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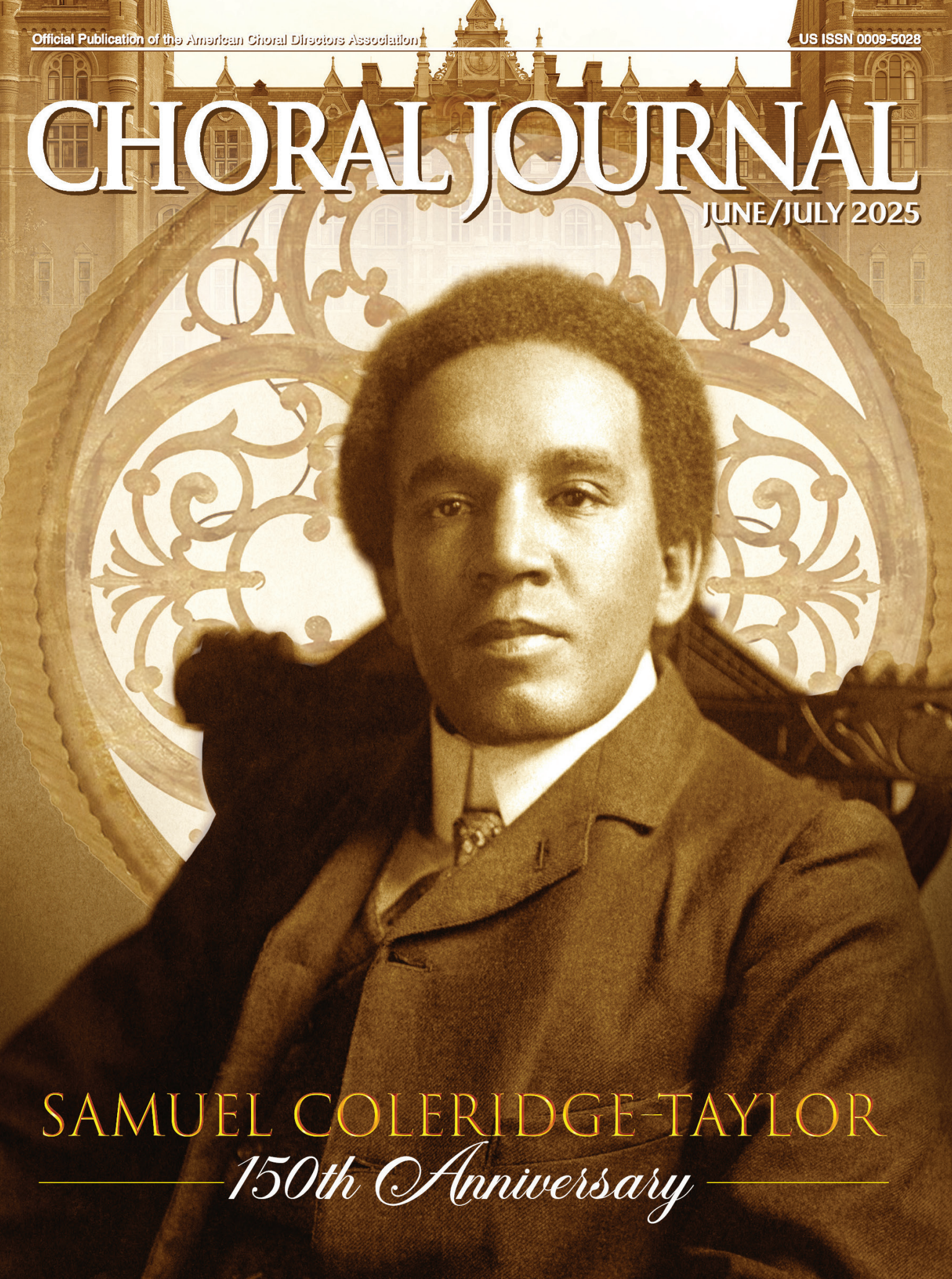

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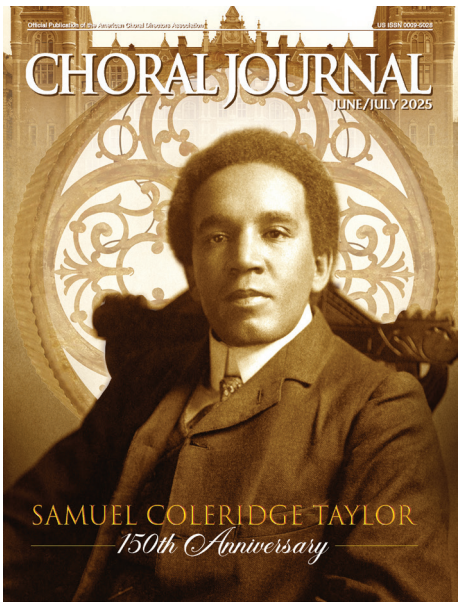

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ADVOCACY STATEMENT

The human spirit is elevated to a broader understanding of itself and its place in the world through the study of and participation in choral music. Singing in a choir produces more active and involved citizens. It affects self-worth in youth and adults. It builds connectivity throughout communities. Society benefits from the aesthetic beauty and community of singers created by choral programs within schools, houses of worship, and community organizations through involved citizenry, connectivity throughout communities, and feelings of personal self-worth. The American Choral Directors Association and its membership resolve to ensure the survival of choral programs for this and future generations by:

Actively voicing support for funding at local, state, and national levels of education and government; collaborating with local and national organizations to ensure the distribution of arts funding data and arts-related activism opportunities; advocating for full access to choral singing and inclusion of all singers in a choral program; and ensuring the distribution of advocacy statements and data regarding choral programs.

From the Executive Director

Robyn Hilger

A Note of Thanks— and Hope for What's to Come

I want to take a moment to offer heartfelt thanks to our outgoing state presidents. For the past two years, you have guided your chapters with creativity, compassion, and resilience. Whether organizing festivals, supporting educators through uncertain times, or finding new ways to bring people together in song, your leadership has made a lasting difference.

Being a state president isn't just about managing meetings or checking off tasks. It's about building community—through music and through service. It's about doing the quiet, consistent work that helps others feel supported, seen, and inspired. You've kept the music going, sometimes against all odds. And that's something to be proud of.

As we welcome a new group of state leaders, I feel a renewed sense of optimism. These incoming presidents inherit strong foundations—thanks to you—and they bring fresh energy and ideas. I know they'll lead with the same dedication, and I hope they'll also find joy in the work knowing they are not alone.

We also have several national leaders who are ending their terms of service. First, thank you to André Thomas. André ends his service on the Executive Committee and officially becomes a member of the Past Presidents' Council on July 1. André will always be the first ACDA National President I served with, and I will always be eternally grateful for his steady guidance, leadership, support, and for helping to "raise me" as your National Executive Director. David Fryling will end his term as National President and will transition into the Past President's role. David has been a thought leader and a visionary for many pieces of ACDA's work, including being a champion for ACDA to continually strive to be a place of true belonging. It has not been easy for these two leaders, who took the reins during COVID and directly into COVID recovery. They have led us with bravery, skill, strength, and solid vision for our future.

Choral music is a collective act. No one voice carries the song; it's the blend, the balance, the harmony that create something lasting. And that's exactly what these leaders have built in state chapters and nationally: harmony, strength, and a future filled with possibility.

Thank you for your service. Thank you for your heart. And thank you for reminding all of us what it means to lead with music at the center.

Robyn Hilger

From the **President**

David Fryling

As I sit here writing my final President's Column, I cannot help but think of the rich threads of people, music, collaboration, and renewal that this organization has woven into the tapestry of my life. ACDA has given so much to so many, and I certainly count myself in that number. In my first column in July 2023, I listed four beliefs that served to ground my agenda as president of ACDA. I thought I would revisit these statements to see where we are two years later.

I continue to believe deeply in ACDA. Its people, its mission, and its vision "to create powerful artistic experiences and be advocates for cultural and educational change that we might transform people's lives" are all things that continue to inspire me and so many others. Our national artistic and educational leadership position is even more important these two years later and, I believe, stronger.

I continue to believe in you, our members, who guide us all in this important work. I am inspired every time I meet a new-to-me member of this organization; the breadth and depth of our grassroots leadership is astounding. I look forward to each of your continued stewardship of ACDA.

I continue to believe we must hold each other accountable and persevere in this most vital work. We must continue to reach outside of our comfort zones to expand what it means to invite everyone to sing their songs, and continue to engage more—and more diverse—communities in creating meaning and impact through our art.

I continue to believe in the transformative possibilities of our work together. Together, we are thousands strong, in positions of community trust, and hold immense potential for effecting positive change within a society in turmoil. The transformative power of artistic experiences should not be underestimated. Their potential role of effecting positive change is more apparent—and needed—than ever.

It has been one of the most meaningful opportunities in my professional life to serve as your ACDA National President. My deepest thanks go out to the other members of the Executive Committee: To rising **President-Elect Jessica Napoles**, welcome! We are excited for the new energy you bring. To rising **Vice President Pearl Shankguan** and her 2027 National Conference Committee, we're already so thankful for the work you're doing. To our two "retirees," **Past President André Thomas** and **Secretary and Treasurer Tom Merrill**, thank you each for your steady and steadfast leadership for so many years. To rising **President Edie Copley**, we all look with anticipation to see where your leadership takes us. And to our **Executive Director, Robyn Hilger**, whose thoughtful leadership of our beloved institution continues to inspire everyone who has the privilege of working alongside her, thank you: you are a rockstar and role model for us all.

As I move into the past president position on the Executive Committee, I look forward to the important work we have before us. I promise we will pursue ACDA's compelling vision of its bright future on your behalf. Out of so many, we continue to be ONE ACDA.

From the **Guest Editor**

Marques L. A. Garrett

Anniversaries are an opportune time for musical celebrations. Conductors, singers, instrumentalists, historians, and other musicians rally around a common goal of honoring the musical contributions of one individual to our craft. Aside from the 125th anniversary of James Weldon Johnson's poem "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which was to honor Abraham Lincoln's birthday at a school in Jacksonville, Florida, 2025 is the 150th anniversary year of the birth of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

Coleridge-Taylor was a celebrated composer during his short life of just over thirty-seven years—only two years longer than Mozart lived. His musical talents were recognized and nurtured as a child. He studied at the Royal College of Music, where Charles Villiers Stanford became his composition teacher while his classmates were other noted composers of the twentieth century. His contributions to the choral canon include accessible anthems with organ, fiery unaccompanied part-songs, and wildly expressive cantatas and oratorios. While his songs did not defy the musical conventions of the day, their appeal can be seen in their uncanny way of pleasing novice and professional musicians.

His domestic success is evident from the hundreds of thousands of scores sold during his life and the performances of his famous cantata *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* that were rumored to have outnumbered Handel's *Messiah* some years. Musicians in the United States were also quite familiar with him and his work, resulting in three successful tours of the States. The Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Choral Society of Washington, DC, was formed to pay tribute to him as a pillar of Black excellence in classical music. (Harry T. Burleigh was a soloist for one of their performances.) Coleridge-Taylor even dedicated his *Five Choral Ballads* to the Society.

In some of his writings about the successes of other Black composers, R. Nathaniel Dett mentioned Coleridge-Taylor among his American counterparts. Primarily, Coleridge-Taylor's music was devoid of any idiomatic musical elements associated with African or African-inspired music. As an exception, the 1905 publication of *24 Negro Melodies* for piano was possibly an inspiration for Dett to use Black folk music in his own music like Coleridge-Taylor incorporated this music from both sides of the Atlantic for this collection. Despite his fame, his ethnicity still prevented him from some of the pleasures afforded composers, such as the opportunity to sit anywhere in the hall for the premiere of one's work.

I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to curate articles and reviews for this focus issue and hope that you enjoy learning more about his music and program it not only in 2025 but for many other events in years to come.

Letters to the **Editor**

In Donna Arnold's informative article "Serge Jaroff's Don Cossack Choir: A Treasure from the Russian Diaspora," there are several misleading comments on the music that influenced Jaroff's work. Since the author footnotes me, and since many choral directors are unfamiliar with this repertoire, I would like to clear up some details.

When describing Jarroff's forebears, she calls the Ukrainian-born composer Dmitry (Dmytro) Bortniansky (1751–1825) "Russia's first great master of westernized choral music, which he learned from study in Italy," and she cites my article in *The New Grove Dictionary* as her source. I have not referred to him as such, and her problematic statement requires some untangling. First, Bortniansky's music does not belong to Russia exclusively. Rather, he wrote it for the Russian Empire of the time, which included Russia, Ukraine, and other lands. Second, westernization in Eastern Slavic music began much earlier and continued during the Russian Empire when the Romanoff Tsars and Tsarinas imported German and Italian composers to their court in St. Petersburg. Third, Bortniansky's exposure to westernized choral music began when he was a choirboy for the court (singing music by those composers) and continued in Italy.

In my articles for *The New Grove Dictionary* article and the *Choral Journal* (August 2001), I carefully refer to Bortniansky as the first native Slavic composer to become chorusmaster for the Russian Imperial Court. I note that he was influential not so much as a westernizer, but as an innovator in his approach to the a cappella medium. His flexibility—alternating solo and tutti, divisi and non-divisi writing, along with his specificity—notating detailed dynamics and phrasing in different voice parts, continued to influence many composers who followed him. Recently, when leading a choir in a movement from the Rachmaninoff Vespers, I noticed anew how fluidly the textures shift, how specific the dynamic and articulation markings are in each voice part. This approach can be traced back to Bortniansky.

I am grateful for Ms. Arnold's article on Mr. Jaroff, his choir, and their repertoire. It is of course impossible to cover every detail and nuance of any underrepresented culture and repertoire in a single article. Thus, it is even more important to be highly careful with wording. I hope this letter clarifies some of the misleading points in her writing, and I hope that your readers will continue to explore Eastern European choral music.

Dr. Marika Kuzma
Professor Emerita, University of California, Berkeley
Editor, Dmitry Bortniansky: 35 Sacred Choral Concertos (Carus Verlag, 2016)
Author, *Carols of Birds, Bells, and Sacred Hymns from Ukraine: An Anthology and Cultural Companion* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2024)

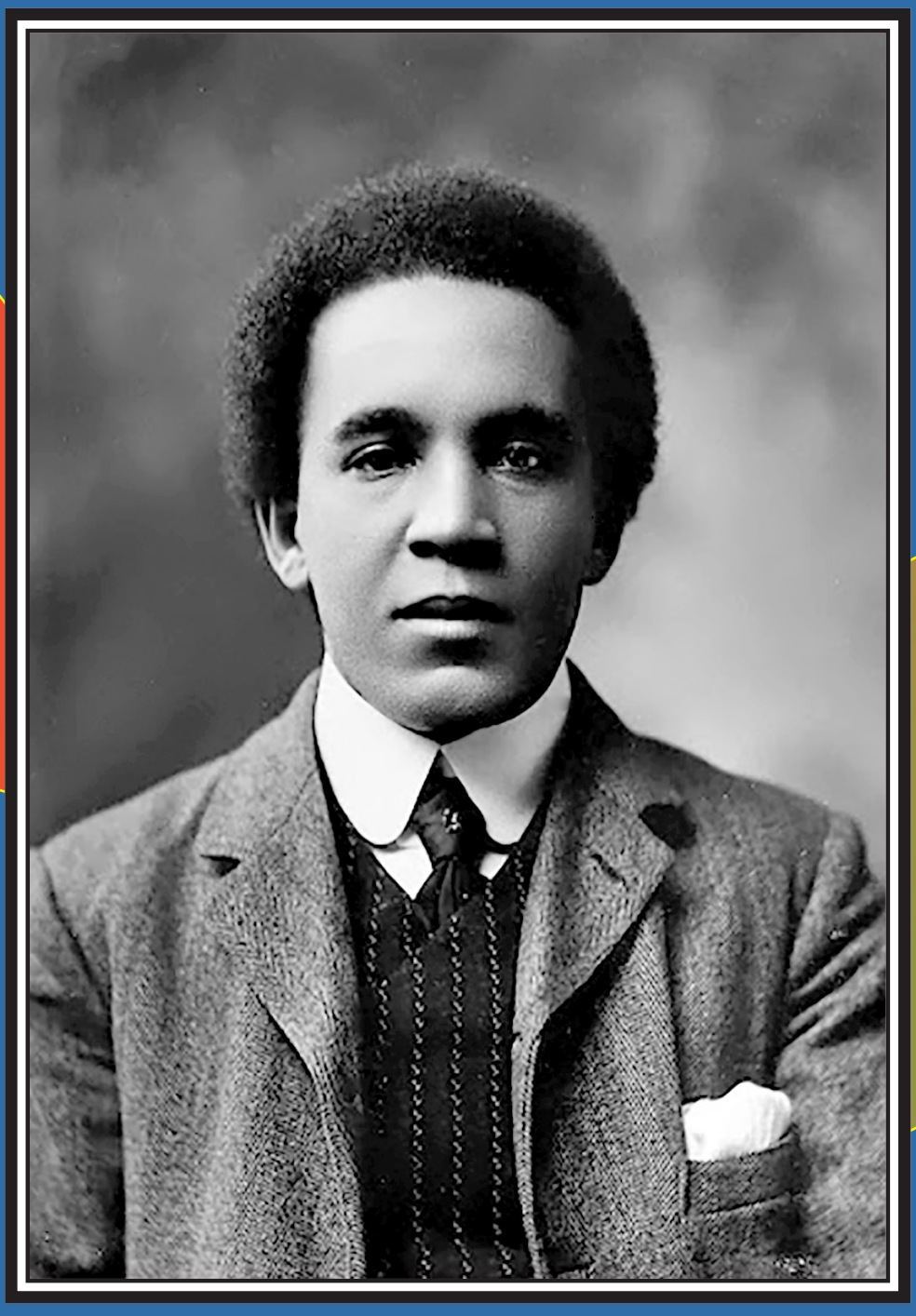
Editor's Corrections:

From the March/April 2025 issue, "Serge Jaroff's Don Cossack Choir," page 28, column 2, paragraph 2. Original sentence follows, with the rephrased sentence beneath. *Original*: Ukrainian-born composer Dmitry Bortniansky (1751–1825), who is best remembered for his choral works, is generally recognized as Russia's first great master of that westernized style, which he learned from study in Italy.

Correction: The Ukrainian-born composer Dmitry (Dmytro) Bortniansky (1751–1825), who is best remembered for his choral works and worked for the Russian Imperial Court, is generally recognized as a master of an italianate style that was in fashion at the time.

Page 29. In the spelling of Bortniansky's hymn "Kol' slaven," the correct Cyrillic script is "Коль славен" (not "Коль рабен").

From the May 2025 issue, "A Call to Action: Promoting and Preserving Women in the Field of Choral Conducting," page 42, note 25: The full book title is *Fair Play: A Game-Changing Solution for When You Have Too Much to Do (and More Life to Live)*, published in 2019. (The endnote cited publication as 2021, which is the date of the updated book cover.)



Photograph of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1905), The National Archives Catalogue. Public record. Reference: COPY 1/483/155

Donté Ford, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Music and Associate Chaplain for Worships Arts
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

Sounds for the Sanctuary: The Sacred Choral Music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Through a Creative Liturgical Lens

DONTÉ FORD

The output of Black musicians is uniquely peculiar and significant as it relates to the church—specifically, the Black church and its various members—and its fostering of musical gifts. While not a product of the Black church in the traditional sense, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was indeed a musician whose contribution to the practice of church music, mainly through sacred choral compositions, should not be overlooked. They are arguably his chief contribution to this institution in which his musical gift was nurtured as a young musical apprentice. This article explores the sacred choral music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor through a liturgical lens, providing an overview of the composer's background in the church and a survey of several anthems.

Sacred Music Output

Historian Jeffrey Green offers an enlightening investigative article—of which an expanded version later appears in his book, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, A Musical Life*—about the early years of Coleridge-Taylor, which includes information on his father, Dr. Daniel Peter Hughes Taylor, whom Samuel never met. Interestingly enough, Green notes that an obituary in the *British Medical Journal* shared news about Samuel's father and his passing, asserting Dr. Taylor's paternal relationship to this famed "writer of sacred music and the author of 'Hiawatha.'"[1] While it is commonplace to laud Coleridge-Taylor for his cantata, *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, it appears that the composer was also reasonably well known, at least for a time, on account of his sacred music. This notoriety is corroborated by the fact that prominent music publisher Novello printed Coleridge-Taylor's anthems, all of which were published[2] within a span of ten years beginning in 1891, with four more in the subsequent year. This renders his first published anthem at the age of sixteen and his last at twenty-six, though his sacred cantata, *The Atonement*, was published by Novello when Coleridge-Taylor was twenty-eight.

Coleridge-Taylor's output of sacred choral music is small; it is, however, peculiar that his works have fallen into disuse considering his prowess and popularity, and especially in light of Britain's quest for its distinctive musical identity and contribution.[3] (This author notes that Coleridge-Taylor's harmony instructor, Charles Wood, is remembered only for a handful of anthems.[4])

Coleridge-Taylor was an active church musician throughout his youth. Green notes that Coleridge was a frequent soloist with the church choir, and by age ten, Coleridge-Taylor was performing not only in church but also in school.[5] His ecclesiastical affiliation boasts both Presbyterianism and Anglicanism, but he was exceedingly active in and formed during his time with the latter. Green notes that the "substantial inheritance of choral music possessed by the Anglicans was an important experience in the young composer's education."[6] Despite the influence of the church on Coleridge-Taylor's musical development, much of the history surrounding his musical trajectory places a fair amount of emphasis on his time at the Royal College of Music as an adolescent lad of fifteen years old. To be fair, the output of his anthems is a result of, or at least coincides with, his time and study at the Royal College of Music. Undoubtedly, his mentorship by Charles Villers Stanford and probable fraternization with the likes of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst likely contributed to his formal composition of church/sacred music. Consequently, it is worth noting that as a church musician, Coleridge-Taylor made more of his lasting (or would-be) contribution as a composer rather than an organist or choirmaster, albeit also a conductor.

Choral music practitioner and Coleridge-Taylor specialist Zanaida Noelle Robles summarizes Coleridge-Taylor's anthems in her dissertation, particularly suggesting a corpus reading. In doing so, Robles elucidates broader revelations that may illuminate some aspect of Coleridge-Taylor's greater call, thus pointing more steadily to the significance of his sacred choral compositions. Reading his first anthem, *In Thee, O Lord*, as a statement of faith in his abilities to compose, Robles suggests a potential spiritual significance of Coleridge-Taylor's complete body of anthems, regarding his final anthem, *What Thou Hast Given Me, Lord, Here I Tender,* as a statement of resignation. Further, Robles also notes that Christian faith may not necessarily be an absolute for Coleridge-Taylor, though the indelible influence of English sacred choral tradition is without question.[7]

Robles's argument is entirely plausible, particularly related to faith commitment on Coleridge-Taylor's part. Amid the influence of Coleridge-Taylor's activity in church music making, very little information (comparatively) is typically discussed regarding his faith rearing in relationship to the church, let alone a profession of faith—in this case, Christian. Nevertheless, biographer Geoffrey Self notes that Coleridge-Taylor had a real but simple faith.[8] On what basis does Self make that claim? It is somewhat unclear and without explication. Self mentions Coleridge-Taylor's faith to contrast the composer against Delius, Vaughan Williams, and Elgar, all of whom had significant roles with the Three Choirs Festival, even amid questions about their faith or lack thereof, in the years following Coleridge-Taylor's unsuccessful premiere of *The Atonement*. To contextualize, the question of faith is relevant given that

the Three Choirs Festival is a collaboration between three prominent cathedrals in Hereford, Gloucester, and Worcester and their church choirs.[9]

Considering the body of Coleridge-Taylor's sacred music output, and with Self's comment in mind, it appears likely that some aspect of personal faith might undergird Coleridge-Taylor's sacred choral output. The entire body of anthems can appropriately find its place throughout the Christian liturgical year, especially for significant "festival" seasons such as Christmas and Easter and the days surrounding them. Further, Coleridge-Taylor seems to compose in a declamatory style for chorus, leaving little room for obscured text. Yes, nineteenth-century English anthem compositional style generally frontlines text intelligibility. However, Coleridge-Taylor almost provides "choral recitative" in his anthems atop beautiful lyrical, linear, and lush organ accompaniment. In the absence of telescoped text, there could be something more to Coleridge-Taylor's aims in communicating the text, aside from being an inheritor of a tradition. And if true, this makes it all the more worthwhile to use his music in worship.

With or without a faith commitment, Coleridge-Taylor's sacred choral music contributions make stunning additions to weekly worship, whether in formal liturgical, high church or less formal, low church settings. Owing to the fact that all churches have a liturgy—or order of worship—the creative liturgical lens through which this author has considered these works should be understood as suggestions/consideration for the use of this music in corporate worship more broadly, not necessarily limited to only strict, formally liturgical, settings, though the music naturally lends itself to said conditions. This view also does not exclude or intend to suggest that these choral works should be excluded from concert performances. In the cases of some works, a concert setting or presentational offering might work best.

Selection of Choral Anthems

As previously stated, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor is an inheritor of and contributor to the English choral tradition of the Church of England. This is evidenced by several features, not least of which include his setting of *Morning and Evening Service*. Though composed for worship, this work is especially viable for concert settings and can function on concert programs much like musical settings of its Roman Catholic Mass counterpart. Additionally, his anthems specifically showcase his awareness of liturgical and musical conventions such as verse anthems, integrating chorale/hymn tunes, use of the plagal "amen" cadence, and use of doxology—an expression of praise in celebration and acknowledgment of God.

The Lord Is My Strength is labeled a short anthem for Easter (which could be editorial), quoting two stanzas of Psalm 118. It is affixed with a chorale, which textually functions as a prayer for Eastertide—a term explicitly used in the composition's lyrics—and ends with a trinitarian doxology. Because this text is a Psalm, it can and should find multiple uses during various church seasons. However, if one adheres to liturgical seasons rather strictly (arguably appropriately), the closing chorale presents a potential problem lyrically on account of its use of the term *Eastertide*. (In the broadest application, one could argue that present-day Christians are always in a season of Eastertide as post-resurrection followers of Jesus.) To remedy this, if using this anthem outside of Eastertide, one might consider returning to the beginning of the anthem after the conclusion of the 6/4 section—which sets stanza seventeen of Psalm 118, singing through and ending on the downbeat of measure twenty to round out the performance. One might also decide to include and thereby conclude with the printed "amen" cadence.

Published simultaneously with three others, *Lift Up Your Heads* sets stanzas seven and eight of Psalm 24 in a lively manner, as indicated by the tempo designation. As a festival anthem, this setting fits appropriately in the weeks following Easter Sunday, though it could also find a home during Palm Sunday services. Additional uses throughout the year could include prelude or introit as a means of calling the congregation to worship in song; some congregations even use the label musical call to worship. Given this anthem's short, sectional construction—and its swift tempo marking—it could be deployed in conjunction with a reading of Psalm 24. Stanza 7, which corresponds with the first thirty-five measures of the anthem, including the brief

organ introduction, can serve as the refrain that is sung before beginning the reading, then again at the *selah* marking after stanza six, with a rendering of the complete anthem at the *selah* marking at the conclusion of the Psalm. One could also opt to sing the anthem from the beginning through beat three of measure 73 after the first *selah* marking, resuming with measure 74 to the end after reading the final stanzas of Psalm 24, after which the final *selah* indication appears.

In *By the Rivers of Baylon*, Coleridge-Taylor joins the roster of composers who have provided settings of Psalm 137, commonly under the Latin title *Super flumina Babylonis*. In this verse anthem, Coleridge-Taylor takes a few slight poetic liberties with the text, which is highly declamatory in style with rhythmic vitality aligning nicely with the natural pronunciation of the prose. Of course, the Psalms naturally reveal the conditions out of which they are born and to which they might apply. Since Psalm 137 is contextualized by Judah's exilic period in Babylon, this anthem pairs nicely with other Old/First Testament passages, not least of which is Jeremiah 29. Liturgically recalibrating and reconnecting this psalm to Jeremiah 29, particularly as it relates to contextualizing a familiar promise and message of comfort, will prove especially meaningful for worship constituents.

O Ye That Love The Lord may remind one of the hymn *Come, We That Love the Lord*, penned by Coleridge-Taylor's earlier church music predecessor (broadly speaking) Isaac Watts (1674–1748). Content-wise, these pieces have little to do with each other directly, although it might be a pleasant challenge to consider how each puts out a different kind of call to saints or "children of the heavenly king." (Creative thinking could also be employed to consider uses of this Watts hymn in conjunction with Psalm 137, particularly when using Watts's hymn with the refrain affixed by Robert Lowry, which is often used at its title—*We're Marching to Zion*.) In this short four-voice anthem, however, Coleridge-Taylor uses the organ to primarily double choral parts as the singers intone stanza ten of Psalm 97, which encourages God's people to hate what is evil, knowing that the Lord preserves the souls of His saints.

Break Forth Into Joy employs scriptural texts associated with Christmas, setting verses from Isaiah and Luke. This anthem also includes prose from the popular Christmas Carol *O Come All Ye Faithful* and would be fitting for a service of Lessons and Carols, a service in which Coleridge-Taylor's *Magnificat* from his *Morning and Evening Service* setting could also find a home. Consequently, other portions of Coleridge-Taylor's service settings, such as the *Nunc Dimittis* and *Benedictus*, can be used throughout the Christmas season. On the other end of that spectrum, *Now Late on the Sabbath Day* fittingly finds its home during the Easter Triduum, Easter Sunday, or Eastertide, utilizing text from Matthew 28, which chronicles Christ's resurrection, post-resurrection activity, and great commission(ing).

A soprano solo is deployed to serve as the angel's answer to the women gathered at the sepulchre as part of the Matthew 28 passage. But one might also consider utilizing a soprano soloist for the beginning portion of this anthem, depending on the skill of the choir; and even still, doing so despite the skill level of the choir offers another opportunity to engage the soloist and soloists' overall as an organic feature of church choral singing. This anthem will be especially appropriate during services in which the music is mainly responsible for communicating the story of Christ's passion and resurrection, perhaps without explication. Coleridge-Taylor's setting of this text underscores what this author percieves as his concern about text intelligibility and storytelling, not unlike Coleridge-Taylor's sacred music mentioned before and hereafter.

In Thee, O Lord can also find a place among Easter Triduum services, particularly Good Friday or those telling Christ's passion, specifically his seven last sayings. Coleridge-Taylor uses the first stanza of Psalm 71 to begin this economical (in length and voices) anthem before incorporating stanzas two and six from Psalm 31. The latter Psalm employs the words that Jesus uttered in what church tradition regards as his final saying: "Into Thy hands, I commend my spirit." It is worth noting that Psalm 31 and Psalm 71 begin the same way. With this parallel to Christ, this anthem can provide a contemplative choral reflection and response to Christ's final saying.

While certainly the least ontologically liturgical, Coleridge-Taylor's *The Atonement* can undoubtedly trace its roots to the church music tradition. Geoffrey Self

Table 1. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Compositions for Liturgical Use

Title	Liturgical Use*
Break Forth Into Joy	Advent, Christmas
By the Rivers of Babylon	Lent, Ordinary time, Service of lament
In Thee, O Lord	Lent, Good Friday
Lift Up Your Heads	Advent, Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Ascension, Ordinary time, Introit, Call to worship
Now Late on Sabbath Day	Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter, Eastertide, Ascension
O Ye That Love the Lord	Lent, Ordinary time
The Lord Is My Strength	Easter, Eastertide, Ordinary time
"Jubilate Deo" from *Morning and Evening Service in F Major*, Op. 18	Ordinary Time, Matins, General use, Introit, Call to worship
"Magnificat" from *Morning and Evening Service in F Major*, Op. 18	Advent, Christmas, Christmastide, Evensong, Lessons and Carols
"Benedictus" from *Morning and Evening Service in F Major*, Op. 18	Epiphany, Matins, Christ the King Sunday, Communion
"Nunc dimittis" from *Morning and Evening Service in F Major*, Op. 18	Advent, Christmas, Christmastide, Evensong, Lessons and Carols, Dismissal/Benediction, Funeral/memorial services
"Te Deum" from *Morning and Evening Service in F Major*, Op. 18	Ordinary time, Lent**, Eastertide, Matins, Communion
The Atonement	Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday

*While Holy Week is regarded as part of Lent, it is treated separately in this table to add specificity of recommendation and to account for non-liturgical churches.

**Depending on the context, Te Deum settings may not be the most musically appropriate during this season, given their typically joyful settings.

regards *The Atonement* as an embryonic opera, costumed in the cantata and oratorio vein of Mendelssohn and Dvořák.[10] It is well documented that the reception of *The Atonement* was catastrophic upon its premiere: the Three Choirs Festival, for which it was commissioned. This was in part due to the high "consumer" expectation set by Coleridge-Taylor's *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*. However, a later performance at Royal Albert Hall was met with much gratification.[11] Coleridge-Taylor contended that his music (referencing his cantata) was misunderstood, at least in part because of his race.[12] Interestingly, John Stainer (who was thirty-five years Coleridge-Taylor's senior) composed his passion, *The Crucifixion*, just under twenty years prior, which received similarly themed criticism. Regardless of why it was initially unpopular, it is still part of Coleridge-Taylor's output of sacred music, though not composed for liturgical use; this is perhaps the missing nuance that critics of the music did not acknowledge. Given that it is labeled as a cantata and that Self (though he personally considers it a small-scale opera) affirms its place in the lineage of the cantata and oratorio tradition, this choral masterwork might also find a liturgical use, given the cantata and oratorio ties to formal liturgy, especially by the historical connection points to medieval liturgical dramas.

Absolutely, this work requires high levels of musical proficiency to execute skillfully and may very well be beyond the scope of many church choirs. Nevertheless, it is dynamic in its musical storytelling, as it provides a complete Passion narrative starting in the garden of Gethsemane, even giving musical voice to characters in the story who are often unrepresented. While breaking away from some conventions associated with works within this style/tradition, Coleridge-Taylor still employs historical precedents of a baritone-voiced Jesus, a turba or chorus representing the narrative Jews, and also maintains later developments that would have been common practice of the day—for example, an active chorus participating in the storytelling. If nothing else, excerpts from this masterwork can uniquely enliven present-day services of Christian worship. With this masterwork in conjunction with his anthems, church choral musicians have at their disposal treasures for creative liturgical use across denominational lines—treasures and sounds for the sanctuary. CJ

NOTES

[1] Jeffrey Green, "Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: The Early Years" in *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Autumn 2001): 135.

[2] Novello published all of Coleridge-Taylor's anthems except for *What Thou Hast Given Me, Lord Here I Tender,* which was published by Maxwell and Co. in 1905 and will not be considered in this article.

[3] Zanaida Robles offers her DMA dissertation from this same vantage point—the question of/realization that Coleridge-Taylor's sacred music is largely unperformed—and provides a valuable resource through her work in performing and analyzing Coleridge-Taylor corpus on anthems and service music. See Zanaida Noelle Robles, "The Sacred Choral Works of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor" (DMA diss., University of Southern California, 2014), 40.

[4] Geoffrey Self, *The Hiawatha Man: The Life and Work of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor* (Hants: Scolar Press, 1988), 16.

[5] Green,"The Early Years," 143; Jeffrey Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, A Musical Life* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), 31.

[6] Green, *A Musical Life,*18.

[7] Zanaida Noelle Robles, "The Sacred Choral Works of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor."

[8] Geoffrey Self, *The Hiawatha Man*, 140.

[9] "Our History," 3choirs, January 31, 2025, https://3choirs.org/about/our-history.

[10] Self, *The Hiawatha Man*, 140.

[11] Ibid., 136.

[12] Ibid., 135.

2026 REGION CONFERENCES

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Celebrating Legacy and Unity: The Enduring Influence of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*

VINROY D. BROWN, JR.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, who passed away prematurely at age thirty-seven, left behind nearly one hundred works for voice and instruments, with *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* standing out as one of his most celebrated compositions. As a mixed-race composer of English and Sierra Leonean descent, he was both celebrated and challenged during his lifetime. In the United States, African American communities embraced Coleridge-Taylor, viewing him as a powerful symbol of Black excellence in the classical music world. Despite facing racial prejudice, he achieved prominence in classical music, as evidenced by his vast output and fame during a time when the field was largely dominated by white composers. During his three visits to the United States, he was warmly received, even meeting President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House—an unusual honor for a Black artist at the time. His legacy endures as a composer who broke racial barriers and inspired future generations of Black musicians.

Hiawatha's Wedding Feast premiered in 1898 to immediate international acclaim, earning praise from the leading composers and critics of the era. Coleridge-Taylor's success was grounded in his distinctive musical voice, which synthesized rich European harmonies with rhythmic elements reflective of his own diverse cultural background. This unique blend made him a prominent figure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Composition and Premiere of *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*

Hiawatha's Wedding Feast and its companion works, *The Death of Minnehaha*, *Hiawatha's Departure*, and "Overture to the Song of Hiawatha" make the complete *Scenes from The Song of Hiawatha by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Op. 30*. These works were composed by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor between 1898 and 1900. Coleridge-Taylor gained recognition after a successful performance of his works at the 1898 Three Choirs Festival, around the time he was commissioned to compose *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*. This opportunity came through the recommendation of Sir Edward Elgar, who deeply admired his work. Coleridge-Taylor did not take long to complete the score, and it was published ahead of its premiere on November 11, 1898, at his alma mater, The Royal College of Music. His mentor, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, conducted the premiere performance to an enthusiastic audience. In October 1912, Sir Hubert Parry later described the first performance, writing in the *Musical Times*:

> It had got abroad in some unaccountable and mysterious manner that something of unusual interest was going to happen... Expectation was not disappointed, and Hiawatha started on a career [which] established it as one of the the most universally beloved works of modern English music.[1]

Within months of its premiere in London, it received its American premiere by the Temple Choir of Brooklyn, New York. It was then performed across the globe, including performances in South Africa and New Zealand.[2] In England, performances became so frequent that it is said to have rivaled the acclaim of Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.[3] In the decades following its premiere, the complete *Song of Hiawatha* was staged annually at Royal Albert Hall replete with staging and costume. The first staged performance was conducted by Samuel's son, Hiawatha Coleridge-Taylor, in 1924. The Museum of Music History's website includes photos from selected performances, noting: "For fourteen years between 1924 and 1939 this spectacular production of Coleridge-Taylor's *Hiawatha* was an essential attraction of the London summer season."[4]

It is important to note that while the work received international acclaim, Coleridge-Taylor did not receive significant financial gain from the composition. The young composer sold his rights to the work for fifteen guineas—a modest fee for such a magnificent work.[5] He received no royalties for performances or copies purchased, and his financial outlook did not improve during that period as one would have thought. This led to a period of significant overworking, which is believed to have contributed to the pneumonia that led to his death in 1912.

The Literary Foundation: Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* served as the libretto for *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, providing the narrative framework and poetic imagery that Coleridge-Taylor masterfully set to music. Published in 1855, Longfellow's poem, written in a distinctive trochaic tetrameter,[6] was heavily inspired by the rhythms of Finnish epic poetry, particularly the *Kalevala*, a nineteenth-century epic compiled by Elias Lönnrot from Karelian and Finnish folklore.[7] The section of the poem selected for Coleridge-Taylor's cantata is drawn from Canto XI, a passage that vividly recounts the joyous wedding of Hiawatha and Minnehaha in a rich, picturesque setting.

The Song of Hiawatha is an epic poem inspired by Indigenous American legends, particularly those of the Ojibwe people.[8] It recounts the life and deeds of Hiawatha, a legendary hero known for his wisdom and strength, and his union with Minnehaha, a maiden of the Dacotah people.[9] Longfellow sought to capture the grandeur and mysticism of Indigenous storytelling through a distinctly Western literary lens. Trochaic tetrameter, with its rolling, chant-like rhythm, mirrors the cadence of oral storytelling. The structure does not lend itself to musical adaptation. However, Coleridge-Taylor used the text to create a fluid and dynamic setting. Longfellow divided the poem into multiple cantos, each depicting different aspects of Hiawatha's life. *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* vividly portrays the joy and grandeur of the festivities through rich descriptions of na-

ture, music, and communal celebration.

The text presents four key thematic elements for readers to explore. First and foremost is the beauty of nature in Longfellow's writing. The passage selected for the cantata is rich in imagery, vividly depicting rivers, forests, and wildlife as integral to the celebratory scene.

Then along the sandy margin
Of the lake, the Big-Sea-Water,
On he sped with frenzied gestures,
Stamped upon the sand, and tossed it
Wildly in the air around him;
Till the wind became a whirlwind,
Till the sand was blown and sifted
Like great snowdrifts o'er the landscape,
Heaping all the shores with Sand Dunes,
Sand Hills of the Nagow Wudjoo!

Longfellow's vivid descriptions harmonize the people with their environment, allowing listeners to visualize the landscape as the music unfolds.

Of note is the theme of communal celebration. Hiawatha and Minnehaha's wedding feast is not merely a personal milestone but a shared experience for the entire village. Longfellow immediately sets the scene with a rhythmic, chant-like passage:

You shall hear how Pau-Puk-Keewis,
How the handsome Yenadizze
Danced at Hiawatha's wedding;
How the gentle Chibiabos,
He the sweetest of musicians,
Sand his songs of love and longing;
How Iagoo, the great boaster,
He the marvellous story-teller,
Told his tales of strange adventure,
That the feast might be more joyous,
That the time might pass more gayly,
And the guests be more contented.

Longfellow illustrates the gathering of people, their feasting, and their songs, emphasizing the significance of unity and collective joy.

Music and storytelling emerge as central themes in the poem, with storytelling serving as a fundamental aspect of the human experience. It fosters connection, preserves history, and provides a means of sharing cultural identity—particularly in indigenous traditions, where oral narratives play a vital role in passing down knowledge and heritage. The wedding festivities are infused with references to "the flute's wild music" and the rhythmic energy of dancing. Longfellow highlights song and storytelling as vital traditions for preserving cultural memory—an idea that Coleridge-Taylor echoes through his intricate orchestration and interplay between voices and instruments.

Finally, at its core, the text celebrates love and unity. Hiawatha and Minnehaha's marriage represents their personal bond and the union of different tribes, symbolizing peace and harmony. This theme resonated deeply in an era when discussions of cultural unity and division were at the forefront, making the work both timely and timeless. Among the most passionate moments in the text is the aria, "Onaway! Awake, Beloved," in which their love is described in the following way:

And the gentle Chibiabos
Sang in accents sweet and tender,
Sang in tones of deep emotion
Songs of love and songs of longing;
Looking still at Hiawatha,
Looking at fair Laughing Water,
Sang he softly, sang in this wise:
"Onaway! Awake, beloved!
Thou the wild-flower of the forest!
Thou the wild-bird of the prairie!
Thou with eyes so soft and fawn-like!
"If thou only lookest at me,
I am happy, I am happy,
As the lilies of the prairie,
When they feel the dew upon them!

Modern Critique

Although *The Song of Hiawatha* was immensely popular in the nineteenth century, it has since been critiqued by some for its romanticized depiction of Indigenous American culture. Longfellow, writing from a Eurocentric perspective, crafted a narrative that blended indigenous legends with his own poetic imagination, often simplifying or altering elements to fit his artistic vision. While his intent was to celebrate Indigenous American traditions, the result was a work that, while beautifully written, did not always reflect authentic indigenous perspectives. As a composer of African descent working within the European classical tradition, Coleridge-Taylor saw *The Song of Hiawatha* not as a literal historical account but as a vehicle for artistic expression. His ability to transform the text into a universal celebration of love and community reflects his broader goal of bridging cultural identities through music. His setting does not attempt to recreate indigenous music but instead interprets Longfellow's words through the lens of Western classical tradition. By doing so, he created a work that transcended cultural boundaries, offering a universal expression of joy, love, and community.

As perspectives on colonial-era literature have evolved, so too has the conversation surrounding Longfellow's text. Today, there is a greater awareness of the need to contextualize Longfellow's portrayal of Indigenous American culture.[10] While the poem remains a significant literary work, modern scholarship acknowledges its limitations and the ways in which it reflects nineteenth-century attitudes rather than authentic indigenous narratives.[11] This shift should not be viewed as a critique or a reason to avoid performing the work but rather as an invitation to engage in informed discussions about the text. Such conversations as part of the preparation process can enrich the performance and foster a deeper understanding of the work's complexities.

Musical Interpretation: Coleridge-Taylor's Artistic Vision

Hiawatha's Wedding Feast is scored for SATB chorus (with divisi), tenor soloist, and orchestra. Coleridge-Taylor enhances Longfellow's text through his choral writing, using the collective voice of the choir to amplify the festive atmosphere. The work is composed in nine sections, each providing a different tonal soundscape and mood. Eight of the sections are composed for chorus. However, nestled in the sections is a standalone aria, "Onaway! Awake, Beloved," scored for tenor soloist. Its orchestration requires the full complement of instruments, which provide a rich sonic texture that enhances the work's vivid storytelling.

In the opening section, the strings are often employed to create lush, sweeping lines that evoke the beauty of the natural setting (Figure 1 on the next page). The brass section, especially in moments of heightened drama or celebration, provides powerful and bold statements, underscoring the grandeur of the event. The woodwinds are used to add color and intimacy to the work, particularly in passages involving the solo tenor, whose aria is supported by a delicate woodwind background. In addition, the percussion section, including the use of cymbals and timpani, adds rhythmic drive and excitement to sections of communal action or festive celebration.

Through his orchestration, Coleridge-Taylor creates a dynamic interplay between the vocal and instrumental forces. The orchestra often sets the emotional tone for the vocal passages, and at times, it takes on a more prominent role, using thematic material to highlight the narrative elements. The careful balance of orchestral color with the voices ensures that the work remains rich and immersive, whether in moments of quiet reflection or exuberant celebration. Even in its more intimate or subdued moments, the overall feeling of celebration is present throughout the vocal and instrumental writing.

The melodies in *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* are among the many distinctive features of the work, with Coleridge-Taylor's expansive, lyrical writing allowing the chorus and soloist to shine. From the opening fifths in the woodwinds that then are heard in the chorus, the vocal lines are thoughtful and endearing. The tenor aria stands out as the most iconic melodic passage, featuring soaring phrases and sustained lines that evoke the grandeur of the ceremony while also expressing the intimate emotions of the bride and groom. The melody reflects the meaning of the text with sustained notes underscoring the urgency and passion in the singer's plea. This aria, like many of the work's melodies, reveals Coleridge-Taylor's ability to balance dramatic intensity with lyricism, adding to the

memorability of the work (Figure 2 on the next page).

In addition to the tenor aria, Coleridge-Taylor's vocal lines for the chorus are meticulously constructed to balance individual expression with ensemble cohesion. He employs both homophonic textures and contrapuntal passages. These contrasting techniques allow for a variety of expressive possibilities, enhancing the emotional depth of the piece. The choral sections, particularly those depicting the wedding feast, use rich harmonies with overlapping vocal entrances, creating a sense of community and collective joy. The vocal writing showcases the composer's fluency in handling complex choral textures while ensuring that the text remains clear and intelligible to the listener.

Rhythm plays a central role in creating the vitality and movement of *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*. The rhythmic structure varies throughout the cantata, with some sections featuring stately, processional rhythms and others employing more fluid patterns. Influenced by both European classical traditions and the rhythmic characteristics of African music—an aspect significant due to Coleridge-Taylor's mixed heritage—the work incor-

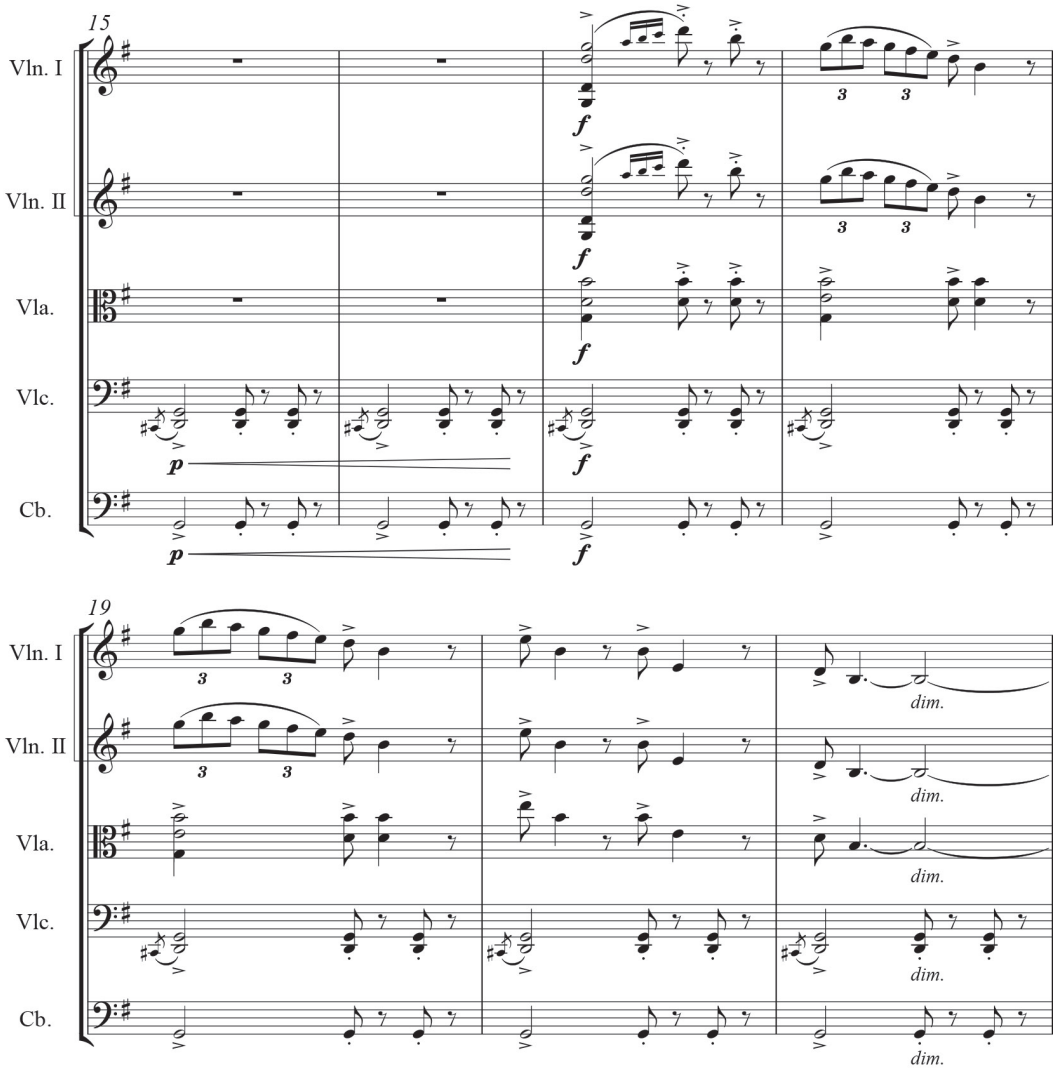


Figure 1. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, mm. 19–25. Public domain.

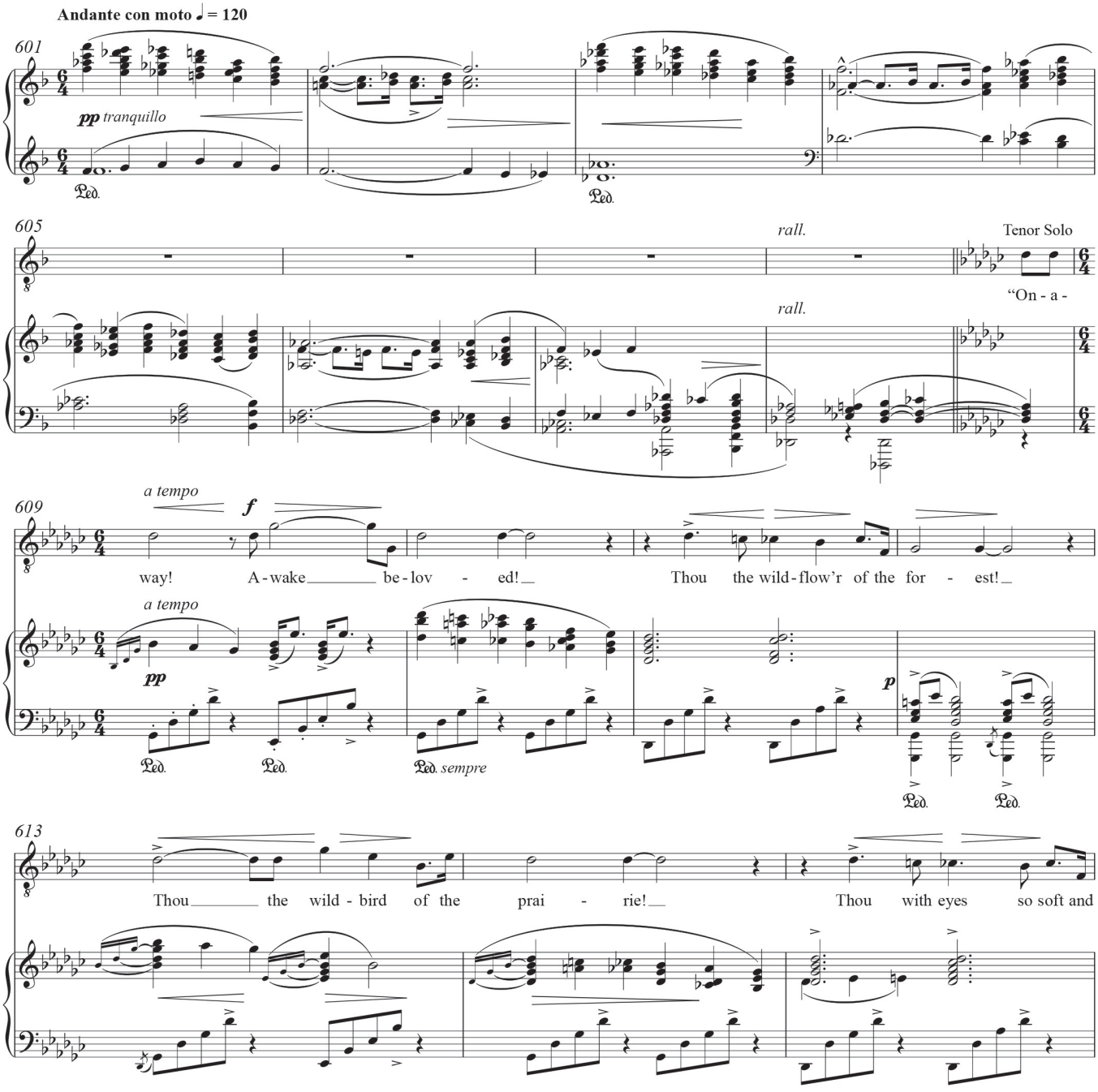


Figure 2. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, *Hiawatha's Feast*, mm. 601–615. Onaway! Awake, Beloved (aria) opening. Public domain.

porates both regular, march-like beats in the opening sections and more syncopated rhythms as the narrative develops. These rhythmic shifts contribute to the celebratory nature of the work, mirroring the excitement and communal energy of the wedding feast, especially in the choral sections where the rhythmic drive increases to heighten the event's grandeur.

Furthermore, Coleridge-Taylor introduces moments of varying meters that add a fluid, expressive quality to the music. These shifts often occur during intimate, emotional moments, such as the solo sections, where the flexibility of rhythm mirrors the deep emotional currents of the text. This rhythmic diversity enhances the emotional range of the work, moving seamlessly from collective celebration to more introspective, heartfelt expressions.

The harmonic language of *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* reflects the rich, chromatic style typical of the late-Romantic era, supporting the expressive nature of the text. Coleridge-Taylor uses tonal harmony but frequently shifts between keys and modulates to evoke emotional movement and depth. While the piece primarily employs major keys that reflect the celebratory nature of the wedding feast, the composer introduces minor modes to convey moments of introspection, yearning, or sadness. These subtle harmonic shifts serve as a musical reflection of the changing emotional landscape of the narrative. For instance, the transitions from lighthearted celebration to deeper emotional moments are underscored by shifts in tonality, enhancing the work's narrative complexity. This can be heard in the opening of the cantata, composed in D major as the excitement of the wedding celebration where the cuisine is described in colorful language. The first considerable change in mood takes place at rehearsal 13, where the tenors and basses introduce the post feast activities and engage the chef Nokomis, in a playful B♭ major (Figure 3 on the next page).

Throughout the work, Coleridge-Taylor subtly shifts to related minor keys to deepen the emotional resonance of the text. These modulations often occur at pivotal points in the narrative, highlighting transitions from external celebration to more personal, introspective moments. Among the intimate moments of the work are when the chorus sings about Chibiabos, a "friend of Hiawatha," asking for a song of love on longing. This section, from rehearsal 41 to 45, leads into the tenor aria, which is woven into the storyline (Figure 4 on page 23). The lush, chromatic chords move beyond conventional tonality, embracing more expansive harmonic territories and creating a sense of harmonic richness that complements the multifaceted narrative of the work.

Revival and Modern Performances

Although *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* is not in frequent performance rotation today, several notable performances have taken place in recent years. Centennial celebrations of the work in 1998 began a revival of renewed interest. Of important note are performances of the work in Boston, home of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. In 2017, the Colour of Music Festival, under the leadership of founder and artistic director Lee Pringle, presented the work with conductor Kzaem Abdullah. In 2023, Dr. Zanaida Robles, a respected Coleridge-Taylor scholar, led the National Concerts Chorus & Orchestra in a landmark performance at Carnegie Hall—the first time the work had been heard on that prestigious stage in over a century. In 2024 the Carroll Symphony Orchestra and Griffin Choral Arts of Griffin, Georgia, paired their performance of the cantata with works by Aaron Copland. In spring 2025, the Westminster Symphonic Choir, under the direction of Donald Nally, performed the piece as part of the Third Celebration of Black Music at Westminster Choir College. While not an exhaustive list, these performances reflect the growing attention and appreciation for the work across the nation in recent years.

Conclusion

Hiawatha's Wedding Feast stands as a monumental work that blends Western classical traditions, American poetry, and Indigenous storytelling. Its success, both in its immediate reception and its legacy, underscores Coleridge-Taylor's unique ability to fuse diverse musical elements into a cohesive, evocative expression of celebration, unity, and love. Using the text of Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*, Coleridge-Taylor's approach to the music transcends mere representation of cultures, infusing the text with his own creative vision through

intricate orchestration and rhythmic innovation. Modern performances can be viewed as indicative of a resurgence of interest in this masterpiece and Coleridge-Taylor's overall musical contributions. As we reflect on Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's life and legacy, *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* remains a testament to his extraordinary talent, offering an enduring message of cultural unity and shared joy throughout time. CJ

NOTES

[1] William Ethaniel Thomas, "Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's Hi-

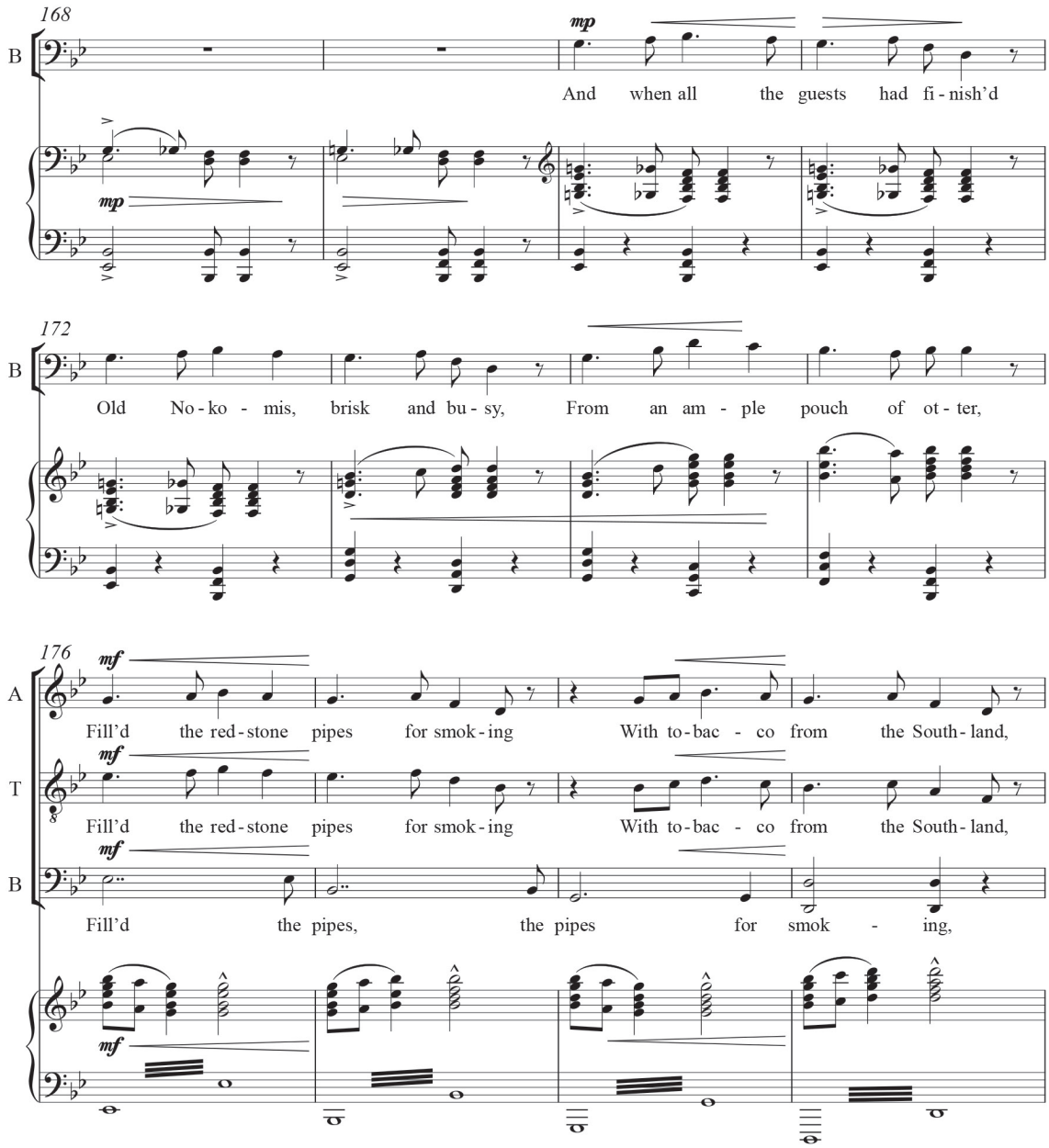


Figure 3. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, *Hiawatha's Feast*, mm. 168–179. Public domain.

awatha's Wedding Feast," Accessed February 3, 2025, https://web.archive.org/web/20201020165811/http://www.cambridgechorus.org/works/HWF.html.

[2] Charles Effrord, "Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Black Mahler," Accessed January 30, 2025, http://www.blackmahler.com/.

[3] Jeffrey P. Green, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, a musical life* (Routledge, 2016).

[4] "Hiawatha at the Royal Albert Hall (1924-1939)," Museum of Music History Blog (September 2012), Accessed April 4, 2025. https://momh.org.uk/exhibitions/hiawatha-at-the-royal-albert-hall-1924-1939/

[5] Fifteen pounds in 1898 is the approximate cost of $2,100 in 2025. https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator

[6] Trochaic tetrameter is a poetic meter that has four trochaic feet per line. A trochee is a foot that has one stressed syllable followed by one unstressed syllable. In trochaic tetrameter, each line has four trochees, or eight syllables.

[7] It tells of Earth's creation, conflicts between the lands of Kalevala (Väinölä) and Pohjola, and the construction and theft of the mythical Sampo, a magical source of prosperity.

[8] The Ojibwe people are an Indigenous American tribe primarily located in the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada.

[9] The Dakota people are an Indigenous American tribe and First Nations band government in North America. They compose two of the three main subcultures of the Sioux people and are typically divided into the Eastern Dakota and the Western Dakota.

[10] Maine Historical Society, "Whence these stories? History in Longfellow's Poetry - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 215th Birthday," Accessed March 1, 2025. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_ETVtqBnaI

[11] Theresa Gaul, "Discordant Notes: Longfellow's Song of Hiawatha, Community, Race, and Performance Politics," *The Journal of American Culture* (2004).

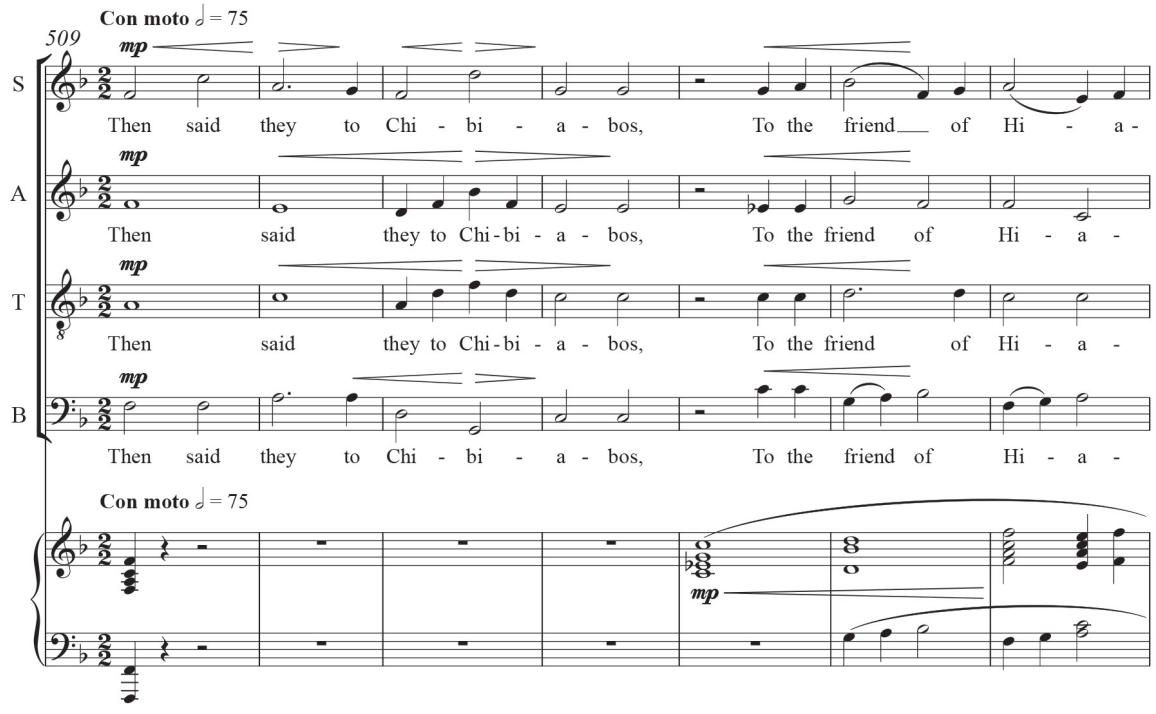
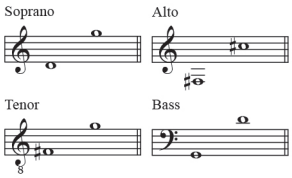


Figure 4. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, *Hiawatha's Feast*, mm. 509–515. SATB Chorale. Public domain.

Choral Reviews

Compiled by Marques L. A. Garrett

By the Waters of Babylon
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor
SATB, solo, organ
Novello, 1899 (5:30)



Coleridge-Taylor's *By the Waters of Babylon* follows the Anglican tradition of "full" and "verse" passages, allowing for soloists and the full choir to shine in individualized sections. The emotional content of this anthem expresses lamentation and sorrow. The text, drawn from Psalm 137, depicts the exiled Jewish nation sitting by the streams of Babylon, mourning their lost homeland. The dynamics display a broad range influenced by the emotions of the text, with one striking exception at the end of the work. Coleridge-Taylor sets the concluding text, "Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children, and throweth them against the stones," with a piano dynamic. This choice of a quiet conclusion might reflect the solemnity of the text, praising victory at the expense of innocent lives lost.

Coleridge-Taylor's choral writing provides great accessibility for choirs. *By the Waters of Babylon* features vertical conceit, syllabic English text, a steady *larghetto* tempo, and minimal polyphony—all traits that allow for greater ease of learning. There are various unison and octave passages. The only *divisi* passage occurs in the alto voice for two measures (see the phrase "in my mirth"). The overall tonality consists of harmonic minor sonorities, occasionally interspersed with major passages. For example, the text "as for our harps, we hanged them up: upon the trees that are therein" is a brief tonal respite in G major, perhaps remembering the joyful music made in the past. While transient unaccompanied chromatic segments occur, the organ provides *colla parte* support during the more chromatic sections.

What choirs might program this work? The organ accompaniment suggests that church choirs would find this anthem a compelling addition to their services. However, advanced high school choirs and honor choirs are also well-equipped to learn this piece. There are plenty of opportunities for dramatic interpretation that young singers would be thrilled to undertake. Displaying themes of oppression and displacement, this piece could be paired with Palestina's *Super Flumina Babylonis* or Moira Smiley's *Refugee*. Church choir directors may find this piece to be a challenging undertaking for volunteer singers; however, with ample rehearsal time, this anthem is achievable and a powerful addition to the liturgical programming of Psalm 137.

For more access to this piece, some choirs have opted for piano accompaniment, which also works effectively for performance. An impactful introduction to the piece in rehearsal could be the section, "Remember the children of Edom, O Lord," featuring unison passages on a repeated F♯. The rhythmic inflection, with its stirring triplets and dotted eighth-sixteenth notes, creates an excellent foundation for teaching rhythms and promoting dramatic textual expression.

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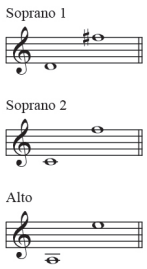
Associate Director of Choral Activities
Texas State University

Encinctured With a Twine of Leaves
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor
Part-song
SSA, piano
Novell, 1908 (3:30)



Encinctured With a Twine of Leaves was part of a collection of trios and quartets for female voices. It is one in a handful of instances where Coleridge-Taylor set the work of English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) to music. Taylor Coleridge's poem appears on page 169 in the 1906 publication *The Golden Book of Coleridge* and reads as follows:

Encinctured* with a twine of leaves,
That leafy twine his only dress!
A lovely Boy was plucking fruits,
By moonlight, in a wilderness.
The moon was bright, the air was free,
And fruits and flowers together grew
On many a shrub and many a tree:
And all put on a gentle hue,
Hanging in the shadowy air
Like a picture rich and rare.
It was a climate where, they say,
The night is more belov'd than day.
But who that beauteous Boy beguil'd,
That beauteous Boy to linger here?
Alone, by night, a little child,
In place so silent and so wild –
Has he no friend, no loving mother near?

*Encincture: / ɛnˈsɪŋk tʃər / verb (used with object): to gird or encompass with or as with a belt or girdle.

Coleridge-Taylor offers a moderately challenging part-song for treble choir that showcases his ability to write soaring, memorable melodies that are deftly paired with a harmonic structure that is both satisfying and surprising. Each voice part gets a chance at the melody (with opportunities for a potential soloist), as the composer has skillfully woven the mystery and beauty of the poetry into his music. The piano accompaniment carries the weight of a Schubert art song, yet it assists the choir as the piece moves through multiple keys.

A two-measure piano introduction utilizes both a C♯ and G♯ outside of the key signature to introduce a hauntingly beautiful melodic motif that recurs throughout the piece. The sopranos enter in measure three with an eight-measure unison phrase that covers the first four lines of poetry. There is a clear rise-and-fall contour to the melody, which is reinforced by Coleridge-Taylor's dynamic markings and tempo alterations at the ends of phrases. Text painting plays a significant role as the melody wraps around the listener, mirroring the leafy belt worn by the subject of our poem. It could be highly effective to assign these opening eight measures to a soloist. This same melody is used in setting lines five through seven of the poem, except now the lower two parts sing in harmony. Here the composer utilizes both subtle rhythmic changes in each part, as well as borrowed chords, which help sustain the listener's interest while building intensity. Interestingly, the melody from this point on will be through-composed; we will not hear the opening melody again until the final eight measures, at which point it makes a brief appearance in the piano accompaniment.

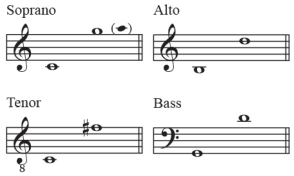
It is helpful that either the composer or publisher delineates each section via a double bar; care should still be taken to ensure that the piece is not presented as individual movements, however. The next section (mm. 25–34) is firmly anchored in the relative major key of F major via a pedal tone in the accompaniment. The vocal textures are now reversed as the lower two parts are assigned to the newly composed melody while the sopranos float above. Coleridge-Taylor continues to impress the visuals of the poetry upon the listener as the melody hangs and moves through the air above the solid pedal foundation (lines 8-10 of the poem). This same vocal texture is applied to measures 35–47 but now in the key of A major. The lowered sixth scale degree is present throughout, perhaps indicating that while we are in a different key, we still intend to return to where we began. A strong V-I cadence leads to D major in measure 52, setting up a satisfying parallel shift to our home key of D minor in measure 73.

This journey through different tonal centers, both major and minor, perfectly encapsulates the varied emotions of the text. Three different major keys describe a picturesque landscape yet are bookended by the mysterious and contemplative D minor. Despite this beguiling scene, the curious mind inquires why a child like this is alone, in the woods, at night. While this question is left unanswered by Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor offers some musical solace in the form of a Picardy third, repeated three times at the close.

Encinctured With a Twine of Leaves exemplifies Coleridge-Taylor's abilities as a melodist who deftly brings musical life to words on a page. Harmonically it is complex and varied yet is still palatable to perform and to listen to as it glides through tonal centers that are all related in some way. Intermediate to advanced treble ensembles would be well served by programming this wonderfully rich twentieth-century part-song.

Paul von Kampen
Director of Choral Activities
Concordia University, St. Paul

Viking Song
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor
SATB, piano
J. Curwen & Sons, ca. 1911 (2:30)



With a title like *Viking Song*, today's choral director may be taken aback. "Could it be that the influence of superhero cinematic universes has leeched into the groundwater of choral music?" But, no, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was about a hundred years ahead of the curve when he set this evocative poem. It would appear from this choice that the wide appeal of Norse mythology was as present a century ago as it is today, but this hidden gem of Coleridge-Taylor's part songs is not as widely known. His masterful compositional craft is on full display in this compelling work that is attainable for an SATB choir of any experience level.

Just like a good superhero movie, the opening sequence of *Viking Song* grabs one's attention straight away. The piano accompaniment "in march time" lays a strong rhythmic foundation, with a harmonic progression that would be right at home under the fingers of a baseball game organist. The first words of the choir are unforgettable, as they declare, "Clang, clang, clang on the anvil!" The most frequently occurring word in the text offers deep layers of opportunity for music making. The crispness of a hammer on an anvil is a wonderful image for the accents throughout the piece. Singers would find joy in rehearsal by holding their imaginary hammers in the air and vigorously striking metal on metal to provide contrast in articulation. One could take the analogy even further by imagining the singer's breathing mechanism to be akin to the hot coals of the forge, whose flames are best stoked with low and open breaths. While an onomatopoeia-like "clang" is a surefire source of joy, it also presents a challenge. After emphasis on a clear consonant, how can the ensuing vowel be sung with beautiful choral tone? It is the word that begins and ends the piece, so finding a nuanced bal-

ance between a vigorous consonant and a well-rounded vowel is an engaging choral challenge.

After its memorable opening words, the poetry casts Thor and Odin as central characters. They are later replaced with Britannia, a personification of the spirit of Great Britain. This is typical of poetry and music from this era, in which British nationalism was a common theme. Coleridge-Taylor provides optional text substitutions in the score for choirs of the United States. "Britannia" can be exchanged for "Columbia," the "North sea" can become the "blue sea," and "the island" can be sung as "the nation." Coleridge-Taylor was quite popular on both sides of the pond, so conductors can choose which country to highlight based on their concert theme, other repertoire on their program, or personal preference.

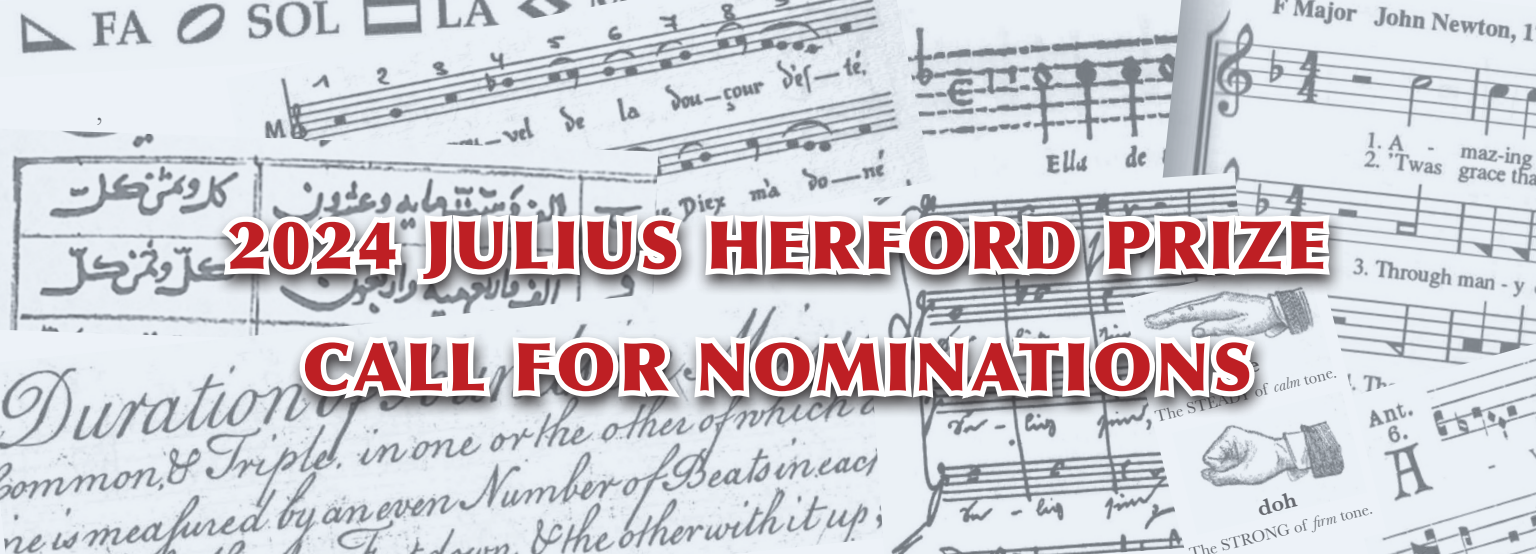
Outside of its eye-catching text, another highly rewarding aspect of *Viking Song* lies in its accessibility. The rhythmic demands are modest. Simple march-like rhythms in duple time are the prevailing wind in this piece's sails, outside of two quick ripples of eighth-note triplets. The part writing is mostly diatonic, with brief moments of chromaticism in the form of half-step neighbor or passing tones. A symmetrical ABBA form lends itself well to efficient rehearsals, as musical details rehearsed in one section will pay dividends when transferred to its pair. There is very little divisi throughout the work, with none in the soprano and alto parts and only a measure or two for the tenors and basses.

Despite a musical foundation that is not particularly complex, Coleridge-Taylor keeps the attention of the listener and performer through a variety of tonal centers and choral textures. While the sopranos, altos, and tenors sing as a homophonic trio in the opening F major section, the basses take delight in their exclamations between the entrances of the other voice parts. He sets their declamations of "Is it Thor?" and "Is it Odin with the leather on his knee?" in a range that is right in the sweet spot of most choral basses.

This textural variety continues in the first B section, which modulates to A major. The altos and basses sing the melody in octaves in a comfortable tessitura, while the sopranos and tenors comment with a "clang" countermelody in octaves. For the second B section, their roles are switched. Coleridge-Taylor cleverly modulates the key to C major, which places the same content from the previous section in an excellent range for each voice part.

After a return of the A section material, choirs will thoroughly enjoy the coda. Coleridge-Taylor uses the most recognizable word of the piece as the starring character of the conclusion. The upper and lower voices are briefly pitted against each other with competing "clangs," then unified in a thrilling final chord progression that leaves a lasting impression on audiences and choirs alike.

Matt Carlson, DMA Student
University of North Texas



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Questions? Amanda Bumgarner, Publications Editor, abumgarner@acda.org

Research Report

Elizabeth Cassidy Parker and
Elizabeth Hearn, editors

Potential Mental Health Benefits of Collaborative Ensemble Singing for Female Adolescents

by Catherine Grimm

Research has shown that adolescent females are more at risk for anxiety and depression than their male counterparts.[1] This widespread mental health decline has been exacerbated by the isolation and uncertainty caused by the pandemic.[2] Many interventions have been implemented for youth as a whole in the United States, and some have focused on the female adolescent population. Participation in choral singing may be productive for well-being because of its proven effects of community building, emotional expression, and social connection.[3] This review of literature seeks to uncover how choral music educators may address anxiety, depression, and stress in adolescent girls. Specifically, this article explores the potential benefits of collaborative ensemble singing as a tool for building mental health and wellness in female adolescents.[4] In this article, the term "adolescence" refers to the general ages of children between twelve to eighteen years old.

Mental Health in Female Adolescents

By adolescence, females are twice as likely to experience anxiety and depression than males.[5] This is due in large part to biological developments and societal expectations specific to female adolescents. Biologically, numerous hormonal changes cause girls to have a lower rate than males of instrumental coping skills to combat symptoms of anxiety and depression. Social stresses resulting from problematic relationships such as conflicts with friends or rejection by classmates have been shown to be a predictor of depressive symptoms in adolescence, with which female adolescents have an even greater risk.[6] When social stresses become chronic, they affect the dysregulation of physical, neurohormonal, and biochemical operations and may cause anxiety, withdrawal, and depressive symptoms.

Internalizing strong emotions is a socially groomed behavior placed upon female adolescents that presents significant risks for their mental health.[7] Girls are more likely than boys of the same age to perceive a larger discrepancy between their current and ideal self while attempting to maintain academic and social expectations. In trying to close this uncomfortable gap between the current and the ideal self, anxiety, somatic problems, and eating disorders may manifest.[8] Female inclination toward internalized, repetitive focus on these issues is correlated with anxiety, depression, and decreased well-being.[9] Laura Finch et al. state, "Despite the challenges of measuring…'soft' outcomes like self-esteem and resilience, it is clear that a focus on 'hard' outcomes alone [i.e., grades, test scores] will not work."[10] The need for mental health interventions for adolescent girls has never been higher, with symptoms of depression, anxiety, and loneliness significantly

worsening in this demographic during the pandemic. Choral music educators stand in a unique position to serve the wellness needs of female students.[11]

Benefits of Choral Participation for Female Adolescents

Choir participation has the potential to help change the course of declining mental health in female adolescents through "encouraging and empowering women as holistic individuals, leaders, and musicians."[12] The benefits of singing and the benefits of choral singing overlap in the areas of self-esteem and self-confidence.[13] To further enhance these benefits, directors can intentionally incorporate a collaborative ensemble model.[14]

A sense of belonging is one of the most powerful and beneficial byproducts of choral singing, but especially from a developmental standpoint for adolescents.[15] The teamwork of ensemble singing can elicit a sense of unity among singers.[16] Additionally, choral students may be more comfortable and at peace with their identity, enhancing the sense of community through expressing individuality in the music. Members of a choir are able to connect and be vulnerable with each other and the group, effectively breaking down the barriers to friendship that are so sought after in adolescence. Adderley et al. echo this in their research, identifying respect from peers as an additional benefit of consistent music participation.[17]

Parker notes that one of the most important outcomes of choir participation for teens is increased self-acceptance and understanding.[18] Teen girls, in particular, report actively exploring and developing their changing voices rather than concentrating on their limitations.[19] This is in opposition to factors like rumination on disordered symptoms and body image dissatisfaction that are characteristic of the age group.[20] Forming identity is a large part of adolescence, and choral participation may be a proactive tool to empower female adolescents through this developmental stage.[21] Additionally, pride in achievements and accomplishments through music making can help to combat low self-esteem and low self-confidence, which are two main factors cited in the literature as predictors of anxiety and depression for adolescent girls.[22]

Collaborative Ensemble Models: A Learner-Centered Design

The learner-centered design of collaborative ensembles is not a new concept in educational theory, but one that may specifically benefit female adolescents in choir because of the level of empowerment it adds to the rehearsal. Much of the learner-centered design approach agrees with and is derived from constructivist models, which would complement findings for women in educational settings that show an emphasis on narrative thinking and community interaction.[23] A peer-based, social-learning classroom encourages empowerment in all students regardless of gender through recognizing their lived experiences as valuable knowledge for problem solving within the music.[24] When the singers use their own knowledge to solve musical problems, the authority shifts from the conductor to the ensemble members, tapping into the developmentally appropriate modes of belonging, social affiliation, and relational learning experiences through the co-construction of dialogue with peers.[25] Through learner-centered collaboration, all singers become harnessed for learning experiences.

A Closer Look at the Collaborative Model Ensemble

The equalization of power between the student and the teacher in a collaborative model can empower individuals to express their own voice.[26] This peer-based, social-learning classroom cultivates feelings of empowerment in students by recognizing their lived experiences as valuable knowledge for problem solving within the music.[27] Bartolome noted that when control of the artistic process was handed over to singers in a girls' choir, an "empowered ownership was evident in each rehearsal."[28] Mitchell also found that the relational nature of rehearsals gave opportunities for personal risk-taking, which actually increased self-efficacy.[29]

Throughout the course of the rehearsal season, the ensemble members and conductor must provide opportunities for the practice of open-discourse, validation of ideas, balancing of group dynamics, and listening in order for this process to be successful.[30] However, Bryson cautions that individuals must be "willing to learn, experiment, and take on new responsibilities" in

implementing this method.[31] The collaborative model ensemble also offers opportunities for students to engage in messy critical thinking and problem solving that fosters musical agency.[32] The learner interacts and makes meaning from their musical environment through the help of small peer-groups, aligning with the educational philosophy of John Dewey.[33] The more responsibility female adolescents are given, the more empowered choir members and individuals they become, and these democratic processes may help them find their identity through music.[34]

Issues with leadership such as role confusion, lack of direction, and individual apathy have been found to arise in this model, yet more findings suggest that the groups seem to support individual contributions; an intimate, collective desire for the success of each member; and a reciprocal trust in the interest of meeting the musical goals of the ensemble.[35] Most importantly, collaborative decision making has been correlated with a sense of connectedness and autonomy, which inspires even more community in the group.[36] This support meets the blossoming need for social affiliation and belonging in adolescent girls.

Conclusion

Many interventions have been implemented for youth in the United States, yet few have focused on the mental health of the female adolescent population in music. A collaborative ensemble model has the potential to harness the benefits of choral singing to generate empowerment and provide these students with a locus of control that is correlated with improved mental health. Some resources that educators may utilize as a small beginning in their own classroom include *The Learner-Centered Music Classroom* by Jonathan Kladder and Nana Wolfe-Hill's "Collaboration and Meaning Making in the Women's Choral Rehearsal," in *The Oxford Handbook of Choral Pedagogy*. The collaborative model ensemble may be an opportunity to rewrite the choral and mental health narrative for female adolescents in the United States. CJ

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NOTES

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On the Voice

Matthew Hoch, editor <mrh0032@auburn.edu>

Preparing for a Career as a Professional Session Singer: An Interview with Sally Stevens

by Micah Bland

The entertainment and recording industry was established during the early part of the twentieth century. This led to new professional opportunities for singers in film, television, radio, and recorded audio. These vocal professionals are commonly referred to as "session singers" who perform in recording studios as either featured or auxiliary musicians. As recorded audio opportunities continue to expand in the twenty-first century, aspiring professional choral singers should consider session singing as a viable career path. To help these aspiring musicians understand the responsibilities, opportunities, and challenges of session work, the following interview was conducted with professional singer Sally Stevens in September 2023.[1]

As one of the preeminent session musicians of this generation, Stevens has worked in the recording industry for over sixty years as a session singer and vocal contractor. Throughout her career, Stevens has advocated for industry musicians while serving on the national board of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) for forty-five years and the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) board of directors for eighteen years.[2] As a professional singer, Stevens performed on major recording projects throughout the 1960s and 70s as a member of the Ron Hicklin Singers, and performed with notable artists such as Neil Diamond, Ray Charles, Sonny and Cher, Dean Martin, Ray Conniff, Frank Sinatra, Johnny Cash, Placido Domingo, Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, and Burt Bacharach.

In the 1980s, Stevens found success as a vocal contractor for film and television, working closely with composers such as John Williams, Danny Elfman, Alan Silvestri, and James Newton Howard. Throughout her career, Stevens has performed or contracted vocals for hundreds of film and television productions, including *The Sound of Music* (1965), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), and twenty-one seasons of *Family Guy* (1999–2022).[3] Possibly Stevens' most iconic credit includes the main theme from *The Simpsons*, which features Stevens; her daughter, Susie; and composer Danny Elfman (750 episodes to date).[4] In 2022, Stevens published a detailed memoir of her life and professional experience titled, *I Sang That: A Memoir from Hollywood*.[5]

What are the musical skills a singer needs to be successful as a session singer?

To do any choral or ensemble work, you must have excellent sight-reading skills. You also need to have

good intonation, because the industry does not use auto-tune.[6] Also important is an understanding that when you're in the studio, you're part of an entity. If you have a question about something, you can't contact the composer directly; you have to go through the choral contractor or the vocal contractor. You must arrive on time and be aware of the work rules. Union membership is also important. Based on my experience in the business, I didn't do anything that was not union employment. If I were going to hire a singer for a project, they had to be a current in-good-standing member of SAG-AFTRA [the Screen Actors Guild–American Federation of Television and Radio Artists]. It is still important to have union work as your goal. I am not sure younger singers understand how important it is to have healthcare coverage and a pension that builds over time. Have rules that get you residuals when your work is reused.[7] Session singers always have a slow period during the year where there's not much work, and if those residual checks aren't coming in, there's no way to pay the bills.

When hiring musicians as a vocal contractor, what qualities did you look for? What type of things made you want to hire or rehire a singer?

Well, you don't want someone in front of a microphone with six other people who are chatting, engaging in conversations, or creating a disturbance. Session singers need to have a professional attitude and a focus at all times. Each project also varies. As a vocal contractor, you have to shape the sound according to what the composer's work requires. Session singers who are successful in the business can easily adapt their sound to sing different styles. For example, I didn't want someone with a big vibrato in the soprano section of the choir. Instead, I would be drawn to people who could sing with a floatier tone. As you get to know the community, you learn about the skillsets of various singers; some excel with a more classical sound, some with a more contemporary or gospel sound, etc. You try to shape the group's sound through these personnel choices.

It sounds like it's beneficial for singers to be versatile in many different styles, but it also sounds like you had some singers you used for more specific genres. Were most of the singers you hired skilled in multiple genres and styles?

Most of the singers I drew from were quite flexible and really good at adapting their sound or approach to the style. However, the size of the ensemble matters. With smaller groups, you have to be more selective in terms of who is skilled in a particular style. Often I would get a request for a solo (like a little squib in *The Simpsons*) that would be very clearly defined: "We [the producers] want an opera singer, or a fragment from this aria, or we want someone that sounds funky like a rock singer from the sixties," etc. As a contractor, you have to keep track of who does what on your roster of singers.

How would you suggest a new singer in the industry go about finding work?

If they are starting from scratch or don't know anyone in the community, I would suggest that they submit a demo no longer than three minutes of various styles to the main four or five vocal contractors in town. They can also send a link to their professional website. Connecting with other singers is really how we all evolved in the business. I suggest participating in a community or church choir, because you often meet people that can help you connect with professionals in the business. Also, those choral experiences put music in front of you at least once a week, helping you maintain your sight-singing skills.[8]

Can you describe more about the expectations of a session singer demo? Should the demo include an entire song?

No, maybe only about fifteen seconds of a song. Never a whole song, because the person listening will probably just skip through it and might miss something that was really important.

Demos should include something that shows your high octave range, super low range, or strongest solo style. Including something where you've layered multiple voices shows how you can harmonize. If you've

done a project from a commercial or something that you thought came out really well, take a little piece of that and put it in the demo. But the variety of what you do should probably be no more than five or six little samples. Include only what you do really well.

Considering the length of your career, how were you able to maintain the health of your voice?

I have this annoying habit of humming all the time. I don't even know what I'm humming unless I stop and think, "what are the lyrics for that song?" But I truly believe the humming has helped, because that's exercising the vocal folds in a healthy way. Also, in my career over the years, I've never had to belt; when I've performed as a soprano in a choir, it's always been a high floaty sound. If I've performed a solo, it's always been a breathy sound, so I never really had a risk of harming my voice.[9] I try to make myself vocalize every day, especially when I know that I have a performance coming up. I've also tuned in with a couple of voice teachers over the last few years, just to get an update. I think you have to keep singing—whether anybody's listening or not!

For many years you served on the SAG-AFTRA board. Can you share who this union represents and the advantages of joining as a session singer?

My history with unions goes back to about 1967 when I served on the Los Angeles local board of AFTRA. Back then there were two separate unions. (They merged in 2012.) AFTRA was the more democratic of the unions because it represented singers, actors, stunt people, dancers, news people, announcers, voice-over actors, and puppeteers. All those categories had representation on the board, and everybody had representation on the wages and working conditions committee. I served on the local board for a few years before I was elected to the national board.

Around 1983 I was appointed to the AFTRA board of trustees for the health and retirement fund. I am still a trustee today. SAG at that time was primarily an actor's union, although it covered session singers if we worked on theatrical features, prime-time television, or television commercials. AFTRA handled radio commercials and radio programming. Now the unions have merged and represent all categories: theatrical, prime-time television, variety television, dancers, reality TV, radio and television commercials, and sound recording. In my opinion, it's very important that singers be part of the union. Your residuals, salaries, and contributions that employers make go into the fund, which provides pension payments and health coverage. It also guarantees that the terms of your contracts are upheld. In other words, if you don't believe you're getting paid properly, you can file a claim and the union will step in and investigate your situation.

I think most people in the business (including myself) start out doing nonunion sessions. When you're nineteen years old, that's how you learn to stand in front of a microphone. But at some point—when you realize that you've broken through and are doing more union projects—then you need to set the nonunion work aside. If too many people don't, it chips away at the integrity of union employment. If a producer knows that they can get as good an artist for a nonunion gig as they can for a union gig, they're not going to want to pay the union benefits or the required union salary, which pulls money out of those funds and weakens the pension and healthcare of union members. And that harms everybody, even the folks who are being faithful to the contracts. So I encourage young singers to get involved with their union. We have a very active singers committee at the union, and there are branches across the nation in places like New York, Los Angeles, Nashville, and Chicago. There is also the national committee, which is a great resource for finding and solving problems.[10]

You mentioned several benefits the union offers, such as a standardized pay scale, residuals, health coverage, and pension. Is there anything else a singer should know about nonunion work? For example, is there a set hour limit?

There's no hour limit, nor is there safety protection. There's also no guarantee that you'll get paid correctly. It's difficult to learn all this stuff when you're first

getting into the business, but you can always reach out to the union and inquire about rates and other things. I don't mean this to sound inconsiderate, but I think there's a little bit of a stigma attached to someone who is well known as being both a nonunion and union singer. For certain projects, having a reputation for doing both types of work can be a check mark against you.

However, there may be more people who are doing that than I realize. The union has made efforts to reach out and get singers involved with the SAG-AFTRA singers committee. We encourage them to attend events and share information with them about their union and what it offers. For example, the SAG conservatory regularly has workshops and events that are useful to singers.[11] There's also a lab where you learn how to submit and put together your own voice-over demos. For a while they were doing meet-the-composer events. There are a lot of activities like this that have started up again now that the pandemic is over.

Do you have any other thoughts or insights you want to share with a prospective session singer?

It's important to have a professional-sounding demo, but I also think it's essential to understand that this profession is a community and group of colleagues. Unlike actors who compete against each other for roles, session singing is mostly ensemble work; you get to know the community by being around and working alongside each other. Networking is important. In a church or community choir, you might find yourself standing next to someone who is a working session singer and impressed by your ensemble singing. They may pass your name along to a vocal contractor. In my own career and the careers of people I know, I have grown so much through networking. There's always a certain amount of schmoozing and politicking; basically, it's about getting to know individual singers and learning what each person does well. That's what helped me when I had the opportunity to begin contracting. It's important to find ways to get connected to the community, no matter how small or unimportant they might seem. CJ

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NOTES

[1] University of Toledo IRB approval was acquired for this research. The interview was conducted via Zoom on September 6, 2023.

[2] The Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists merged in 2012 to form SAG-AFTRA.

[3] Additional notable appearances as singer or vocal contractor include *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), *Grease* (1978), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Home Alone* (1990), *Last of the Mohicans* (1992), *Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit* (1993), *Forrest Gump* (1994), *Apollo 13* (1995), *Mulan* (1998), *Elf* (2003), *The Polar Express* (2004), *The Avengers* (2012), *Star Wars: Episode VII—The Force Awakens* (2015), and twenty Academy Award ceremonies (Oscars).

[4] Sally Stevens, *I Sang That: A Memoir from Hollywood* (Atmosphere Press, 2022).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Author's note: Auto-tune cannot be utilized during choral recording sessions due to the simultaneous sounding of multiple pitches. Auto-tune can be utilized when each vocalist is recorded individually.

[7] Residuals are payments made to performers when the work is used beyond the initial compensation agreement.

[8] Author's note: Most American metropolitan cities offer union and nonunion employment opportunities for session singers. Nonunion session work can also be found internationally.

[9] These words are the interviewee's. The editor acknowledges that it is possible to belt in a healthy way and that a breathy sound in and of itself is not a reliable indicator of vocal health.

[10] For more information about the SAG-AFTRA National Code of Fair Practice for Sound Recordings, visit https://www.sagaftra.org/production-center/contract/806/rate-sheet/document.

[11] For more information about SAG-AFTRA conservatories, visit https://www.sagaftra.org/sag-aftra-conservatories.

In Memoriam

Don V Moses (1936-2025)

Don V Moses was born December 21, 1936, in Garden City, Kansas, and passed away peacefully March 12, 2025, at his home in Surprise, Arizona. He earned his bachelor's degree in music education from Fort Hays State University, and both a master of music and doctorate of music from Indiana University. During his tenure at Indiana, he also served as assistant professor of music among the conducting faculty from 1964 to 1973. In 1973 he became the director of choral activities at the University of Iowa. Don remained there until 1986, when he took the position of director of the School of Music at the University of Illinois. Among his published works are handbooks on choral conducting.

Don was best known for his lifelong work on the masses of Joseph Haydn. He was the founding director of the Classical Music Festival in Eisenstadt, Austria, a position he held from 1976 to 2000. Both the city of Eisenstadt and the state of Burgenland recognized his work in promoting the city and its connection to Haydn, and it has become one of the longest-running music festivals in Europe. In 2008 he published, along with Robert W. Demaree, *The Masses of Joseph Haydn*, based on this extensive research and performance experience. For those interested in learning more about Don Moses and his conducting, research, and work at the University of Illinois, the Sousa Archives and Center for American music holds the Don V Moses Music and Papers (1960-2000).

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Rehearsal Break

Jennifer Rodgers, editor

One Text, Many Settings: Helping Students Create Meaning Through Text in the Choir Classroom

by Emily T. Peterson

Inspiring active and analytical listening in the choral classroom allows students to connect to the text in more profound and thoughtful ways. Time restrictions and other educational obligations often discourage choral educators from incorporating listening activities in daily or weekly practice. There are, however, many ways to build intentional listening and critical aural skills that positively impact other aspects of developing musicianship. Accessing the same text in multiple settings is one way students can connect more deeply, explore more personal meaning, and discover how text influences music and performance. The purpose of this article is to provide an intentional listening framework that educators can implement in daily or weekly rehearsals to reinvigorate student's emotional connection to the text. This framework is focused on incorporating varying styles of music in choral rehearsal to engage students and allow them to interact with text through the use of familiar music.

It was a junior high passing period, and students were busy chatting and socializing in the hall. Suddenly, music started to play, indicating the one-minute tardy warning. Students started darting into classrooms and rushing to get to class on time.

"Hello Darkness, my old friend. I've come to talk with you again. Within the vision softly creeping, left its seeds while I was sleeping… People talking without speaking, people hearing without listening…."[1]

Students were humming and singing the haunting melody as they entered the classroom. Something unique and creative was happening as they experienced the music on their own terms. But, I wondered, had my students ever considered the lyrics, what they could mean, or how they might connect to their own lives? Had any of them ever heard the whole song without the hustle and bustle of students moving to class around them?

In music with lyrics, listeners and performers have the distinct opportunity to use text to guide their musical interpretation. In a choral classroom, however, it can sometimes be easy to tell students what *we think* the words mean instead of asking *them* to draw their own connections and interact with the text.

For centuries, composers have used text to elevate the power of music. Text painting has helped composers draw direct connections between what is happening musically to what the words are trying to portray.[2] Emo-

tional connections are directly drawn between the text and the music to evoke feelings in the listener. Presenting the same text approached from different musical perspectives is a staple of many composers' musical endeavors, as evidenced by the sheer number of songs that are re-recorded by various artists today—a practice that has been common from antiquity in both sacred and secular music.[3]

Encouraging divergent thinking through listening is important and not difficult to incorporate into daily instructional practices. Designing listening experiences for students based on different interpretations of a single text setting is a great introduction to this kind of free thinking. Students interact with the text multiple times while encountering different viewpoints of composers and arrangers from diverse backgrounds. Each composer or arranger's context and interpretation highlights their unique musical contribution, promotes broader inclusivity and understanding, and empowers students to add their own meaning to the text.[4]

The *Sound of Silence* anecdote comes from a moment of realization I had in my classroom and is the impetus for the strategies shared in this article. Students were already drawn to this music, so I decided to create an extended listening lesson based on the piece. Through listening to various versions of the same song and examining the text in isolation, students were enabled to make profound, thoughtful, and creative connections to the song and text. Specificity in listening brought meaningful change to the way students viewed text and influenced their experience beyond the technical process of making music. In this article, I will share the specific strategies that led to these outcomes in hopes that they are generalizable to future practitioners who may create lessons with varied repertoire. Following is an example of how the concept of "one text, many settings" could occur in the classroom.

Repertoire Selection

In every area of musical study—historic, research, and applied—thoughtful repertoire selection is crucial. This is particularly true when the goal is to actively engage students.[5] In the following listening sequence example, I selected the music specifically because of my school's culture and the students' pre-disposed inclination toward *The Sound of Silence*. When choosing repertoire, one should consider authenticity, cultural relevance, and inclusion. The music selected should avoid perpetuating stereotypes or other social, emotional, or societal issues that might impact a student's participation.[6]

It is essential to know your students and their ability level to better guide their commitment to discovering deeper implications of the text. Their age and emotional intelligence is an essential concern when selecting repertoire. Mature students may do well with more complex text, but it is important to consider their emotional capacity to process underlying messages. It is also possible that there will be students who are unable or unwilling to participate in certain musical selections for personal or religious reasons. We must be mindful when selecting repertoire and text to avoid situations where any student is excluded from the meaningful work of uncovering deeper meaning of text through thorough analysis. Flexibility is an important consideration when designing listening sequences.

We may not always fully understand the nuances of our students' lives and personal history. As such, it is important to be vulnerable and open in order to create a classroom environment where students feel comfortable relating to text in a personal way. Inevitably, students will have differing opinions on the meaning of the text, which is ultimately part of the enjoyment of deep listening and analysis. Their differing opinions will help them understand a greater range of interpretation and free them to create their own conclusions about the meaning of the text. Again, creating a respectful and safe environment is essential to ensure that every student can share their opinion and feel valued, despite disagreements with their peers.

Introductory Listening Lessons and Expectations

Frequently teaching and practicing attentive listening is an essential musical skill. Setting clear expectations for *how* students should listen is an important first step in encouraging them to think critically about what they hear. Teachers should encourage students to listen in silence, saving their comments until the end of the piece. If they need to, students can write down

thoughts as they consider the music so they remember what they want to contribute to the discussion. Listening expectations might also include minimizing distractions outside of talking such as other class work, people entering/exiting the classroom, announcements, or phone usage.

Scaffolding shorter aural activities early in the year helps to build stamina and provides the opportunity for students to practice finding a sense of calm while they listen. To help students process aural input, consider guiding the listening process and encourage them to attend to specific musical facets. For example, I might ask them to focus on different types of instruments they hear, identify the form of the piece, describe the singer's tone quality, or listen for key reoccurring musical material. Providing students with a specific task to identify is a great way to encourage them to attend carefully while giving explicit directives about what careful listening entails. Once students have learned how to listen beyond surface level musical material, they can use those skills to make more informed judgements about the music and further their own musical interpretation.

Additionally, practice providing appropriate feedback. Students may have wonderful musical ideas; however, if they cannot appropriately communicate their thoughts, the meaning is lost. An honest discussion about providing feedback is important before asking students to contribute freely. A teacher might model their vision of appropriate and thoughtful feedback early in the process. Teachers may also offer explicit instruction about expectations for providing feedback, which might be necessary to help guide students through crafting their comments. Incorporating listening lessons at the beginning of the year focused specifically on appropriately responding to music provides the foundation for future listening activities. The majority of time in early listening lessons might be spent discussing how answers such as "this is horrible" or "it's good" are personal judgment responses that don't provide much information for discussion.

Begin with positive comments only, asking students to respond to things they appreciate about the music. Too often, students' natural response is negative, so by insisting on positive comments to start, hopefully they learn to focus on different aspects of the music beyond superficial judgment. Eventually, the conversation can incorporate negatives, but we spend an abundant amount of time working on how to phrase statements. For example, the statement "this sucks" is not acceptable, but something like, "I disliked this piece because it is unaccompanied and I think it would sound better with instrumental accompaniment," is specific and insightful. Students learn they can disagree about the piece if they can respectfully express that opinion with supporting evidence and thoughtfulness.

A Four-Step Model for Intentional Listening

After establishing a valued and respectful listening culture in the classroom, the real fun of discussing text can happen. The four-part sequence below has been effective in my program. The sessions can be separate or combined and are flexible for the amount of time available to dedicate to the lesson.

Part 1: Expose students to the music on a surface level

In session one, start the listening activity with a less familiar version of the song to capture the students' attention. Presenting a less common arrangement helps avoid any preconceived notions about the music. It is also a fantastic opportunity for students to hear and experience something they may not seek out on their own. Allow students to experience the music without any other directive. Instead of asking specific guiding questions, it is valuable to simply let students embrace the music and come to their initial conclusions independently.

Listen to the audio alone several times to increase familiarity. Audio recordings provide fewer distractions and stimulating input so students can focus on the act of listening. The first time through, ask students only to listen with no other directives. Before the second listening, approach students with prompts like: What instruments do you hear? How does the music make you feel? Do you recognize the music or does anything seem familiar about it? What is the form? Does anything repeat or capture your attention? What story is the music telling? What is it about? Does it remind you of anything?

After the second listening, ask students to get into small groups and share their experiences. For the sake

of efficiency, it may be helpful for you to partner or group students together. A simple "turn and share" may be equally effective. Ask students to share what they noticed based on your initial questions and be ready to share something about their experience. When they have had enough time to make connections, ask for volunteers to share with the whole class. Allow ample time for students to share and let their ideas expand and grow. Though it may be time intensive, letting students drive the group discussion can lead to valuable connections and learning.

In *The Sound of Silence* example, I played the Pentatonix version of the song for students first.[7] I selected this arrangement knowing that Pentatonix as a group is currently culturally relevant, so it could be a more accessible entry point to an unfamiliar piece. There are many pop-oriented a cappella ensembles that perform exceptional arrangements of familiar repertoire that students are easily able to relate to and may even listen to by choice. With these types of unaccompanied ensembles, students can often make connections between the listening example and their choral music.

Part 2: Connect to previous lessons and expand on common themes

Revisit the text utilizing a new setting. Start by asking students to review what was previously discussed in the first listening. Often it is surprising to find what students do or do not remember from previous listening experiences. The connections that students make can help guide further discussions. When students have sufficiently shared information and ideas, listen to the next example. Let students hear the example more than once to provide ample opportunity for them to formulate thoughtful ideas about the new experience.

Follow the same general process as with the first example. Ask students to only listen the first time without any priming or directives. The second time, ask students guiding questions particularly focused on the text. Can they understand the text better or worse in this recording? What does the text imply or talk about? Does the meaning of the text feel different in a new setting? Continue the process by asking students to discuss with a neighbor, then be ready to share. Instead of verbal sharing, teachers might utilize this point in the process to have students quickly write out their thoughts. Time restraints are a consideration on how students share their thoughts, though allowing students the opportunity to express their opinions about the new setting and its relevance to the text is critical to the process.

For our second encounter of *The Sound of Silence*, I chose the original version of the song performed and written by Simon and Garfunkel. As the opening vignette suggests, students already had experience with the original piece and had heard it many times without truly considering the music or the text. After hearing the seminal recording, students were able to make interesting connections to the Pentatonix arrangement. Some made surface-level comments about which version they liked better, but others were able to connect to why they had a specific musical preference. Students were generally able to make better arguments for their preferences after listening to more than one version. The original context of the song often changes a lot of student perspectives, so I was intentional about sharing the roots of the song after they already shared their ideas.

Part 3: Analyze the text in isolation before connecting to another listening example

For the next event in the listening sequence, provide a copy of the text to each student. As students silently read through the text, ask them to highlight or underline any words they do not know or questions they have about the content. Encourage students to make connections to their lives, other things they have read, or phrases that stand out to them. Ask them what questions they have about the lyrics and allow them to answer each other's questions. To spark conversation, I find it helpful to give some insight into my personal connection to the text. It is also helpful to give students parameters if they are struggling to share ideas. A more specific series of questions might be: If you were going to share three keywords or phrases from the text, what would they be? What do these words mean to you? How do these words impact the meaning of the song?

As students share, it is important to listen and expand on their ideas. Let them guide the conversation, allowing space to make meaning of the text. Teachers should model creating connections for the students to help them feel safe and comfortable as well as demonstrating what sorts of aspects they might want to consider in the future. Praising students for their contribu-

tions is also critical to encourage future participation. When students share, it should not be about right or wrong answers, but rather about helping them connect their thoughts to others or to the text itself in meaningful ways.

Hopefully, the structure of the lessons and classroom environment will help students feel empowered to share interesting observations about the text. In my experience, many students are surprised to learn that they misunderstood keywords or phrases when they only listened to the music. Reading the lyrics allows them to think about the meaning of the text without a direct aural stimulus. I have also found it helpful to leave questions about the text open ended and let students share what speaks to them instead of reading through the text line by line. By first understanding what students find important, it is then easier to guide them through the story the text is telling.

In *The Sound of Silence*, some students were drawn to the lines, "In restless dreams, I walked alone, narrow streets of cobblestone… and my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a neon light that split the night," and they were able to connect to the narrator of the song and could visualize the scenario. Other students were drawn to the emphatic statement, "'Fools' said I, 'you do not know, silence like a cancer grows.'" The idea of silence as a cancerous blight that grows and suffocates the narrator of the song resonated deeply with many students. After listening to this input, I guided the discussion back to the lines, "people talking without speaking, people hearing without listening," facilitating further discussion. To encourage genuine connections between the text and students, I had to be willing to share what these words mean to me and how Paul Simon uses these words to evoke strong emotions in the listener. As mentioned previously, if I ask my students to emotionally relate to the music, it is also my responsibility to demonstrate being vulnerable and share my personal connections to the message of the text.

After the discussion based on text in isolation, to further students' understanding, it may be helpful to provide them with another arrangement to listen to while they read along with the text. When students read the text and listen at the same time, they can synthesize important concepts. Using *The Sound of Silence* gave me the opportunity to share the version of the song performed by the heavy metal band Disturbed.[8] This gritty version painted a new picture for students and resounded on a different level for many of them. The raw emotion and rough edges highlighted the importance of the text. As an extra layer to the listening sequence, I showed them the music video for our final listening. The visual aspect provided a stunning new sensory input to digest the music in a way we had not previously explored.

Part 4: Review previous versions and make connections

As a conclusion to this listening sequence, revisit each interpretation of the text. Students will often be

able to make more thorough connections if they have had plenty of time to process the works and re-examine them over an extended period. Review clips of each of the versions of the song to refresh student's memories. It may be beneficial to ask a variety of concluding questions about the experience. Asking students to compare the renditions of the song and make a musically informed decision about which one was their favorite can be a concrete way for students to synthesize the entirety of the lesson.

A strategy like "Four Corners" will allow students to share about their preferences in a low-pressure setting. "Four Corners" is a common educational active engagement strategy designed to stimulate conversation, collaboration, and respectful discourse.[9] The flexibility of this particular engagement strategy allows teachers to encourage discussion and involvement from all students in a structured but safe environment. To implement a "Four Corners" discussion, determine four different labels or aspects of discussion you want students to think critically about. Students move to the corner that most interests them or they agree with the most. Students discuss in their groups knowing they must be willing to share at any moment and need to have respectful arguments to present to the rest of the class at the end of the discussion. I often used the four different listening examples of the same piece as the topic for each of the corners. Students were asked to go to the corner of the listening example they liked best and have a dialogue with their corner group about why they shared that opinion. Then after the allotted time, they presented their determinations to the whole class. One might also label corners with "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree" and select more guiding questions about the repertoire.[10] There are many creative ways you can fit a strategy like "Four Corners" into an active engagement environment to enhance students understanding of the text.

Suggestions for Extensions

Since multiple musical settings to a single text has been a common practice for centuries, the possible extensions to a sequenced listening lesson on text settings are extensive. In choral arrangements alone there are often several interpretations of the same text. For example, by searching for the keyword "stars" on most major music publication sites, several dozen different choral settings can be found based on the poetry of Sara Teasdale. Another example is *And So It Goes* by Billy Joel.[11] You can use the original version, an arrangement performed by The King's Singers,[12] and a performance by the Virginia Women's Chorus[13] as points of comparison and discussion. YouTube is a great place to find examples. In addition, this text allows students to make emotional connections to a serious song.

Other possible extensions might include asking students to bring in their own playlists as an avenue to pursue deeper connections to text. In asking students to create a deeper understanding of the music and text of their choice, we can also encourage them to further expand their interpretation of the text we present through the repertoire we select.

The Sound of Silence vignette shows a logical order for

sequencing an extended listening example focused on one text in multiple ways. I was impressed and touched by the level of insight and emotion my students were able to bring to the conversations we had about this text. Throughout the year, students continued to request "THE song," by which they meant the Pentatonix version of *The Sound of Silence*. Since the students cared deeply about the piece, I even included it as part of our spring concert repertoire, allowing the students to find another way to interact and connect to the music.

Conclusion

Listening to many settings of one text is a valuable and engaging exercise to help students achieve greater musical sensitivity and deeper interpretation. Teachers should craft mindful and creative listening activities to allow students to discover music on their own terms and make meaningful connections to the aesthetic of the art.[14] Thoughtful, student-centric analysis of multiple settings can also garner a sense of inclusivity and diversity in the classroom.[15] Students can develop lifelong creative listening skills and a deep sense of aural musicianship by practicing active listening as part of routine classroom instruction. CJ

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NOTES

[1] *The Sound of Silence*, Electric Version, Spotify, Track 1 on Simon & Garfunkel, *Sounds of Silence*, Columbia Records, 1966.

[2] Peter F. Stacey, "Towards the analysis of the relationship of music and text in contemporary composition," *Contemporary Music Review* 5:1 (1989): 9–27.

[3] J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music.* 10th ed. (W. W. Norton & Company, 2019).

[4] Tiger Robinson and Mara E. Culp, "Promoting gender inclusivity in general music: considerations for music listening," *Journal of General Music Education* 35, no. 1 (2021): 15–22; John Kratus, "Music listening is creative," *Music Educators Journal* 103, no. 3 (2017): 46–51; William Todd Anderson, "Mindful music listening instruction increases listening sensitivity and enjoyment," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 34, no. 3 (2016): 48–55; Frank M. Diaz, "Mindfulness, attention, and flow during music listening: an empirical investigation," *Psychology of Music* 41, no. 1 (2011): 42–58; Erik Johnson, "Developing listening skills through peer interaction," *Music Educators Journal* 98, no. 2 (2011): 49–54.

[5] Andrew Crane, "Hunting Choral Treasure: How Conductors Find New Repertoire," *Choral Journal* 59, no. 4 (2018): 42–47; Caron Daley, "Operationalizing your diversity goals through repertoire selection," *Choral Journal* 62, no. 7 (March/April 2022): 57–58; Karen Howard, "The impact of dysconscious racism and ethical caring on choral repertoire," *Music Education Research* 24, no. 3 (2022): 340–49.

[6] Tiffany Walker, "Addressing Contextual Information in Multicultural Choral Repertoire," *Choral Journal* 61, no. 4 (2020): 57–62.

[7] *The Sound of Silence*, Spotify, Track 1 on single Pentatonix, *The Sound of Silence*, RCA Records, 2019.

[8] *The Sound of Silence*, Track 11 on Disturbed, *Immortalized*, Reprise Records, 2015.

[9] Teach Britannica, "Four Corners." Accessed March 4, 2025. https://teachbritannica.com/instructional-strategy/four-corners/.

[10] Ibid.

[11] *And So It Goes*, Track 10 on Billy Joel, *Storm Front*, Columbia Records, 1989.

[12] *And So It Goes*, arr. Bob Chilcott, Track 5, Disc 1 on The King's Singers, *Gold*, Signum Records, 2017.

[13] Virginia Women's Chorus, *And So It Goes*, arr. Kirby Shaw, performed Spring 2016, YouTube, 4:34, https://youtu.be/oBH5rN-Zt74?si=RRQXUz5iJiF_tFjR.

[14] William Todd Anderson, "Mindful music listening instruction increases listening sensitivity and enjoyment," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 34, no. 3 (2016): 48–55.

[15] Tiger Robinson and Mara E. Culp, "Promoting gender inclusivity in general music."

INTERNATIONAL CONDUCTORS EXCHANGE PROGRAM
Portugal 2026
CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

ACDA is pleased to announce Portugal as the next partner for the International Conductors Exchange Program (ICEP). In 2025, six American and six Portuguese conductors will be selected to participate in a bilateral, mutual exchange to take place in 2026. Conductors will be paired based on backgrounds and interests, and will visit each other's choral communities, sharing techniques, and learning best practices. Visits by the Portuguese conductors will be centered around the 2026 ACDA Regional conferences. U.S. conductors will host their counterparts in their local communities for region visits 3-5 days before or after their regional conference. In turn, American conductors will be hosted in Portugal in June 2026. Typical residencies are 9-10 days, and exact dates will be determined in consultation with our Portuguese partners.

ICEP is providing opportunities for the next generation of choral leaders to represent the United States as ambassadors to the world in the exchange of music, ideas, and cultures. Established in 2010 and coordinated by ACDA's International Activities Committee, the program has connected choral conductors in the United States with counterparts in Cuba, China, Sweden, South Korea, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Uruguay, Kenya, South Africa, Germany, and the Philippines. Between 2012 and 2025, over 80 American conductors have participated in the exchange program, hosting an international conductor and traveling abroad to observe and lead rehearsals and performances, present lectures and master classes, and take part in conferences and other activities.

ICEP OBJECTIVES

1) To create connections between leaders of the U.S. choral community and colleagues across the globe. 2) To forge stronger relationships between ACDA and choral associations around the world. 3) To raise the visibility and leadership role of ACDA in the global choral community.

Application Period: April 3 – May 30, 2025

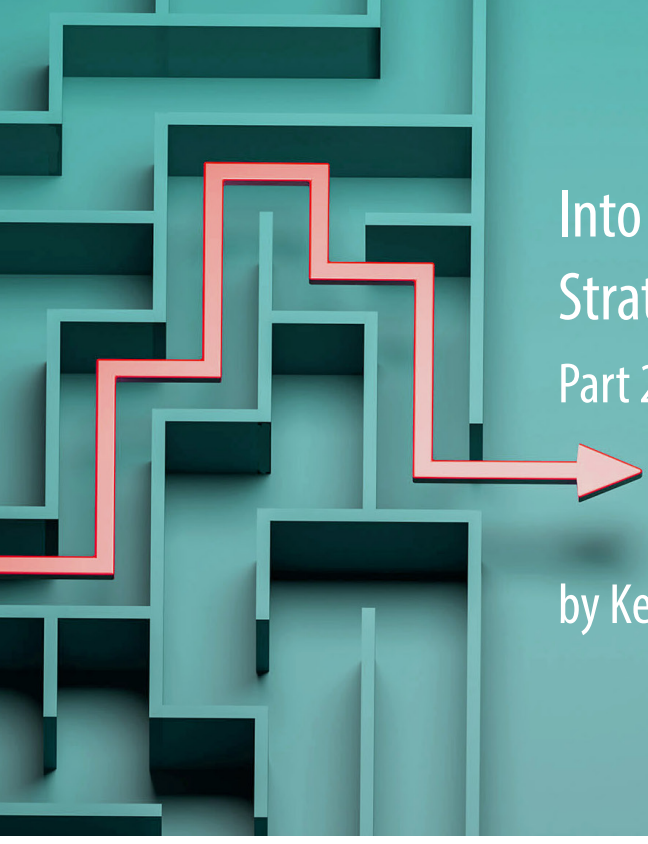
SELECTION CRITERIA - EMERGING CONDUCTOR

The Standing Committee for International Activities is charged with the selection of emerging leaders of the choral profession to represent the United States. The Committee has developed the following list of criteria:

1) Is a current member of ACDA, 2) Is an active choral conductor in a professional (remunerative) position, 3) Leads choirs with a demonstrated level of excellence, 4) Exhibits a high level of human understanding, tact, and cross-cultural sensitivity, 5) Has a minimum of 3 years and a maximum of 20 years in the profession

Candidates may reflect a wide diversity of interests and accomplishments (church/synagogue, community/professional choir, primary/secondary/higher education).

For more information and to apply, visit: http://acda.org/resources/ICEP
Application deadline: May 30, 2025



Into the Great Unknown: Strategies for Early-Career Teachers

Part 2: Planning Routines and Teaching Procedures

by Kendra Taylor and Olivia Salzman-Coon

The early years of teaching music can feel exhausting. In our professional experience, student teachers often remark about the amount of energy needed to teach for a full day. While teaching music is a job that requires a lot of energy and focus, some techniques and strategies can maximize your rehearsal engagement and protect your energy. This series of columns is inspired by our presentation to early-career teachers at the 2024 Northwestern ACDA Regional Conference. Part one focused on planning and organizing your program and strategies for classroom management (*Choral Journal*, August 2024). In part two, we will outline methods for designing routines, delivering instruction, and crafting long-term structures so you are less worn out at the end of the day and can sustain a healthy career as a choral educator. We will also include a practical instruction checklist so you can self-reflect on your teaching.

Challenge: Help! My rehearsals are wearing me out! I need to find a way to plan my rehearsals that feels sustainable.

Solution One: Identify aspects of teaching and rehearsing that are tiring and design routines to support those areas.

Establishing a routine for your classes in the early years of teaching seems daunting; and because rehearsals are subject to so many variables, no one can give you a foolproof routine without knowing you, your students, and your instructional goals. However, the tools offered in this article should help you develop a system for reflection on what you would like to do to strengthen your lesson structuring and how to design a routine around those goals.

Routines allow you to create a predictable environment for both you and your students. Trauma-informed pedagogy suggests that routines and predictability can help students feel more at ease and empowered in a classroom.[1] The three steps we rely on to design a routine are: (1) designing daily and event-based routines with consideration to context, (2) reflecting on what our routines may (or may not) be achieving after trying them out, and (3) applying effective aspects of routines to multiple situations with our students.

1. Designing Routines

Routines should support one of three priorities in your classroom: 1) the needs of your students, 2) the lesson objectives and goals you're addressing in your lesson, and 3) your needs. When designing routines, anything to which you plan to dedicate time should contribute to one of these goals. At the start of a new year, term, or concert cycle, sit down with a sheet of paper divided into

three columns and label them "for the students," "for me," and "for our goals/objectives" and make time to brainstorm what is most important for your upcoming time together. This can inform what you choose to include in your daily rehearsals. For example, if rehearsals are wearing you out, you may want to have section leaders handling warm-ups. This could be listed in your "for me" column since it supports your needs. It could also be listed in any of the other columns since it will allow students to become more independent musicians and give you a chance to assess proper technique and instructional needs without also conducting warm-ups. An idea that lands in all three columns is a strong choice to support your routine! See Table 1 on the next page for routine brainstorming examples.

2. Applying Routines

Throughout the process of routine design, you will stumble upon techniques that work well enough to become institutional knowledge, or routines that will endure across all classes you work with at your school for years to come. Consider explicitly stating these routines in your syllabus, handbook, and other program-specific documents. This will help create a predictable environment for new students enrolling and parents/guardians, as well as returning students participating in trips, concerts, festivals, and other big events. See a list of suggested long-term routines below.

Concert routine:

- Make call times a set amount of time before curtain (e.g., always 1 hour before curtain no matter what call time is) and make a set rule for when students can leave the event.
- Compile a list of specific items that students will clean up and/or be responsible for.
- Make a set list of expectations for concert attire.
- Plan for transportation options going home and track who is able to drive alone, ride with other peers' parents, or otherwise leave events without their own family.
- What is the plan for students who cannot go home after school prior to the concert? Consider allowing students to stay in your room, securing chaperones, and providing food.
- Possibly provide dinner or snacks to students.
- Have facilitators to help you (teachers, parents/guardians, and/or student leaders to help with sound checks, monitoring spaces, and serving dinner if it is provided).

Checkout routine:

- Decide if you charge for folders/concert outfits (remember to consider if this possibly excludes some students).
- Set a date that music will be due back. If you penalize late returns, set deadlines and amounts before the due date so there are clear consequences.
- Ask other teachers in your building who also check out equipment what their routines and policies are. This can help you adhere to a clear building-wide policy if possible.

Solution Two: Adjust the delivery of your instruction to protect your energy while still giving quality feedback in an engaging environment.

Finding the correct teacher-talk-time ratio in your own classroom can be challenging. As a new educator, you may still be learning how to give directions that are clear, concise, and efficient. Direct instruction is explicit, systematic (sequenced), and delivered in the fewest possible steps.[2] By working to talk more efficiently, we can increase student engagement. If students are waiting their turn to participate there may be off-task behavior, so we want to engage students in "doing" as fast as possible. Masterful teachers find ways to have students actively engaged at all times (ex. turn listening to the directions into a game/activity/assignment, engaging a section that isn't singing in a music listening/evaluation task). You can also increase engagement by

Table 1. Routine Brainstorming Example

For the Students	For Me	For Our Objectives/Goals
Assign "home base" spots to all students. This helps with attendance, but it also allows students to visualize their learning space ahead of time and enter the room with a destination in mind.	**Create daily clean-up routines.** It is a group environment with a group-made mess. What fun! It is okay to set the expectation that everyone cleans up after themselves and helps you ready the room for the next class.	**Provide instructional support every day.** Giving out IPA charts, posting anchor charts, or providing other supports can help students answer their own questions in the same predictable spots and address challenges independently.
Set entrance/exit expectations for students. This could be exit ticket tasks, collecting folders and chairs, signing in on the class log, or anything else important to ensure students are accounted for and the room is ready for learning/the next class. It also signals to the students it's time to get started and helps everyone anticipate what the start and end of class should look like every day.	**Minimize your roles.** Give the class the tools to address their own needs and try tasks as an ensemble utilizing their past knowledge/skills to address new musical challenges. This can include having rotating student leaders take the student through warm-ups daily, having students listen to recordings of themselves and give themselves feedback for improvement, having bathroom breaks self-managed through a sign-out sheet, or reference materials (like IPA charts and extra scores) freely available for students to reference when they have questions about their parts.[3]	**Have some extra supplies on hand daily.** Think about what extra supplies are needed on hand to avoid days when students forget materials. This also allows the student to address their needs without your help.
Project the daily class plan on the board. This allows students to come into their assigned sport, review the plan for the day, and prepare themselves independently.	**Find a building mentor.** Who can watch you teach and give you feedback in a low-stakes manner? Plan a regular interval of time to meet and jot questions down as you think of them.	**Consult IEP and 504s when planning.** All lessons should be created with accessibility in mind. Don't try to fix troubles after the fact, but design lesson structuring early to allow for a universal learning design. See Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines.[4]
Set behavior expectations/consequences early. This depersonalizes consequences by sharing them before misbehaviors happen. Then when consequences are given, students know ahead of time what to expect and you can avoid unnecessary power struggles.	**Learn the daily routine of your students.** Are you immediately before lunch? After PE? Across campus from their previous class? Don't try to struggle against students' daily lives without understanding them. If you spot a challenge, brainstorm solutions with fellow teachers and students. This builds rapport and saves your energy.	**Document everything!** This will allow you to spot patterns in your behavior or in student behavior based on activity, assessment style, or other factors. Journal 1-2 sentences or a short bullet-point list about each class daily in a Word document.

appropriately "switching gears." You want to monitor how much time you are spending on an activity and not spend too much time on one aspect of rehearsal.

Want to challenge yourself and have fun in the process? Play the "Rule-of-7" game with your class. The goal of the game is to tell your choir what you want them to do in seven words or less.[5] You can only say seven words, then the students must do something (e.g., a musical task). If you go over seven words and students have not done something to participate, have someone ring a bell or play a fun noise on a phone to cut you off. At that point, students must do something before you can talk again (e.g., sing a passage, clap a rhythm, etc.). Dr. Sharon Paul from the University of Oregon has done this exercise with graduate conductors using a ten-word limit.

Feedback cycle:

We need to make sure we are giving clear goals, instructions, and feedback to engage students. We want to aim to teach in feedback cycles:

1) Teacher instruction

2) Student task

3) Teacher feedback on that task

In order to be efficient, you may find you are speaking in bullet points instead of prose. We encourage you to give one goal at a time (that you can effectively assess—i.e., see them do something, hear it, write it). For example:

1) "Sing m. 1-8 and snap on all final consonants."

2) Students sing and snap (can visually assess who does/doesn't know where to place the consonants).

3) Give feedback specific to the goal. Avoid the urge to speak about all that just happened; stick to your stated goal.

At this point, you can continue with your first goal or pivot to something new. But be sure to close your feedback cycles before moving on. Also, be mindful of your goals and feedback. Are you always asking for goals related to dynamics or rhythm? You might consider placing a choral evaluation rubric/scale nearby while you listen to your ensemble. By looking at those categories (tone, intonation, vowel uniformity, rhythm precision, phrasing, etc.), you will be inspired to create goals and provide feedback in more areas.

Instruction delivery checklist:

The checklist below will help you to monitor your delivery of instruction. You can use this tool as your lesson plan or as a self-assessment tool (video record your lesson and fill out the form after). You can also invite a trusted mentor to your classroom to fill out this form as you teach. See what patterns arise and use this as a guide in your own professional development.

Delivery of Instruction Rubric

Note: this list is based upon course content created by Dr. Melissa Brunkan. It has been modified and included with permission.

Content:

◦ An introduction (related to goal)

◦ A closure (related to goal/review)

◦ Clear goals that are observable/measurable & specific (student-friendly language)

◦ An assessment task that accurately assesses the goal. For example, if you are interested in knowing how accurately students can label notes on a staff, do not grade them based upon a concert performance, but rather an activity that required them to label notes. Ask yourself, "Can my student be successful at this task using my targeted assessment skill alone?"

◦ A hands-on activity (i.e., not lecture, not just written tasks) that applies the concept being taught (can also be used to assess student learning—something you can see/hear them do). This could be as simple as asking students

to snap on all rests in a piece of music or utilizing Curwen/Glover hand gestures to reinforce melodic lines.

◦ Scaffolding: logical/appropriate sequence of activities to get from prior knowledge to goal

◦ Culturally responsive/relevant element

Delivery:

◦ Preparation (ex. completed slides, materials, knows plan, know the music, score study, purposeful warmups linked to goals for the day)

◦ Pacing/energy/active participation (students always have a task, not too long on one thing)

◦ Clear/efficient verbal communication: teacher talk is minimal but specific, with minimal pause words, minimal thinking silence, age-appropriate language

◦ Clear/respectful nonverbal communication

◦ Teacher/professional disposition

Communication:

◦ Feedback loops (specific goal presented—students do it—feedback on goal)

◦ Specific/appropriate feedback on musical concepts

◦ Specific/appropriate feedback on behavior (classroom management)

◦ Modeling and instrument skills (singing, playing, hand signs)

◦ Conducting/song leading (starting/stopping music, leading music/rhythms)

Reflect upon the following when you watch a video of your teaching:

• Are you making eye contact (equally amongst all students)?

• Is the tone/volume of your vocal delivery engaging? (as opposed to monotone and one volume)

• What do your facial expressions look like? (positive and encouraging vs. disapproving)

• Are you engaging your body? (For example: walking around the room as opposed to sitting at the piano for most of class, matching your physical alignment to what you'd like to see in your singers, using nonverbal communication that reinforces your verbal directions)

3. Reflecting on Routines

Once you've attempted to employ your routines for a substantial amount of time, reflect on the challenges and successes. Are you able to clearly see the benefit of the tasks you employ regularly? Are you still facing challenges at some point in your lesson? Has your energy level increased? Be vulnerable with yourself and decide what needs further improvement. Improvement is a lifelong task. There is no need to feel shame or disappointment if something doesn't work out. That just means you are one step closer to finding the solution. If possible, bring your routine and ongoing challenges to a building mentor or a music mentor in your district/area and ask for their input. After your first attempt at routine design, you can bring invaluable knowledge of your students and classroom culture to this conversation.

Conclusions

We hope you are inspired to reflect on your classroom routines, delivery or instruction, and can find ways to refine your teaching with an eye to conserving your energy. While self-reflection can be challenging and time consuming on the front end, in the long run it will enable you to better serve students and help yourself feel more empowered and energized at the end of a day of teaching. We hope you have fun in the process. Happy planning! CJ

Dr. Kendra Taylor and **Dr. Olivia Salzman-Coon** both received their PhDs at the University of Oregon and teach music in the Pacific Northwest.

NOTES

[1] Tom Brunzell, "Trauma-Aware Practice and Positive Education" in Margaret L. Kern and Michael L. Wehmeyer (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Education* (Palgrave Macmillan/Springer Nature, 2021): 205–23. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-64537-3_8

[2] Jean Stockard, Timothy W. Wood, Cristy Coughlin, and Caitlin Rasplica Khoury, "The effectiveness of direct instruction curricula: A meta-analysis of a half century of research," *Review of Educational Research* 88, no. 4 (2018): 479–507.

[3] It is important to consider when you will allocate time to prep your student leaders with this end goal in mind. Consider utilizing leadership camp opportunities to accomplish this.

[4] CAST, Inc., The UDL guidelines. https://udlguidelines.cast.org/

[5] Charlene Archibeque, "Making rehearsal time count," *Choral Journal* 33, no. 2 (1992): 18–19.

In Memoriam

Allen Cantey Crowell (1937-2025)

Allen C. Crowell died on March 29, 2025, at the age of eighty-seven after a valiant battle with pancreatic cancer. From a young age, Allen sang in church, and as a teenager began taking voice lessons with the music minister at Dauphin Way Methodist. While in college at Westminster, he sang with the New York Philharmonic in Carnegie Hall with Leonard Bernstein, Bruno Walter, Herbert von Karajan, and John Barbirolli. In 1960 he married his high school sweetheart, Phyllis Merry. In 1962 he took the helm of the Army Chorus and became the associate bandmaster of The Army Band. During his years in Washington, Allen also performed regularly as a soloist with the Baltimore Symphony in a series of pop concerts, served as the bass soloist at the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. for seventeen years, and was bass soloist with The York Symphony in Pennsylvania.

After serving twenty years in the Army, regularly performing at The White House and State Dinners, Allen retired at the age of forty-two and returned to Princeton, New Jersey, to teach choral conducting and conduct the Oratorio Choir at Westminster Choir College. After twenty years at Westminster, he served for ten years as the Heyward Chair of Choral Music and Director of Choral Activities at the University of Georgia Department of Music.

During his fifty-year career as a conductor, Allen led all-state bands and choruses, honors groups, and other festivals across the country, and he conducted the highly acclaimed ACDA National Men's Honor Choir at their national conference in Washington D.C. in 1995. From 1998 to 2003 he was the music director of the Ghost Ranch Vocal Camp in New Mexico. He received an honorary doctorate from Westminster Choir College in 2006 and was named Conductor Emeritus of The United States Army Band in 2017.

He was a brilliant musician, witty, funny, a voracious reader, practical and passionate, stoic in his approach to daily life and world events, fiery and intense with a baton in his hand. His absence is palpable, and he will be sorely missed by all who loved and knew him.

Robert Shaw Award Reception for Dr. Charlene Archibeque

The American Choral Directors Association is pleased to award its highest honor, The Robert Shaw Choral Award, to a choral leader who has made unusual contributions to the art of choral music. The recipient is chosen by the ACDA Past Presidents' Council from a pool of nominees that come from the ACDA membership. The Robert Shaw Choral Award is presented during each National Conference.

Dr. Charlene Archibeque is considered one of America's foremost choral conductors and teachers. She was the first woman to earn the DMA in Choral Conducting (University of Colorado, 1969) and served for thirty-five years as director of choral activities at San Jose State University, where she trained hundreds of today's choral conductors and mentored over eighty master's students. The world-renowned SJSU Choraliers took sixteen tours abroad, winning seven international competitions and performing in major music halls. Choirs under Dr. Archibeque's direction have performed at twenty-five state, regional, and national ACDA conferences. Her honors include receiving the 2008 Howard Swan Award presented by the California Choral Directors Association, the 2013 Excellence in Choral Music Award presented by the University of Colorado, being named Outstanding Alumna at the University of Colorado, and receiving both of San Jose State's highest honors: Outstanding Professor and President's Scholar.

Dr. Archibeque has conducted and prepared over 150 major choral works with orchestras and performs music from all historical periods. She has conducted hundreds of honor, festival, and all-state choirs in forty-six US states and six Canadian provinces. She has served as headliner for state, regional, and national ACDA, MENC, and MEA conferences. Dr. Archibeque holds degrees from the University of Michigan, San Diego State, and the University of Colorado. She is editor of the Charlene Archibeque Choral Series with Santa Barbara Music Publishers.

Photos courtesy of Margie Camp and André Thomas.

Charlene Archibeque speaking at the award reception in the Moody Performance Hall on Friday, March 21.

Charlene with ACDA Vice President Edith Copley. "It was my honor to present the Robert Shaw Choral Award to Dr. Charlene Archibeque on Thursday and Friday nights in the Winspear Opera House. She is a dear friend and an incredible musician, teacher, conductor, and clinician who has been an inspiration to her students and choral colleagues for decades."

Lou De La Rosa (Western ACDA Region Past President) shared, "As a graduate of her program, I experienced the love that Charlene holds for her choir members, instilling in us a love for the literature; respect for audiences, peers, clinicians and adjudicators; and a drive for excellence in performance and scholarship. She is the epitome of a lifelong learner, always taking notes as she attends interest sessions and performances and posing specific questions to her seatmates afterward to hear other viewpoints."

Charlene Archibeque with past Robert Shaw Choral Award winners, André Thomas (2017) and Rodney Eichenberger (2021)

ACDA President-Elect Pearl Shangkuan, Anton Armstrong, Charlene Archibeque, and ACDA Past President André Thomas

Presenters (L to R): Former student Lou De La Rosa, CCDA President-Elect Kristina Nakagawa, Trent Patterson with André Thomas, CCDA Past President Jeffrey Benson, and daughter, Melissa, kneeling beside Charlene.

Women in choral music attending the reception, many crediting Charlene Archibeque with blazing the path for them.

An Interview with the 2019 National Legacy Directors Chorus Conductors

Compiled by Amanda Bumgarner

Editor's Note: This article was originally published in December 2019 as part of the ACDA sixtieth anniversary series. It has been condensed for this reprint to highlight the interview with Charlene Archibeque, winner of the 2025 Robert Shaw Award, which was presented at the 2025 ACDA National Conference in Dallas, Texas.

The National Legacy Directors Chorus was an exciting collaboration between eleven iconic conductors and an intergenerational chorus at the 2019 ACDA National Conference in Kansas City, Kansas. All eleven conductors received the same list of questions and chose several to respond to for this article. Note that not all conductors chose to participate in the interview. The responses are presented in alphabetical order.

Charlene Archibeque was the first woman to receive the doctorate of musical arts in choral conducting. She prepared hundreds of choral directors and mentored over eighty master's students during her thirty-five-year tenure at San Jose State University. SJSU choirs performed for twenty-five professional conferences, and won seven international competitions, including Wales, Tallin, and Spittal. She has conducted festival choirs, honor choirs, and all-state choirs in forty-six states and six Canadian provinces.

Briefly describe the experience of participating in ACDA's Legacy Conductors Choir.

What an honor to be asked to be one of the conductors of the Legacy Conductor Choir! Needless to say, I was happy to be one of the women conductors and happy to still be able to represent this age group—still able to walk, see, hear, and conduct! I was thankful that so many fine singers/conductors were willing to miss so many interest sessions at the convention to take part in this experiment and hope that the experience was rewarding enough to merit their time and dedication! It was fascinating to be able to be with the other conductors—my long-time friends—and observe again the elements of their personalities, conducting, and rehearsal techniques that have put their individual stamp on their work throughout their careers.

What do you think are the most striking changes (positive or negative) in choral music today?

Two changes that have made a huge difference in audience enjoyment: the incorporation of World Music in programming and the use of choreography and multimedia in concerts. The change that causes me the most discomfort: the tendency to only program the "latest fad composers." This results in concerts lacking in variety, strength, and often emotional satisfaction.

Not all that is new is great, and much that is new is derivative. I long for programs that are centered on great choral music of all historical periods, programs that are carefully thought out with a unifying thread but that are totally diversified in musical style, textual content, rhythmic variety, visual enhancement, and a true communion with the audience. I worry somewhat at the current trend of turning concerts into political and social events, music selected for its "agenda."

What, if anything, would you change about your professional life?

I always remember Charles Hirt saying he wouldn't change his career for any other and that he was happier in choral music than any of his friends in other professions. I feel the same way: lucky to have landed where I did and immensely happy every time I am in front of a choir or working with choral conductors.

What do you want your legacy to be?

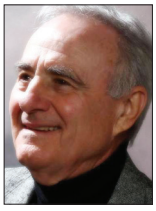
I want my life to have touched others in positive ways. I hope that I have encouraged people to strive for excellence in all aspects of their lives and that the joy we have known together in making great music will sustain and give direction to them. I continue to want to help choral directors be more efficient, more effective, better conductors, and better communicators of the choral art.

Describe your most important musical mentors in terms of how they contributed to your professional development.

I was fortunate to have many fine musical mentors starting with my piano teachers as a child and my high school piano teacher, who taught me the great composers and harmony lessons in the summer; Rosemarie Grentzer at Oberlin who taught me to memorize the Harvard Dictionary and respect for musical terms; and my theory teachers who got excited at chord progressions; Sally Monsour at the U. of Michigan who showed me personality in the choral classroom—and again at Colorado when she helped me learn chironomy and pointed out that a bright e vowel can be just as pretty as a dark, covered e. Maynard Klein, my choral director at U of M, who made us write in the text translation in every piece before we rehearsed it and made me feel that he was always looking right at me in rehearsal. Lynn Whitten was my mentor for my doctorate: he cleaned up my conducting and encouraged me to do deep research, along with Warner Imig who shared some vocal secrets.

What do you miss most about your job(s) after retirement, and why?

What I miss most in retirement is being around young people and being able to make beautiful music happen.



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 and around the world. 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. Ehly is the recipient of numerous teaching and performance excellence awards and grants.

What do you think are the most striking changes (positive or negative) in choral music today?

Positive: The quality of the performances has continued to improve quite remarkably. Exploration of music from distant and different cultures has increased dramatically. There is evidence of outstanding teaching in the preparation of young music educators. Communication of professional services, namely ACDA and State CDAs, has increased greatly and communication

is enhanced.

Negative: There appears to be a preponderance of performances of non-traditional contemporary literature that is to be appreciated more for its theoretical compositional components than for a more humanitarian message. It's good to explore any and all new compositional styles, but not at the expense of our great heritage of literature that has spoken to generations of peoples from the Renaissance to the present.

What, if anything, would you change about your professional life?

I would be kinder, gentler, and more sympathetic to the less talented and less popular student. I would give more time and attention to those in need. I would be a more thoughtful mentor to the younger, less experienced teachers and colleagues around me.

What is the best professional advice you were given early in your career?

Look for what's NOT in the score—i.e., seek the Original Source of Inspiration.

—John Finley Williamson

Let your gentleness be evident to all.

— Phil. 4:4

Be joyful always…give thanks in all circumstances.

— 1 Thes. 5:16-17

Legacy Conductors with Accompanist Kevin Tison. Conductors (L-R): Jerry McCoy, Ann Howard Jones, Donald Neuen, Charlene Archibeque, Rodney Eichenberger, Sigrid Johnson, Albert McNeil, Kenneth Fulton, Dale Warland, William Hatcher, Eph Ehly

You can't do too much, but you can do too many.

—George Lynn

How did you keep yourself fresh and enthusiastic during your career?

Maintain a positive attitude in spite of any and all circumstances. Stop teaching and start sharing. Choose the subject/music that excites you. Exercise. Maintain a healthy relationship with family, colleagues, friends, and neighbors. Look for the extra in the ordinary. Consider every waking moment an adventure in living.

Rodney Eichenberger is professor emeritus at the Florida State University. He joined ACDA in the early sixties and served as the local chair of the last ACDA convention in conjunction with MENC in 1968. He served as Northwest Region president from 1969 to 1973. He led graduate conducting programs at the University of Washington, the University of Southern California, and the Florida State University. His conducting DVDs are widely used in university conducting classes.

What do you think are the most striking changes (positive or negative) in choral music today?

When I first immersed myself in the world of choral music there were some outstanding choirs in the United States; now there they are all around us and at all levels. One of the most significant developments is that musicianship of conductors and singers has multiplied sevenfold.

What, if anything, would you change about your professional life?

Never could I have dreamed when I joined the high school choir in the second semester of my junior year that I might have the professional career I have enjoyed. I believe the fact that I knew so little when my colleagues with years of experience knew so much actually made me a better teacher, because I have always understood the student who hasn't experienced "it" yet. I have enjoyed so many exhilarating times in my life as a singer and conductor that it's difficult to list the most significant ones, but certainly conducting the Brahms *German Requiem* in the Sydney Opera House was among them.

Kenneth Fulton was alumni professor of choral studies at LSU for twenty-seven years, where he conducted the LSU A Cappella Choir and produced over one hundred graduates of advanced degrees in choral conducting. He was named one of LSU's distinguished professors and received the Sanders Alumni Professorship. Fulton conducted honor festival choruses, master classes, and conductor/teacher workshops in forty-seven states. He is a past president of the Southern ACDA Region, Texas ACDA, and Louisiana ACDA.

What do you think are the most striking changes (positive or negative) in choral music today?

The diversity of what we produce—so many more groups and music of all kinds that touch so many. Again, our collective interest in each other across cultures and peoples.

What choral trends, if any, do you wish were different and why?

We are living in an age where "new" music is readily available and accessible through the internet and the traditional sources. There are so many new and wonderful composers writing music that is challenging, clever, poignant—all of those qualities that appeal to our musical, intellectual, and aesthetic curiosities. And we can't wait to do them all! I get it, and I've been there myself. But I am concerned about "balance" in the longest and richest repertoire base of all the musical arts

stretching back many centuries in our programming. (Band conductors would love to have our repertoire base!)

In the hundreds of performances I've attended in the past ten years, the number of pre-1900 works performed seems to me to be far fewer than in the past (this is an impression and certainly not the result of any "hard" research). So I guess that I'm encouraging our professional responsibility, in this new age of musical accessibility, to explore and promote ways of ensuring the continued exploration in performance that continues to celebrate this wonderful repertoire legacy. At the very least, we should be constantly mindful and careful in our programming decisions to encourage performances that are inclusive and representative of that legacy.

William Hatcher resides in Rancho Bernardo, California, having retired after forty-three years of conducting and teaching choral music. He was the national president of ACDA from 1991 to 1993 and served as chair of the ACDA Endowment Trust. He was the recipient of the Howard Swan Award for lifetime achievement by the California ACDA and received the Weston Noble Award for Lifetime Achievement by North Central ACDA.

What do you think are the most striking changes (positive or negative) in choral music today?

The greater attention to and study of multicultural music is a very positive contribution to choral literature, but I am concerned that our traditional western literature might be slighted. I especially grieve the diminishing of music training in our public and private schools. We have, in a sense, lost generations of people who were once given the fundamentals of musicianship and a love of singing.

What, if anything, would you change about your professional life?

I was gratified to be chosen to teach at the undergraduate and graduate levels as early as I did, but I regret not furthering my graduate study. And, I did not fully appreciate and study the music of women composers whose works I believe are more deserving of attention, such as Ethyl Smyth, Thea Musgrave, Amy Beach, Judith Weir, and Carol E. Barnett.

What do you miss most about your job(s) after retirement?

Since retiring from full-time university teaching, I have served as a guest professor at different campuses and have directed church music programs for a number of years. I truly miss the singers, the curious ones, the smiles on their faces after performing, the thrill of getting a phrase just right, the deep power of a wonderful anthem, and the absolute change we all would feel in making good music. I would love to do the Bach *B Minor Mass* and the Britten *War Requiem* one more time!

Ann Howard Jones is professor emerita of music at Boston University. From 1981 to 1996, Jones was the assistant to the late conductor Robert Shaw with the Atlanta Symphony Choruses and the Robert Shaw Institute. She received the Robert Shaw Choral Award from ACDA (2011), the Distinguished Service to the Profession Award from Chorus America (2014), and the Metcalf Teaching Award from Boston University (2003).

What, if anything, would you change about your professional life?

When I stop to think about my professional life, there are so many things that have happened that I would neither have predicted nor planned for my-

self that I am less inclined to think about the things I would change than to feel overcome with gratitude for the chances I have had, for the confidence others have had in me, for the great and inspiring students and colleagues with whom I have worked, and for the mentors who helped shape my musical life.

Implied in the question is the premise that I had some kind of grand plan in mind when this whole thing started. The fact is, at the end of the master's degree, I applied for my first job, a sabbatical replacement. From then on and after marriage, I had one job after another (many part time) and went from one institution to another with my administrator husband, had a Fulbright professorship to Brazil, finished the DMA; and for the last fifteen to twenty years until retirement in 2016, my professional life was anchored by my work with Robert Shaw and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Choruses and my professorship at Boston University. Would I have planned it that way? Probably not. Would I have changed any of it? At the time, perhaps. In hindsight, it all worked out very well.

What is the most outstanding choral music experience you recall in your life?

It is hard to discount any of the wonderful music we had the opportunity to make under Robert Shaw. Perhaps one of the most meaningful was the performance of the 9th Symphony of Beethoven in the Schauspielhaus in East Berlin before the Berlin Wall came down. The audience was in tears, and many in the chorus were choking back emotions while trying to sing "Freude" and "Brueder" in that context.

Legacy conductors onstage with the choir.

An Interview with the 2019 National Legacy Directors Chorus Conductors

One performance among many that I will always cherish from my time at Boston University was the performance of the "War Requiem" of Benjamin Britten for the Eastern Division conference of ACDA. In a crowded Cathedral of the Holy Cross, that monumental work moved the audience so that at the end of the performance, there was total and complete silence. I stood there quietly and no one moved for the longest time. Very powerful.

This legacy conductor interview was part six in a series of articles published in *Choral Journal* in 2019 during ACDA's sixtieth anniversary year. Below is a list of all six parts and the issue month where you can read those articles in full.

June/July 2019, Part 1 - "ACDA Celebrates 20th Anniversary in 1979—Observations from Six Choral Conductors"

August 2019, Part 2 - "ACDA's 40-Year Journey (1959-1999)" by Russell Mathis

September 2019, Part 3 - "Interviews Through the Years: A Selection of Excerpts from *Choral Journal* Interview Articles" (Part 1 of 2)

October 2019, Part 4 - "Interviews Through the Years: A Selection of Excerpts from *Choral Journal* Interview Articles" (Part 2 of 2)

November 2019, Part 5 - "Repertoire Selections from National and Regional Conferences"

December 2019, Part 6 - "Interview with the 2019 National Legacy Directors Chorus Conductors"

Jerry McCoy is regents professor of music emeritus for the University of North Texas, where between 2000 and 2015 he led the UNT choral program to national and international acclaim while serving as director of choral studies and conductor of the A Cappella Choir. From 2007 to 2015, McCoy served as a member of the ACDA National Executive Committee, and he was national president from 2009 to 2011.

What do you think are the most striking changes (positive or negative) in choral music today?

The availability of the ever-expanding world of choral literature has deeply changed our art form. To experience literature from all sides of the globe deepens our human experience and expands our sense of shared humanity. My only caveat to this is that we also must maintain awareness of the core historical works that first launched our concepts of communal singing.

What, if anything, would you change about your professional life?

When I began college work back in 1982, I never dreamed I'd advance as far as I have, especially considering I was told by a music education professor that I should do something else with my life because I'd never make it as a conductor/teacher! The one thing I might want to change would be my initial response to that teacher's statement. Although I ultimately finished my BA degree in music and went on to earn my MM and DMA degrees as well as a graduate certificate in voice performance and a professional certificate in music education, that teacher's single comment drove me out of choral music making and study for eight years!

What is the most outstanding choral music experience you recall in your life?

One that first comes to mind happened in New York

City. As a new participant in the Robert Shaw Festival Singers, I was in my first rehearsal with Mr. Shaw in the NYC's Manhattan Center. Mr. Shaw was introduced, we did some vocal warm-ups, and launched into our first rehearsal of Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*—count-singing! Although I'd been in bands for many years as a student, I'd never been taught the techniques of count-singing. As I recall, we sang deeply into the work in this manner. After no more than six to eight minutes of this activity, all my concepts of unity of ensemble, unity of rhythmic singing, unity of musical expression, unity of tuning, simultaneity of and dialogue between voice lines were upended. That week-long experience reformatted my concepts of what I taught and how I approached choral music. What I learned that week still lies at the core of my work as a conductor/teacher/coach.

Donald Neuen retired in 2014 as distinguished professor of music/conducting emeritus after serving twenty years on the UCLA faculty. He was previously director of choral activities for the Eastman School of Music for twelve years. Beginning in 1963, Neuen held choral positions with the Universities of Wisconsin, Tennessee, Georgia State, and Ball State. He authored *Choral Concepts*, a choral conducting textbook. In 2017, Neuen retired as the conductor of the internationally televised Hour of Power Choir.

What do you think are the most striking changes (positive or negative) in choral music today?

I'm sorry to see the gradual demise of quality traditional church music in many areas nationwide, and a lessening of the Palestrina-to-Britten legacy in the programming of many school, university, and community choirs. Also, somewhat lacking, seems to be the consistent effort of teaching beautifully mature "soloistic vocal tone quality"—as established so perfectly by Robert Shaw and Roger Wagner.

What, if anything, would you change about your professional life?

I would have been far greater involved, on a consistent basis, in ACDA—and a closer colleague with other choral conductors. Having worked until I was in my eighties, I think I probably climbed most of the mountains that God had planned for me.

What is the best professional advice you were given early in your career?

From Robert Shaw: "90% will never be good enough."

Dale Warland has made an indelible impression on contemporary choral music, nationally and internationally. After disbanding the Dale Warland Singers in 2004, he served as music director of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra Chorale and the Minnesota Beethoven Festival Chorale. Warland's many honors include awards from ASCAP, the McKnight Foundation, Chorus America, and a Grammy nomination. In 2012 he was inducted into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame.

How did you keep yourself fresh and enthusiastic during your career?

A. Primarily through an ongoing effort of seeking out and commissioning, inspiring "new" choral works from emerging and established composers.

B. By seeking out choral works of the highest quality from times past that have been neglected or have fallen off the radar and that need to be "kept alive" and enjoyed by choirs and audiences far and wide. CJ

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Music as storytelling, based in an emotion -

One of Carlos' early memories of music is the Venezuelan tonada, which is an a cappella work song from the plains of his country of origin. His attraction is both to the beautiful melodies themselves, and to the storytelling aspect of them. He finds that young people today in particular, want to talk about their feelings, and how we process our feelings.

Carlos speaks about one of his pieces, "Ayúdame! (Venezuelan Plea for Life)"* that grew out of a very specific feeling:

"It started with feeling hopeless. How can I help from here?"

Seeing his country and his family suffering hunger, sickness, even thirst, left him feeling helpless, with so little he could do from afar (in Houston, studying composition, by then). He ended up recognizing that, although he could not directly change much, he could help with getting information out to more people through his music. In "Ayúdame!" Carlos "explored raw sounds," and says he feels the piece speaks with clear, straightforward simplicity, as a result. And he speaks to the emotional impact of doing this kind of creative work on the composer:

"As composers, we need to take care of ourselves, to not come out of the process all [emotionally] bruised."

Beyond the music of his native Venezuela, Carlos speaks of Arvo Pärt, Christopher Cerrone, Kevin Puts and Ivo Antognini as composers whose work he follows. He calls himself "a singer first," and frequently refers to the experience of singing in choirs as his fundamental impetus to compose. Initially writing almost exclusively "slow and beautiful pieces," he was ultimately challenged through his master's degree training to explore a broader range of emotions and tempos.

* *"Ayúdame!" is one of 8 scores by Carlos Cordero, endorsed as of exceptional value in the PROJECT : ENCORE catalog of contemporary choral music.*

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Carlos feels that writing music is like a conversation between the composer, the singers and ultimately the audience. When he is commissioned for a piece by a choir, he describes a sense of "sitting down together and work on this piece. It helps me to write it in a more personal way. [After all,] we (the composer and the performers) are the ones who spend the most time with the piece."

Carlos most frequently writes his own texts, though he has also turned to liturgical texts and those of historical poets, as well. Lately, he and award-winning song-writer and lyricist, Julie Flanders have been collaborating. One example of their collaboration is his "Holding Our Breath," winner of the 2020 Genesis Prize. They are looking together at a piece Carlos feels he needs to write . . .

"Sometimes I don't wait for a commission."

What is next? Carlos has a passion for working with autistic children, which is part of what he does when he is not composing. He is feeling a piece emerge that brings forward some of the basic language through which he communicates with these children: "Go and be kind." So stay tuned -

- Explore Carlos's biography and full compositional activity on his website: thehappychoir.com/
- For immediate access to their style, check out his eight PROJECT : ENCORE works here: ProjectEncore.org/carlos-cordero

Carlos Cordero

DEBORAH SIMPKIN KING, PHD.
Conductor
P:E Director and Founder
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The Choral Journal: An Index to Volume Sixty-Five

by Scott W. Dorsey

SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION

The classification numbers used below correspond to subject headings in all ACDA monographs utilizing bibliographic format, particularly *The Choral Journal: An Index to Volumes 1-18* (Monograph No. 3) by Gordon Paine, and *The Choral Journal: An Index to Volumes 19-32* (Monograph No. 7) by Scott W. Dorsey. Subject classifications with no entries for this volume year have been omitted from the listing. "BIB." "DISC." and REP." are abbreviations for bibliography, discography and repertoire. A comprehensive index with appropriate annotations and cross-references of all *Choral Journal* articles from 1979 to 2025 is available to ACDA members online at www.acda.org.

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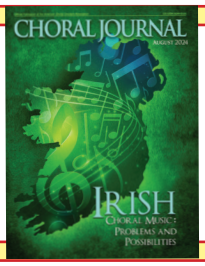

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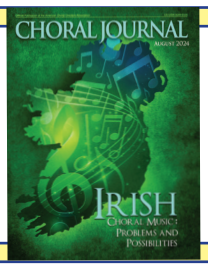

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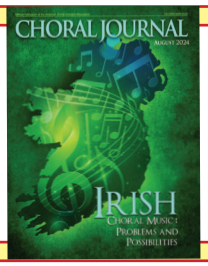

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