Gackle is the author of *Finding Ophelia's Voice*, *Opening Ophelia's Heart*. She is a contributing author for other books published by GIA, Oxford, and Hal Leonard/McGraw-Hill. Gackle serves on the editorial board of Walton Music and is editor for the *Lynne Gackle Choral Series* (Colla Voce).



**Mari Esabel Valverde** is an award-winning transgender Mexican composer who has been commissioned by ACDA, Boston Choral Ensemble, Cantus, the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses, Los Angeles Master Chorale, One Voice Mixed Chorus, Portland's Resonance Ensemble, Seattle Men's and Women's Choruses, TMEA, and the University of Michigan's Glee Club. She has also built a reputation as a singer, educator, adjudicator, and translator. Following six years as a high school classical voice instructor, she spent two years specializing in transgender voice training. Proficient in Spanish, French, and Brazilian Portuguese, she has translated numerous vocal works and documents. She holds degrees from St. Olaf College and San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

March 18-22, 2025

## Integrating Aural Theory in the Choral Rehearsal

Thursday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Atrium

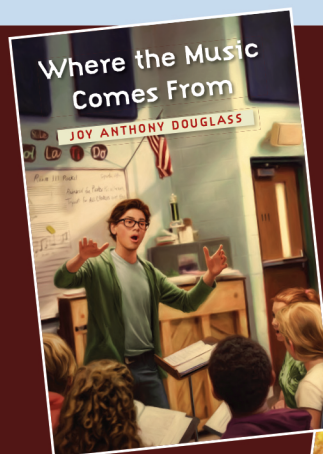
This session is designed to support music literacy and promote independent learning through the integration of aural skill development in the choral rehearsal. Common issues related to sight singing will be addressed, including instructional strategies, time management, financial considerations, assessment, and the importance of selecting quality choral literature that supports literacy goals.



**Lauren Whitham** serves as associate director of choral activities at Western Kentucky University, where she directs the University Singers and Treble Chorus, and teaches music education and aural theory courses. In addition to university teaching, Whitham has considerable public school teaching experience working with K-12 students. Her choirs were invited to perform at NAFME Conferences in Washington State in 2008, 2010, and 2014; and in Kentucky in 2020 and 2021. Whitham earned her bachelor's from Pacific Lutheran University, her master's from Western Washington University, and her DMA from the University of Georgia.

# The Perfect Books for Young Music Lovers

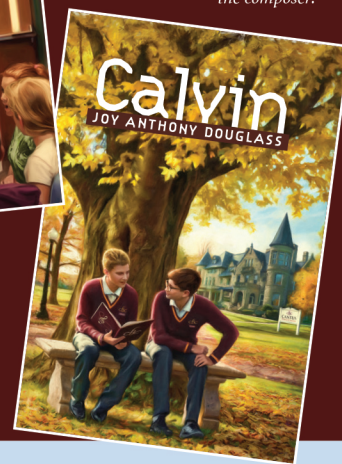
by Joy Anthony Douglass



Scan or click to listen to "WHERE THE MUSIC COMES FROM" by Lee Hoiby, performed by Peter Stewart, baritone; accompanied by the composer.



Search for "Joy Douglass"



"CALVIN is a captivating story of a boy who loves to sing and thrives in a boy choir of other talented young people.

In the sequel, *WHERE THE MUSIC COMES FROM*, Calvin ponders whether to apply his skills to science or choral conducting.

Written by experienced master teacher and musician, Dr. Joy Anthony Douglass, the books are of special interest to teachers and young people who aspire to explore their artistic values through music."

- Ann Howard Jones

DMA in Choral Conducting, U of Iowa | Professor Emerita- Boston University  
Assistant to Robert Shaw and the Atlanta Symphony Chorus



Photo by Steve Gilbert



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[www.joydouglass.com](http://www.joydouglass.com)





ACDA NATIONAL  
**2025**  
March 18-22 Dallas, TX

## 2025 ACDA National Conference

### Interest Sessions (Open to Both Tracks)

#### International Conductors Exchange Program: Music of the Philippines

Thursday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
Fairmont Dallas Hotel  
Venetian Room

This session, led by Filipino delegates from the International Conductors Exchange Program (ICEP), offers a vibrant exploration of the grassroots-driven Philippine choral scene. Showcasing a rich repertoire across various ensemble types—including male, treble, children's, and SATB—this session highlights the intricate rhythms, lyrical melodies, and layered textures that define Philippine choral music. These selections reflect the Philippines' unique, community-centered approach to music making and its deep-rooted cultural expressions. Designed to introduce conductors to Filipino music that can enrich diverse choral programs globally, this presentation encourages cultural exchange and broadens perspectives within the international choral community.



**Beverly Shangkuan-Cheng** is the president of the Philippine Choral Directors Association, chair of the Conducting & Choral Ensemble Department of the University of the Philippines College of Music, and artistic director of the Las Piñas International Bamboo Organ Festival. She won the ACDA National Graduate Conducting Competition and the A1 Piano Category of the Philippines' National Music Competitions for Young Artists. She is the Philippine representative to the Asia Pacific Choral Council and was appointed as conductor of the Asia Pacific Youth Choir for its 2018 season. In 2023 she served as one of the artistic directors for the World Symposium for Choral Music, an event organized by the International Federation for Choral Music.

#### Learning by Trial and Many Errors: Early Career Teaching

Wednesday 3:30 pm - 4:20 pm  
First United Methodist Church  
Atrium

The earliest years of our teaching careers are often the most difficult. As young teachers, we may have great ideas but can struggle to put all of them into successful practice. This session will address common early career teaching misconceptions and pitfalls through the lens of personal experience. Discussion will center around unexpected issues, real-life problems and difficulties in the classroom, and solutions and strategies for growth. Attendees will also be provided with resource and repertoire examples. By addressing the realities of the first years of teaching, this session aims to set a motivating foundation for a lifetime of choral teaching.



**Alyssa Schott** is a music educator, conductor, and vocalist originally from Orland Park, Illinois. She is a graduate of The Ohio State University with a BME specializing in vocal music. At Hilliard Bradley High School in Hilliard, Ohio, she is responsible for teaching the treble voices of the high school choir program and co-directing the Jaguar A Cappella Program (ICHSA Champion Shades of Blue A Cappella and WAVE A Cappella). Schott additionally serves as the South-Central Region Chair for OCDA and is an active member of OMEA, where she has previously presented at the state conference.



Lessons from Renaissance Polyphony  
for Our Contemporary Choral Toolkit

Saturday 10:00 am - 10:50 am  
Moody Performance Hall  
Auditorium

The skills of successful Renaissance music performance and the application of those skills to the performance of contemporary choral music will be explored directly in this session. Participants will discover that the music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provides choral musicians with the tools, both individual and ensemble, needed to perform the repertoire of the past seventy-five years artistically, in addition to Renaissance repertoire itself. Using examples from both the periods, participants will experience rehearsal, vocalization, and conducting techniques that demonstrate the vital connections between the literature of today and the wellspring of our shared choral art.



**Edward Maclary** is professor emeritus of music at the University of Maryland. Under his leadership over two decades, UMD Choirs toured throughout the world, won top prizes in international competitions, and performed multiple times to critical acclaim with the National Symphony Orchestra and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Maclary has been a guest artist at Westminster Choir College, the Eastman School of Music, Indiana University, Ithaca College, Temple University, and Peabody Conservatory. He has served as chorus master for dozens of internationally recognized conductors, and from 2014 to 2017 was the director of the master class in conducting at the Oregon Bach Festival.

“Let’s Sing Indonesian Choral Works”  
with Maestro Avip Priatna and  
the Batavia Madrigal Singers

Friday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Sanctuary

This workshop will focus on four choral works by young Indonesian composers that show the possibility of variations, nuances, and styles that Indonesian choral works can achieve. What you’ll learn in each piece:

“Di Ambang Batas” (Fero Aldiansya Stefanus): how body percussion creates an atmospheric sound to portray the very idea of “The Judgment Day,” as the title of the song implies.

“Stabat Mater Dolorosa” (Vatara A. Silalahi): hear the dissection of this contemporary piece directly from the composer, who is also a member of BMS.

“Gayatri” (Bagus S. Utomo): the cultural depth of Gayatri mantra (Hinduism) by incorporating Balinese traditional dance.

“Hela Rotan” (Ken Steven): sing and dance along with BMS to this enchanting Indonesian folksong.



**Hazim Suhadi** began his piano studies at Yayasan Musik Jakarta and later earned a BA in French and francophone studies and a BM in piano performance at Lawrence University. He then completed his MM at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has worked with esteemed musicians, including Nobuko Imai and Robert McDonald, and has participated in productions like *Candide* and *L’etoile*. He has served on the boards of the Music Teachers National Association Collegiate Chapter and Classical Revolution Madison Cooperative. Now a faculty member at the Jakarta Conservatory of Music, he promotes Indonesian contemporary music and co-founded Klassikhaus, a community connecting classical music to a broader audience.



ACDA NATIONAL  
**2025**  
March 18-22 Dallas, TX

## 2025 ACDA National Conference

### Interest Sessions (Open to Both Tracks)

#### *Mass of the Americas:* New Directions in Sacred Music

Friday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
First United Methodist Church  
Crossroads

Highlighting music from two traditionally under-represented communities, Frank La Rocca's *Mass of the Americas* utilizes Mexican mariachi music as melodic source material and contains the first known Ave Maria in the Nahuatl Aztec language. After undertaking field research in Mexico City, including exploring original source materials from the 1500 and 1600s, this presentation will showcase the fusion of an older compositional style in a fresh new way. Come learn about this work that is accessible for both community/church choirs and university/professional choirs alike and epitomizes the merging of the past and present while pointing to the future of sacred music.



**Richard Carrillo** is an assistant professor and director of choral activities at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. An accomplished conductor, singer, educator, and researcher, Carrillo was a former member of the Grammy Award-winning Houston Chamber Choir and a recipient of the Tinker Field Research Grant, funding research in Mexico. He taught for nearly ten years at Plymouth, Minnesota's Providence Academy, which included 2016 MMEA and 2018 Midwest ACDA Regional Conference performances. His degrees include the University of Houston's Moores School of Music (BM), Missouri State University (MM), and the University of Miami's Frost School of Music (DMA).

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#### More than Surviving: Collegiate Stress, Burnout, and Musicianship

Thursday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
Moody Performance Hall  
Auditorium

Using a trauma-informed lens, this session explores the physical impact of toxic levels of stress. Stress impacts the body and has specific implications for conductors and singers at all levels. Focusing on the undergraduate experience, this session introduces research-supported ways to complete the stress cycle. Furthermore, recognizing that teachers are experiencing high levels of burnout and compassion fatigue, this session explores ways to establish a practice of wellness and balance during one's time as an undergraduate that one can hopefully bring with them into the field, preparing them to be a model of balance for future generations.



**Rebecca DeWan** is the Libra assistant professor of choral/general music education at the University of Maine, where she teaches undergraduate music education courses and conducts Collegiate Chorale.

DeWan's fourteen years in the K-12 classroom inform her research on trauma-informed, equity-centered teaching and learning. She recently earned a PhD in music education from Michigan State University. She is committed to building community through music.

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Multigenerational Choral Excellence:  
Lead, Empower, Achieve

Thursday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Grand Salon

Our volunteer singers provide a unique enthusiasm to succeed beyond what they believe they are capable of. Examine how a combination of intentional leadership skills and proactive choral pedagogies will empower your singers to improve what they bring to your ensemble rather than simply absorbing what you tell them to do. You can provide engagement for younger singers while simultaneously renewing aging voices. Learn how a mostly volunteer community chorus achieved Grammy Award-winning excellence.



**Adam Luebke** was appointed music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus in 2015. He is the winner of the 2020 Grammy for Best Choral Performance, and critics have described his choruses as “splendid” (*Gramophone*), “excellent” (*Musical America*), and “articulate, unified and vividly expressive” (*Chautauqua Daily*). He has conducted at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Chautauqua Institution, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He has worked with Wynton Marsalis, JoAnn Falletta, Gil Rose, Richard Danielpour, Paul Moravec, Angela Brown, and Liz Calloway. Luebke received his musical training at the American Boychoir School, St. Olaf College, Westminster Choir College, and The Florida State University.

Nosotros Existimos:  
Mexican Choral Repertoire and Resources

Wednesday 3:30 pm - 4:20 pm  
First United Methodist Church  
Crossroads

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



**Raul Dominguez** is the associate director of choral studies at Pacific Lutheran University, where he leads two ensembles, the conducting sequence, and teaches secondary methods. He previously served as the director of choral activities at Regis University. He holds a DMA from CU Boulder, an MM from Ithaca College, and BM degrees from Oklahoma City University. His ensembles have sung with the Houston Symphony, Houston Chamber Choir, at Carnegie Hall, on the Colorado State Capitol balcony for the inauguration of Governor Jared Polis, and alongside *RuPaul’s Drag Race* season 11 winner, Yvie Oddly.

### Preparing and Performing Extended Choral Works for Social Justice

A Joint Initiative by the National Diversity Initiatives Committee and the National Composition Initiatives Committee

Thursday 4:45 pm - 5:30 pm  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Grand Salon

While it has become more common for choral directors to program repertoire that addresses issues of social justice, a deficit remains in our understanding of how choral directors and their communities responsively and thoughtfully prepare and perform extended choral works for social justice. In this session, presenters will share findings and key aspects of a large-scale research study involving three different university's preparation and performance of extended choral works, specifically Rollo Dilworth's *Weather*, Craig Hella Johnson's *Considering Matthew Shepard*, and Andrea Ramsey's *Suffrage Cantata*. Singer and conductor perspectives on rehearsal considerations, context-building discussions, and community-specific needs will be shared to propel future possibility.



**Elizabeth Cassidy Parker**, PhD, is professor of music education at the Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University. Prior to her work at Temple, Parker taught at the Schwob School of Music at Colum-

bus State University and held PreK-12 school positions in New York, Nebraska, and Georgia. An active choral conductor, Parker leads Commonwealth Youth Choir, a community-based program in Philadelphia. Her research interests include adolescent musical identity and issues of preservice music teacher identity. Published widely nationally and internationally, Parker is the sole author of *Adolescents on Music* (Oxford University Press).



**Dustin S. Cates** is a teacher, conductor, singer, and researcher who is passionate about building meaningful relationships with people through music. Cates is assistant professor of choral music education at Temple University, where he conducts the University Chorale and teaches courses in music education, choral/vocal pedagogy and choral methods. He currently serves as National ACDA R&R Chair for Tenor-Bass choral ensembles and is past president of the Kansas Choral Directors Association. Cates considers his most important roles to be husband to Raymond Cattaneo and father to their son, Emmaus.



**G. Preston Wilson, Jr.**, PhD, is the musical director of the Fisk Jubilee Singers and assistant professor of music at Fisk University. His research includes urban music educational experiences, race relations in music education, and practical applications of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Prior to his current position, he was the assistant professor of music education at Westminster Choir College of Rider University. He also serves as the Diversity Initiatives Chair for the Tennessee American Choral Directors Association.

### Recruiting and Retaining Singers: Building the Present, Planning the Future

Wednesday 3:30 pm - 4:20 pm  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Sanctuary

As choral directors, we are always exploring ways to recruit and retain singers in the ensembles. When growing choral programs in all settings, it is helpful to consider the following three opportunities: 1) exploring or modifying program structure to meet the needs of the community/school; 2) identifying and connect-



ing with prospective singers; and 3) creating engaging musical experiences that encourage singer retention. Focusing on identifying and developing recruitment efforts that appeal to the broader community and at all musical levels, this session will include strategies to make meaningful connections in order to build and grow a choral program.



**Jennifer Sengin** serves on the choral faculty at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where she leads the graduate choral conducting program and conducts the flagship ensemble, Conservatory Singers, and the Choral Union. In addition to ensembles, Sengin teaches graduate choral conducting and choral literature. She participated as a conducting fellow with ACDA's International Conductor Exchange Program to Germany. Choirs under her direction have won the American Prize and were invited to perform at the NCCO Conference and GMEA conference. An active guest conductor, clinician, adjudicator, and presenter, Sengin has conducted honor choirs across the country.

that perpetuates a one-dimensional perspective on music by historically excluded composers. This session will conclude with a comprehensive list of accessible repertoire and resources that will help participants shift their DEI practices to create more welcoming, safe, and joy-centered choral spaces.



**Alyssa Cossey** is a conductor, singer, educator, and scholar. She is a contributing author for a new textbook on women composers (edited by Hilary Apfelstadt), an inaugural member of mirabai, and is associate director of choral activities at Coastal Carolina University. She was previously an assistant professor of choral music at the University of Arizona. Prior to that, she taught middle and high school choir in Southern California for nearly a decade. Cossey holds degrees from Michigan State University, California State University-Fullerton, and California State Polytechnic University-Pomona.

(re)sounding Joy:  
Shifting Paradigms for DEI Work  
in Choral Spaces

Saturday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Crossroads

Utilizing trauma-informed and equity-centered approaches, this session addresses common DEI programming practices and pitfalls. Attendees will gain strategies for reframing or replacing potentially triggering or trauma-centered music through an examination of common choral practices that may be unintentionally traumatizing for singers. Additionally, we will explore current challenges and common shortcomings of DEI work in choral spaces—including programming

Setting the Tone:  
Voice Placement for Choirs

Wednesday 3:30 pm - 4:20 pm  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Grand Salon

Do you wonder why some voices “stick out” in your choir? Do some chords just not seem to tune even though your singers have learned their music? Perhaps all your singers need is a new seating chart. Group voice placement techniques can achieve a variety of goals including balance, timbre, and musicianship. In this session, we will explore various placement theories and discuss their benefits to help singers to improve their sound efficiently. Attendees will have the opportunity to take part in voice placement processes within their own vocal parts as well as experience a variety of standing positions.



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**Matthew Myers** serves as associate director of choral activities at Washington State University, where he conducts the University Singers and Treble Choir and teaches choral methods and vocal pedagogy.

He earned his DMA at Louisiana State University, MM from Northern Arizona University, and BA from Luther College. Prior to his time at WSU, he taught choir at The American International School of Muscat in Oman; Boylan Catholic High School in Rockford, Illinois; and the University of Alabama. He conducts the Palouse Choral Society and co-hosts the *Choir Fam* Podcast.



**Dean Luethi** serves as the director of choral activities, professor, and former director of the school of music at Washington State University. Luethi received degrees from UW–Green Bay, University of South Florida, and University of Illinois–Urbana/Champaign.

Known for his work as a choral pedagogue, he has presented research, workshops, or conducted choirs at festivals, conferences, and competitions in the United States, India, China, Cuba, Canada, Austria, Poland, and Germany. He is published in the *Choral Journal* and *Music Educators Journal* and has two books published through GIA Publications. He is also cohost of the *Choir Fam* Podcast.

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ACDA NATIONAL  
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**Shaping the Sound:  
Attaining Authenticity in  
Your Jazz Vocal Ensemble**

**Friday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
Moody Performance Hall  
Auditorium**

The session will demonstrate the artistic and performance practices of creating an authentic jazz sound in your vocal ensemble. It will focus on how to achieve that sound through proper vocal pedagogy that is synonymous with a small traditional chamber ensemble choir combined with jazz and contemporary instrumental articulation and style. The session, through short demonstrations (live and recorded), will focus on stylistic differences and similarities between the genres and will teach you “step by step” how to achieve the desired sound that honors the jazz and contemporary traditions.



**Darden Purcell** is a soloist with symphony orchestras, big bands and small ensembles, and jazz vocal educator. Her ensembles have performed at the Kansas City Jazz Summit, VMEA conference, Jazz Education Network conferences and have shared the stage with The New York Voices, Manhattan Transfer, and ACCENT. Purcell has presented/directed at VMEA, PMEA, and Baltimore All-County festivals; Southern ACDA Region; in Sao Paulo, Brazil; and the Institute for Jazz Research, Graz, Austria. She is the director of jazz studies, jazz voice instructor, and director of the Downbeat Award-winning Mason Jazz Vocal Ensemble at George Mason University.

**Members of the George Mason University Mason Jazz Vocal Ensemble** will serve as the demonstration choir for this session.



**Shattering Barriers:  
Empowering Women of Color  
in Choral Leadership**

**Saturday 10:00 am - 10:50 am  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Grand Salon**

Join us for an empowering session dedicated to amplifying the voices by women conductors of color. Drawing upon academic research, real-world examples, and practical strategies, attendees will learn how to identify, navigate, and challenge the systemic barriers and biases that have hindered the advancement of women conductors of color in the field. In a landscape where traditional paths to success often overlook diverse perspectives, this session shines a spotlight on the resilience, creativity, and leadership of women who are forging new paths in the choral world.



**Erika Tazawa** is the assistant director of choral activities at Kennesaw State University, where she conducts the Chamber Singers, Chorale, and Men’s Ensemble. Prior to her appointment at KSU, she served on faculty at Emory University. Tazawa enjoys a versatile and collaborative musical career, actively performing as a conductor, pianist, vocal coach, and guest



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# 2025 ACDA National Conference

## Interest Sessions (Open to Both Tracks)

clinician. She is a core member of the contemporary music ensemble Bent Frequency, and has served on musical staff at The Atlanta Opera and American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria.



**B.E. (Brittney Elizabeth) Boykin** first pursued her interest in music during her time at Spelman College, attending classes that inspired and challenged her musical imagination and peaked her interest

in composition. Boykin has been commissioned by and collaborated with several organizations, including a number of ACDA regions, the Minnesota Opera, and the Kennedy Center. She obtained her PhD from Georgia State University with an emphasis in music education and is currently an assistant professor of music at the Georgia Institute of Technology.



**Elizabeth Bemis-Gatter** serves as the organist/choirmaster at Christ Church Cathedral in Mobile, AL. She has a diverse background as a vocalist, music educator, and church musician in a variety of de-

nominations. She has previously presented at a number of conferences, including The Voice Foundation. She holds an MM from Shenandoah Conservatory and is pursuing a DMA from the University of Mobile. While her formal education is in voice, she enjoys the complexity of playing the pipe organ and working as a collaborative pianist.

### The Future of Choral Music: Performance, Literacy, and Pedagogy

Saturday 10:00 am - 10:50 am  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Sanctuary

### Switching It Up: Thoughtful Creativity in Music Ministry

Saturday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Atrium

This interest session explores frameworks for fostering intentional creativity in music ministry that both speaks to and expands the congregation's sense of their collective musical identity. While many music professionals rely on choral repertoire choice as the primary vehicle for creativity, this session highlights other avenues for creativity, including the use of ensembles and soloists, hymnody, summer scholarship programs that engage youth, and ideas for designing a concert series. This session addresses a wide range of ideas for all budgetary levels and also speaks to the role of the organist/pianist in facilitating worship.

Developmental Teaching in choral music is an approach that supports successful rehearsal and performance by choirs diverse in talent, training, singing experience, motivation—all the challenges we can audition out if there are many available singers. For those teachers without unlimited skilled singers, rehearsal and performance becomes a different and challenging task. In this session, participants will sing and experience several developmental teaching strategies: Group Voice Placement, Repertoire Hierarchy, Revoicing Treble Music (for SATB unbalanced choirs), and the Rules for Expressive Singing. Upon completion of analysis and singing practice, participants can easily implement these methods in their choirs.



**Judy Bowers** was named professor emerita in the College of Music at The Florida State University upon retirement, and subsequently completed four years as Bie-



denharn Endowed Chair at the University of Louisiana Monroe. Bowers has taught music education classes and choirs, provided honor choirs in Canada, Africa, and conducted regional ACDA honor choirs. She also directed the ACDA middle school honor choir in 2009. In 2014, Bowers was named a Lowell Mason National Music Education Fellow by NAFME; and in 2023, the Florida MEA inducted her into the Florida Music Hall of Fame.

**The New Canon Project:  
When Partnerships Bring New Works  
from New Voices to Developing Vocal Ensembles**

**Saturday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Upper Room (3rd Floor)**

The New Canon Project is a model for stepping out of silos and joining forces. Through a unique partnership between ACDA, the American String Teachers Association, Rising Tide Music Press, and ArrangeMe, the New Canon Project champions emerging Black and Latinx composers and will result in twenty-four new works in the last two years. Session participants will hear Cohort 1 & 2 choral works and learn from cohort composers about this experience. Learn how collaboration between composers and mentors, disciplines, and associations fosters community and amplifies new voices. This work is provided with generous support from The Sphinx Venture Fund.



**Allyssa Jones** is the executive director of Rising Tide Music & Arts, Inc., and serves as director of vocal ensembles and assistant director of the School of Music at the University of South Florida. Her thirty-year career in arts education includes positions with Boston Arts Academy, Boston Public Schools, decades of work as a DEIA presenter and consultant, and

board-level participation in NAFME, Eastern ACDA Region, and NCCO. A recipient of a Surdna Fellowship for her creative work, Jones's credits include several solo recordings, original musicals and commissioned works for soloists and choral ensembles. Jones is an informal composer-in-residence with New Voices New Orleans, the Crescent City's new community-based youth chorus.



**Robyn Hilger** is the national executive director of ACDA. She brings a wealth of experience in administration, fundraising, grant writing, and strategic innovation to her work. She is a national board-certified teacher and was named the Teacher of the Year for the State of Oklahoma in 2007. Hilger began her career as an instrumental music teacher. Prior to joining ACDA, she served as the director of community engagement for ReMerge of Oklahoma County. ReMerge is a leader in developing solutions in criminal justice reform specifically focused on women facing felony offenses who are mothers. She teaches advocacy and policy, as well as nonprofit finance, as an adjunct professor in the MA in Nonprofit Leadership program at Oklahoma City University.

**The Score Study and Rehearsal Techniques  
of Margaret Hillis**

**Saturday 10:00 am - 10:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Atrium**

This session will explore the choral methods of Margaret Hillis, the founder and first conductor of the esteemed Chicago Symphony Chorus. Hillis developed methods of score study and rehearsal techniques that have raised the level of choral singing in America to a refined professional level. Her disciplined approach to preparing a score provides the basis for rehearsal

strategies and overall rehearsal planning. Hillis's step-by-step approach will be presented, along with samples of her marked scores. During her teaching career, she promoted this method as being applicable to diverse genres and levels of repertoire. It remains the gold standard.



**Cheryl Frazes Hill** is the director of the Milwaukee Symphony Chorus and associate director of the Chicago Symphony Chorus. Now in her forty-eighth season with the CSO, she was mentored by Margaret Hillis, who appointed her to the position of associate conductor of the symphony chorus. Frazes Hill is professor emerita at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts. Under her direction, her Conservatory Chorus appeared at ACDA conferences and in widely varied performances, including appearances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Rolling Stones. Frazes Hill is the author of *Margaret Hillis Unsung Pioneer* (GIA Publications).

leave with tangible resources, including new octavos, curriculum strategies, and programming ideas to assist with enriching their rehearsal experience and preparing the next generation of choral singers.



**Amy Kotsonis** is the director of choral activities at the University of New Hampshire, where she conducts Chamber Singers and Concert Choir, and teaches choral methods. She is also the artistic director for the Community Chorus at South Berwick. Previously, Kotsonis was associate professor of choral ensembles and music education at the University of Northern Iowa, assistant conductor for the young People's Chorus of New York City, and taught public school in Boston and New York City. She holds degrees from New York University, the University of New Hampshire, and The Florida State University.

Together We Sing:  
Celebrating the Power of the Treble Chorus

Saturday 10:00 am - 10:50 am  
Fairmont Dallas Hotel  
Venetian Room

It is the conductor's responsibility to cultivate distinct identities and environments for each ensemble within our program, ensuring they feel valued and unique. This session will explore ways to foster community, inspire singers with relevant repertoire, and provide opportunities both within and beyond the treble ensemble. Repertoire will be shared that is accessible, allows singers to see themselves and those different from them, all while having age-appropriate text that places them in a position of strength. Participants will

Voices from the Light:  
Reviving a Masterwork for Treble Voices

Thursday 9:00 am - 9:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Sanctuary

In 1997, the Girls Choir of Harlem premiered *Voices from the Light*, composed by African American composer Dorothy Rudd Moore. As was unfortunately common with pieces by persons of color, it remained largely unknown for many years. Masterfully linking quotes from leading African American poets and Negro Spirituals amidst the tapestry of Moore's own text and music, this piece deserves its rightful space in the choral canon. In this session, attendees will be presented with the background of the piece and composer, examination of the text, musical analysis, as well as a performance of the piece, complete with string quartet, oboe, and piano.



**Marques L. A. Garrett** (he/him) is associate professor of choral studies at the University of North Texas. He is an accomplished vocalist and composer, with his works available through several publishers and performed by festival/honor, all-state, professional, and college/university choirs such as the Los Angeles Master Chorale and the Oakwood University Aeolians. He regularly serves as a choral clinician and guest conductor for festival and honor choirs throughout the country. He is an active researcher with published articles and presentations on the choral music of Black composers and rehearsal techniques for state, regional, and national conferences.



**Susan Kelly** is co-director of choirs at Stewarts Creek High School in Smyrna, Tennessee. Previously, Kelly was the director of choral activities at Tennessee State University. She serves as the associate conductor for Vox Grata Women’s Choir in Nashville and as the adult choir director at Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church in Murfreesboro. Kelly is also in demand as a guest conductor, having recently conducted regional and all-state choirs across the Southeast and Northeast. She is a past president of TN-ACDA and serves as chair of choral performance assessment for Middle Tennessee Vocal Association.



**Brian Russell** is co-director of choirs at Stewarts Creek High School in Smyrna, Tennessee. Previously, Russell was assistant professor of music at Illinois Wesleyan University (Bloomington) and Hobart and William Smith Colleges (Geneva, NY). He serves as executive music director of Murfreesboro’s Ethos Youth Ensembles and director of music at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Franklin. He remains an active guest conductor, having been an invited clinician for regional and all-state choirs across the Southeast, Midwest, and Northeast. He serves as the state choral performance assessment coordinator for TN-ACDA.



Creek High School choral program, which also includes the Apollo Contra Ensemble (advanced tenor/bass), Giovanni Voci (beginning treble), Meistersingers (beginning tenor/bass), and Bel Canto (intermediate treble). The Stewarts Creek Choirs are one division of the Stewarts Creek Fine Arts Academy, which offers a collaborative, conservatory-style education within a public high school. In 2023, Athena was selected to perform at TN-MEA.

Voices Unleashed:  
Empowering Students in  
Contemporary A Cappella

Friday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
Moody Performance Hall  
Auditorium

Join us for a hands-on workshop designed to equip choral directors with the skills and knowledge to guide students in expressing themselves through contemporary a cappella. Using members of a professional a cappella group to demonstrate, participants will gain the tools necessary to teach students how to independently handle every aspect of a cappella performance, from selecting repertoire to arranging, beatboxing, and creating choreography. This session will draw on traditional choral foundations and pedagogy, honoring bel canto singing, while embracing innovative methods and styles of contemporary a cappella.

The **Stewarts Creek High School Athena Treble Choir** is the flagship treble ensemble of the Stewarts



ACDA NATIONAL  
**2025**  
March 18-22 Dallas, TX

## 2025 ACDA National Conference

### Interest Sessions (Open to Both Tracks)



**Christina Aloisio** is the music director of the professional a cappella group Backtrack Vocals. Her musical journey spans musical theatre, choral ensembles, and contemporary a cappella. She holds

a BME from the University of Delaware, where she served as assistant music director for Vocal Point, earning third place in the nation's largest a cappella competition, ICCA. Aloisio has also directed productions at Gateway to the Arts, including "The Most Epic Birthday Party" and "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown." She served as vocal captain for Busch Gardens' a cappella show, The Gift of Harmony, and directed the semi-professional group Downbeat.



**Backtrack Vocals** is a vocal band from New York City with a rich touring history across the U.S., Vietnam, and Kazakhstan. Their engaging performances feature a diverse repertoire, including Top 40 hits, Motown, classical, and original music. They are dedicated to education, having conducted outreach programs at over 250 schools worldwide that aim to inspire and develop young artists, fostering inclusivity and a love for a cappella music. Backtrack has over 113,000 subscribers and 13 million views on YouTube.

### Why Social Media is Vital for Choir

Saturday 10:00 am - 10:50 am  
First United Methodist Church  
Crossroads

Discover the power of social media for choral programs! This presentation emphasizes the vital role of an engaging online presence, providing practical tips for effective use. Research and insights from teens' social media usage and its societal impact are shared, highlighting the importance of connectivity. Learn quick and easy content creation tips for Facebook and Instagram and how to streamline posts with Meta Business Suite. The session wraps up with a ready-to-use social media calendar, empowering choral programs to boost visibility and impact in today's digital landscape.



**Kirstie Lisk-McCallum** is a master's student in choral conducting at the University of Houston. After receiving her BME from UH, she served as the assistant choir director at Langham Creek High School in Cy-Fair ISD, directing multiple choirs that earned accolades in competitions and festivals across the city. She has performed with UH's Concert Chorale at prestigious events like TMEA, ACDA, and NCCO, and the Bela Bartok International Choral Competition in Hungary. She has also performed with the Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Cantare Houston, and Suono Chamber Choir in Houston.



Writing for ACDA Publications

Wednesday 4:30 pm - 5:20 pm  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Grand Salon

This interactive clinic is designed to help potential authors on their path to publication. Amanda Bumgarner, ACDA publications editor, will lead the session. Participants are invited to bring an idea, an outline, or a work in progress. After an introduction, the publications editor will facilitate a Q&A with members of the *Choral Journal* editorial board about submissions and the review process. During the second half of the session, attendees can meet individually with editorial board members to discuss their articles.



**Amanda Bumgarner** received degrees in English and religion from Greenville University (Greenville, Illinois). She has almost two decades of professional and freelance editing experience and has worked with hundreds of authors on books and articles of all genres. She lives in Oklahoma City and has worked at the ACDA National Office since 2013.

You Are the Voice Teacher:  
Teaching Technique in Choral Singing

Thursday 1:10 pm - 2:00 pm  
National Shrine Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Grand Salon

“Blend. Drop your jaw. Straight tone. Darker.” Most have heard one of these phrases before, but do these ideas really help inexperienced singers? What terminology can we use to provide clarity, connects concepts in a relatable way, and takes away some of the mystery?

Are we teaching singers the pedagogy behind their instrument in clear, concrete terms? Additionally, how can we bridge what can be a disconnect between singing in a choral ensemble and singing in applied lessons? By bringing concepts and skills from voice pedagogy into the choral rehearsal, conductors can better support their singers in their vocal development.



**Amy Johnston Blosser** served for nine years on the ACDA National Board as the Repertoire & Resources Committee chairperson and was the 2023 national conference chairperson for auditioned choirs. She has helped plan nine ACDA conferences. Under her direction, Bexley High School has performed for NAFME and ACDA conferences, including ACDA performances in 2012, 2016, and 2020. Blosser was selected for the 2015 ACDA International Conductors Exchange Program with Sweden. She is associate director of music at First Community and artistic director of Bexley Choral Society.



**C. Andrew Blosser**, DMA, serves on the voice faculty at The Ohio State University, and is the director of music at First Community Church. Blosser is a featured soloist with orchestras and ensembles throughout the United States, specializing in oratorio. Highlights include Vaughan Williams’s *On Wenlock Edge* (Carpe Diem String Quartet), Handel’s *Messiah* (Columbus Symphony Orchestra), and Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* (Bach Society of Dayton). In 2013 he served as cantor for services at the Berlin Cathedral and as soloist for Mozart’s *Missa Longa* at the Salzburg Cathedral.