

SEPTEMBER 2017

# CHORAL JOURNAL

TITLE	COMPOSER	ERA, COUNTRY, STYLE	NO. OF APPEARANCES
IN REMEMBRANCE	AGUIAR, ERMIANI	20th C. SWE. FOLK SONG	8/20
AVE MARIA	ALFVÉN, HUGO	20th C. AM. ANTHEM	10/20
SICUT LOCUTUS EST	AMÉ, JEFFERY	20th C. AM. ANTHEM	14/20
REINCARNATIONS	ARCADELLI, JACQUES	16th C. FR. FIE. MOTET	9/20
REINCARNATIONS	BACH, J.S.	17th-18th C. GER. MOTET	14/20
FOUR SLOVAK FOLK SONGS	BARBER, SAMUEL	20th C. AM. PART SONG	8/20
THREE HUNGARIAN FOLK SONGS	BARBER, SAMUEL	20th C. AM. PART SONG	10/20
ALLELUIA	BARTÓK, BELA	20th C. HUN. FOLK SONG	8/20
HALLELUJAH FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES	DÁNYI, BELA	20th C. HUN. FOLK SONG	10/20
WEEP, O MINE EYES	BASLER, PAUL	20th C. AM. ANTHEM	8/20
ROSE TOUCHED BY THE SUN'S WARM RAYS	BETHOVEN, LUDWIG VAN	19th C. GER. ORATORIO	13/20
AVE MARIA	BERGER, JEAN	16th C. ENG. ANTHEM	12/20
CHESTER	BIEBL, FRANK	20th C. FRA. ANTHEM	11/20
DAVID'S LAMENTATION	BILLINGS, WILLIAM	20th C. GER. MOTET	12/20
DER ABEND	BRANIS, JOHANNES	18th C. AM. ANTHEM	10/20
HOW LOVELY IS THY DWELLING PLACE	BRANIS, JOHANNES	19th C. GER. PART SONG	8/20
IN STILLER NACHT	BRANIS, JOHANNES	19th C. GER. REQUIEM	13/20
O SCHÖNE NACHT	BRANIS, JOHANNES	19th C. GER. PART SONG	11/20
WONDROUS COOL THOU WOODLAND QUIET	BRANIS, JOHANNES	19th C. GER. PART SONG	12/20
RAINSONG	BRUCKNER, ANTON	19th C. AM. PART SONG	10/20
AVE MARIA	BRUCKNER, ANTON	19th C. AUT. MOTET	15/20
CHRISTUS FACTUS EST	BRUCKNER, ANTON	19th C. AUT. MOTET	10/20
LOCUS ISTE	BRUCKNER, ANTON	19th C. AUT. MOTET	14/20
OS JUSTI MEDITABITUR SAPIENTIAM	BRUCKNER, ANTON	19th C. AUT. MOTET	14/20
AVE MARIA	BRYCE, WILLIAM	20th C. AM. MOTET	10/20
THREE CONTEMPORARY MADRIGALS	BRYCE, WILLIAM	20th C. ESP. MOTET	14/20
AVE VERUM CORPUS	CARSON, WILLIAM	16th-17th C. PART SONG	11/20
AEC DIES	CARSON, WILLIAM	16th-17th C. PART SONG	9/20
ANGEL FOR THY SAVING	CARSON, WILLIAM	16th-17th C. PART SONG	11/20
THE LORD	CARSON, WILLIAM	16th-17th C. PART SONG	11/20

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**The Music of Randol Bass**  
Jonathan Griffith, Conductor  
Randol Bass, Composer-in-Residence



J. Griffith

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Jonathan Griffith, Conductor



J. Martin

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**Martin: Appalachian Winter**  
Joseph Martin, Composer/Conductor  
**Martin: Rhapsody in Bluegrass (World Premiere)**  
Joseph Martin, Composer/Conductor  
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H. Apfelstadt

**Mar 17**

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Hillary Apfelstadt, Conductor



D. Sharon

**Mar 25**

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Deke Sharon, Conductor and Creative Director



E. Whitacre

**Apr 8**

**The Music of Eric Whitacre**  
Eric Whitacre, Composer/Conductor



O. Gjeilo

**Apr 15**

**Gjeilo: Dreamweaver**  
**Gjeilo: Song of the Universal**  
Ola Gjeilo, Composer-in-Residence  
James M. Meaders, Conductor  
**Forrest: Jubilate Deo**  
James M. Meaders, Conductor  
**Rutter: Requiem**  
Milburn Price, Conductor



J. Meaders

**Apr 15**

**The Music of Eric Whitacre**  
Eric Whitacre, Composer/Conductor



E. Whitacre

**Apr 22**

**King's Singers 50th Anniversary Concert**  
Bob Chilcott, Conductor  
Simon Carrington, Conductor  
**The King's Singers, Special Guests**



The King's Singers

**May 25**

**Barnum: A Thousand Red Birds**  
Eric Barnum, Composer/Conductor  
**Featuring Middle School Voices**  
Reese Norris, Conductor



E. Barnum



W. Powell

**May 28**

**The Music of Rosephanye Powell**  
William Powell, Conductor  
Rosephanye Powell, Composer-in-Residence  
**Orff: Carmina Burana**  
Jonathan Griffith, Conductor



P. Choplin

**Jun 17**

**The Music of Pepper Choplin**  
Pepper Choplin, Composer/Conductor  
**Hayes: Spirit Suite 1, 2, & 3**  
Kevin McBeth, Conductor  
Andy Waggoner, Conductor



F. Núñez

**Jun 24**

**Music for Young Voices**  
**(World Premiere Work)**  
Francisco Núñez, Conductor



C. Grases

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Jonathan Griffith, Conductor  
Sir Karl Jenkins, Composer-in-Residence



J. Sebastian Valée

**Feb 19**

**Durufle: Requiem**  
Jean-Sebastian Vallée, Conductor  
**Mozart: Requiem**  
James M. Meaders, Conductor



M. Shaw

**Mar 11**

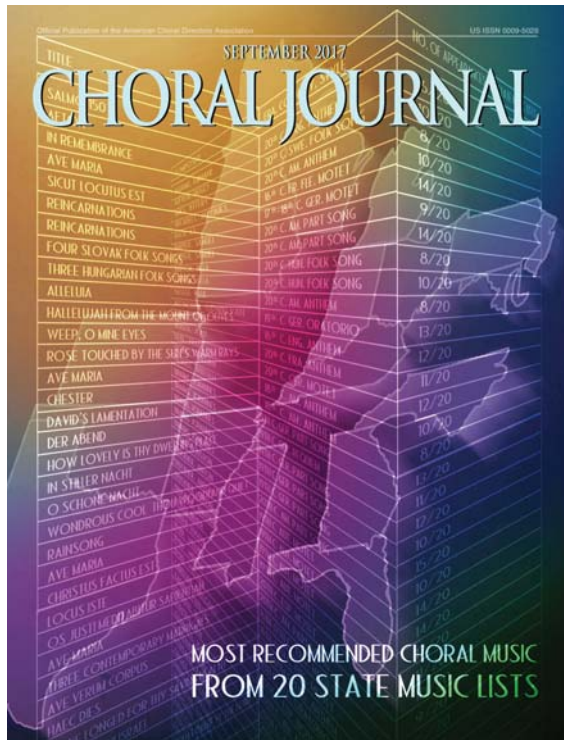
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**On the Cover** This month's cover displays a sample of the repertoire from the state music lists and a map of the majority of states represented.

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## ADVOCACY STATEMENT

Whereas the human spirit is elevated to a broader understanding of itself through study and performance in the aesthetic arts; and

Whereas serious cutbacks in funding and support have steadily eroded state institutions and their programs throughout the country;

Be it resolved that all citizens of the United States of America actively voice affirmative and collective support for necessary funding at the local, state, and national levels of education and government to ensure the survival of arts programs for this and future generations.

# From the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Tim Sharp

*Rah rah ah-ah-ah! Ro mah ro-mah-mah...*

Once upon a time in 2007, on my way to Queen's University Belfast for the "Understanding Bach's B Minor Mass" International Symposium of The Society of Musicology in Ireland, my flight from JFK in New York had to make an emergency medical landing soon after takeoff. After the meals had been served and

taken away, the aircraft began descending as the pilot announced we were making an emergency landing due to an ill passenger. We learned we would be landing in Goose Bay, Labrador.

After landing at a former military landing strip, we were told that due to a fuel situation, the plane would not be able to resume flight until mechanics from Minneapolis could be flown there to take care of a situation with the plane. The estimate was that we would be in Goose Bay for at least a full day longer.

If you know, or if you have heard the plot to the Broadway musical *Come From Away*, you get an idea of what happened soon after this unanticipated landing. The roughly 525 passengers were bussed to an old Air Force barracks, fed as best as could be accommodated, and given bunks for the night and what turned out to be a second night to come. Amazingly, the local support and townspeople took care of the physical needs of all of us quite well, and they even provided a bus for us to see the rather barren area and the one shop that existed in the area. The real challenge was a mental one—what to do with nothing to see, nothing to do, nowhere to go, and no real information about what was to come.

It was in this setting I put to test something most choral musicians believe in theory but probably rarely put to the test. In that situation, I looked at my crowd of fellow stranded, bored, frustrated hanger-mates and boldly asked, "Who would like to sing?" I did exactly what Garrison Keillor did on the opening night of our most recent ACDA National Conference and just start-



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ed walking among people, singing songs that I believed could comprise a common cannon and songs I trusted. I was not disappointed, and neither were the other travelers.

We know people can do this. You go to a ball game and hear thousands join in pitch and community to sing and chant something of a common belief. You see Lady Gaga in concert come to a point in her performance where she stops, points her microphone in the direction of the crowd of thousands, and they respond on pitch, on time, and on cue with, "Rah rah ah-ah-ah! Ro mah ro-mah-mah." You subtly realize in Act III of *Nabucco* that in addition to the chorus on stage singing the *Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves*, 10,000 audience members in the Verona stadium are humming the tune along with the cast.

Choral music is all around us just waiting to happen. I am thrilled that we have found and nearly perfected some of the boxes in which choral music is thriving, such as those like the one I experienced on my arrival in Belfast for the Bach B Minor Mass Symposium. I am also thrilled that ACDA has opened the way to broaden and multiply the boxes that can embrace more ways of singing in community, including impromptu big-sings in airplane hangers. Through the membership of ACDA, we will continue to innovate our way toward a truly choral culture.



sharp@acda.org

 TimothySharp

 American Choral Directors Association

## THE 12 PURPOSES OF ACDA

- To foster and promote choral singing, which will provide artistic, cultural, and spiritual experiences for the participants.
- To foster and promote the finest types of choral music to make these experiences possible.
- To foster and encourage rehearsal procedures conducive to attaining the highest possible level of musicianship and artistic performance.
- To foster and promote the organization and development of choral groups of all types in schools and colleges.
- To foster and promote the development of choral music in the church and synagogue.
- To foster and promote the organization and development of choral societies in cities and communities.
- To foster and promote the understanding of choral music as an important medium of contemporary artistic expression.
- To foster and promote significant research in the field of choral music.
- To foster and encourage choral composition of superior quality.
- To cooperate with all organizations dedicated to the development of musical culture in America.
- To foster and promote international exchange programs involving performing groups, conductors, and composers.
- To disseminate professional news and information about choral music.

—ACDA Constitution and Bylaws

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LOG

### WHAT'S ON TIM'S DAYTIMER?



- Sept 1-6 Manado Cantat 2017 Indonesia
- Sept 7-9 Kaimana-West Papua Choral Festival West Papua
- Sept 12 Belmont University Encore Award Nashville, TN
- Sept 13-16 German Choral Association Dortmund, Germany
- Sept 20 ACDA Executive Committee Oklahoma City, OK
- Sept 22 Epworth Villa Assisted Living Program Edmond, OK

### WHAT'S ON TIM'S IPAD?



- A Failure of Nerve:*  
*Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*  
Edwin H. Friedman
- Protecting Your Internet Identity*  
Ted Claypoole/Theresa Payton

### WHAT'S TIM'S LATEST APP?



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### WHAT'S TIM LISTENING TO?



- Occasional Oratorio, HWV 62*  
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# From the PRESIDENT



Tom Shelton

As I sit down to write this column, I've just returned from an exhilarating three days of ACDA Leadership Meetings in Oklahoma City. It is absolutely amazing to sit around a table with such creative and forward-thinking people who are striving to make positive change for our organization.

This meeting brought together the Executive Committee, National Board, and the seven ACDA Standing Committee Chairs: Diversity Initiatives—Eugene Rogers, chair; International Activities—TJ Harper, chair; Education and Communication—Lisa Billingham, chair; Advocacy and Collaboration—Robyn Lana, chair; Composition Initiatives—Dominick DiOrio, chair; Research and Publications—John Silantien, chair; and Repertoire and Resources—Amy Blosser, chair. Each standing committee provided a mission statement and goals for their committee. You are going to see great things happening throughout the coming year!

The Executive Committee spent time making revisions to our Constitution. These recommendations will be voted on by the membership in January 2018. Along with the projects seeded by ACDA's Fund for Tomorrow, ACDA has several innovative new programs in the works. Alicia Walker, Southern Division Past President, presented information about ChorTransform, which gives student chapters service learning opportunities with partnering choral directors who work in underserved choral settings. She developed and piloted this program at the University of South Carolina. NextDirection is a program developed by the Wisconsin ACDA Chapter that fosters and encourages talented youth to consider a career in choral music. In the coming months, you will be hearing more about both of these new programs. You can find out more information about supporting these and other ACDA initiatives through Fund for Tomorrow at [www.fundfortomorrow.org](http://www.fundfortomorrow.org).

Lynne Gackle, ACDA President-Elect, gave a brief overview of the next National Conference, which will be held in Kansas City, Missouri, February 27 – March 3, 2019. This marks the 60th Anniversary of ACDA! Lynne has already started working hard putting together the conference committee and outline programming ideas for this event.

In closing, I would like to take a moment to honor two officers on the Executive Committee who are rotating off the board. In the current structure, when you serve as National President of ACDA you are committing to a nine-year term. Jo-Michael Scheibe has just completed his term. He has provided great leadership, has served as mentor and role model for choral conductors, and shared visionary insight to help us move forward as an organization. JoAnn Miller just completed two four-year terms as National Treasurer. JoAnn is always the voice of reason and a calming presence around the table. Thank you, Jo-Michael and JoAnn, for your tremendous contributions to ACDA.



# From the EDITOR



Amanda Bumgarner

This month's cover article should be quite useful as choral conductors around the country prepare to begin the new school year. Jim Watson has compiled a comprehensive list comprising works that appear most frequently from selected high school state choral festivals. The guiding research question for his study was: what are the most frequently occurring works on state repertoire lists?

The article begins with a review of literature and includes a table of most recommended works, listed in alphabetical order by composer. A full list of the resources referenced in this article is available for download and online viewing at: [acda.org/files/BibliographyWatson2017.pdf](http://acda.org/files/BibliographyWatson2017.pdf)

Thomas Lloyd's article is an introduction to an important but rarely performed work by Edward Elgar: *The Apostles* (1903). The author presents an analysis of the historical context, possible autobiographical connections, literary and musical form, and thematic compositional techniques. Finally, Tom Wine shares an interview with composer and conductor Eric Whitacre. This interview is based on the questions used in an interview for the GIA series "Composers on Composing," (GIA Press). The interview has been updated and includes Whitacre's thoughts on the creative process, working with text, how conductors should approach his music, and conducting the 2017 ACDA High School Honor Choir.

This issue also includes book reviews, an article in the Student Times column, and a reprint of a *ChorTeach* article from the Spring 2017 issue written by Micah Bland. *ChorTeach* is ACDA's quarterly online publication edited by Terry Barham. This publication is a benefit of ACDA membership and is designed for those who work with amateur singers at all levels. A full index of all articles in the *ChorTeach* archives is available at <https://acda.org/Editor/assets/CHORTEACH%20INDEX.docx>.

I also want to remind readers of ACDA's scholarly scientific research journal: *The International Journal of Research in Choral Singing*. IJRCS is edited by Steven Demorest and is now accepting submissions for review. The editorial board welcomes manuscripts that reflect well-executed research employing quantitative, philosophical, historical, or qualitative methodologies. Submissions can be sent to [ijrcs@acda.org](mailto:ijrcs@acda.org). Find more information, including submission guidelines and journal archives, at <https://acda.org/IJRCS.asp>.

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# Letters to the EDITOR



I read with great interest Sharon Hansen's summary of voice education in choral settings. I am writing to point out one important omission from the column: the contribution of ACDA founder Harry Robert Wilson.

For many years at Teachers College, Columbia University, Dr. Wilson

shared his methods for developing voices/teaching voice in group settings with students at TC, methods that influenced the growth of school choral programs across the country. He summarized it all in his 1959 publication "Artistic Choral Singing," a text that should be added to the list of choral music education textbooks, 1940-2009.

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## 2018 REGION CONFERENCES

Region	Location	Dates
Northwestern Region	Portland, OR	March 7 - 10, 2018
Western Region	Pasadena, CA	March 14 - 17, 2018
North Central Region and Central Region	Chicago, IL	February 14 - 17, 2018
Southwestern Region	Oklahoma City, OK	March 7 - 11, 2018
Eastern Region	Pittsburgh, PA	March 7 - 11, 2018
Southern Region	Louisville, KY	February 21 - 24, 2018





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ASSOCIATION 

Scholars agree that the choir director's literature choice is crucially important. "Selection of literature . . . is an important key which unlocks the doors of success with our singers."<sup>1</sup> The repertoire is the vehicle from which vocal development and music learning occur. Many states provide a repertoire list from which choral music educators must choose literature for the high school state choral festival. Other states provide a body of repertoire as a recommended resource in literature selection. This music list is intended to steer directors toward quality choral music appropriate for the choral festival. For example, the Florida Vocal Association provides a repertoire list intended to provide directors with a resource and encourage the use of quality music.<sup>2</sup> These purposes highlight the value of the list as a resource for excellent choral music.

Musical literature is crucially important to a comprehensive vocal music education because music is the vehicle through which students learn. Scholars acknowledge literature choice as an important factor in a vocal music education. The American Choral Directors Association established "Repertoire & Resources," or R&R, as one of its seven standing committees. Many state choral festival rubrics include the category "selection" as a factor assessed in performance. In fact, many state vocal music associations elect a manager of repertoire resources, referred to in this article as the repertoire director. These directors update, expand, and revise the state music list, and they often oversee the approval process in literature choices for the state choral festival.<sup>3</sup> States rely on expert choices when providing music lists. In this process of identifying quality choral works, directors necessarily include and exclude choral works. The profession, then, is valuing one work and omitting another. This practice seems valid, considering the need for a robust vocal music curriculum, rich in the finest choral works.

“Selection of literature...is an important key which unlocks the doors of success with our singers.”

—Nancy Cox

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# Most Recommended Choral Music from 20 State Music Lists

JIM WATSON



Ray Robinson performed the same task in his standard anthology, *Choral Music*. He seeks to “document the evolution of musical style,” “illustrate the major categories of choral composition,” and “provide a convenient ... library of works by the most important composers of the genre.”<sup>4</sup> In this case, the reader receives Robinson’s expert opinion about which choral works are important to study. Again, the compiler includes valuable works while discarding others. Dennis Shrock follows the same pattern in his textbook *Choral Repertoire*, presenting “the choral music of the most significant composers from the Western Hemisphere throughout recorded history.” In addition, he explains that composers were selected according to their “impact on the development of choral music as an art form, and the selection of repertoire has been determined by the relative merit of compositions as reflected by critical acclaim, popularity and frequency of performance, and availability in academic and commercial publications.”<sup>5</sup> Choral music educators favor Robinson and Shrock’s choices because of their knowledge as choral music professionals.

In *Teaching Music through Performance in Choir*, Heather Buchanan and Matthew Mehaffey polled dozens of music educators “from across the globe” to share their recommendations for high school choirs.<sup>6</sup> In this case, the contributors include leading choral conductors from all educational and professional levels, recognized for excellence in the field. Here again, the reader benefits from expert opinion. The authors of anthologies, textbooks, and compilations perform a similar task. The method involves recommending works while excluding others. The process includes asking proficient choral conductors for their recommendations.

The high school state choral festival offers an appropriate use of recommended music lists. In addition, these event provides one way of promoting excellence in performance. For example, the Michigan School Vocal Music Association states its purpose for its State Choral Festival: “High School State Choral Festival is for the express purpose of improving, promoting, and supporting vocal music education by encouraging excellence in performance. It is a means of experiencing a larger educational setting on a statewide level and should be educationally valid for the student as well as the music director.”<sup>7</sup> This definition highlights the festival’s purpose as an educational tool for both students and directors.

This article contains a comprehensive music list, comprising works that appear most frequently from selected high school state choral festivals. The following research question guided this study: what are the most frequently listed works on state repertoire lists?

## Literature Review

Scholarship varies in philosophy, process, and criteria for literature selection, but common themes emerge. Authors can organize selection criteria into two categories: technical and aesthetic. Directors choose literature based on its technical merit and its aesthetic appeal,<sup>8</sup> and David Brunner’s article “Choral Repertoire: A Director’s Checklist” provides a list of questions for the selection process.<sup>9</sup> Four areas emerge from the literature. Directors select for aesthetic appeal, musical and practical value, pedagogical and educational value, and from the standard choral canon of important choral literature.

Kenneth Phillips, in his book *Directing the Choral Music Program*, lists four objectives when programming choral music: teaching comprehensively, performing a variety of styles, developing the singing voice, and entertaining the audience.<sup>10</sup> His first objective includes aesthetic experience, critical thinking, and self-awareness. For varying styles, He proposez teachers select a wide array of music from many musical periods because students need to understand and appreciate many genres and eras. In addition, directors should consider incorporating music history and theory into the choral classroom, necessitating judicious choices. It is also important to remember that students need to develop as singers; the repertoire should reflect this goal. Finally, there should be consideration of programming to entertain. Though a choral concert is primarily a recitation, Phillips recognizes some of the literature will be more accessible to audiences. In general, he argues for selection on the basis of all four of the discerned criteria in selecting literature: aesthetic appeal, music learning, vocal development, and selection from a choral canon.

James Jordan, Michele Holt, and Paul Head offer their approaches to repertoire selection. In *The School Choral Program*, Jordan lists eleven criteria directors may use when choosing appropriate choral literature.<sup>11</sup> This list includes vocal development, musical style, and balancing genres, among other considerations. Holt emphasize



es places a director might find literature, and here she includes music lists. Head highlights the audience's expectations, the poetry, compositional elements, and the aesthetic experience. Because of the textbook's various authors and approaches, this book also emphasizes all four discerned selection criteria.

Barbara Brinson, in *Choral Music Methods and Materials*,<sup>12</sup> lists practical suggestions in selecting repertoire. First, she includes musical growth. The author also encourages repertoire that provides a comprehensive picture of choral music's heritage. She continues with suggestions regarding enthusiasm for the music, range and tessitura issues, textual considerations, accompaniment, and other considerations. In her text, she includes aesthetic value, music learning, educational growth, and choices from a body of literature.

Hilary Apfelstadt lists quality, pedagogy, and age-appropriate considerations.<sup>13</sup> Guy Forbes provides several factors that affect repertoire selection—quality, vocal development, difficulty, aesthetic value, music education, age-appropriate literature, and artistic demands.<sup>14</sup> Rebecca Reames includes repertoire choice from the body of standard literature, but she writes from the perspective of choices for technical and aesthetic considerations.<sup>15</sup> These three authors encompass all four of the discerned areas in repertoire selection criteria.

Forbes interviewed, surveyed, and collected programs from high school choral directors in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia whom university choral directors and choral music educators identified as outstanding. He compared repertoire selection by style (i.e., Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Twentieth Century, Folk Music and Spirituals, Non-Western, and Pop/Rock). He found that the directors identified as outstanding performed many more classical, folk, and non-Western works with their advanced mixed ensembles than the general population of choral directors. This general population also programmed many more popular and rock selections overall. Finally, outstanding directors' programs included a wider array of historical selections, while the general population, at times, selected from fewer styles. Specifically, 5.1% of the general population selected no classical music, and 6.8% of this group selected music from only one historical period.<sup>16</sup>

Reames surveyed 263 Virginia choral directors who were members of the Virginia Choral Directors Association.<sup>17</sup> She compared the works choral directors performed with their beginning high school ensembles, with balanced repertoire from Larry Wyatt's compiled list of important eras and genres.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Reames planned to compare literature selection criteria between the general population and teachers identified as experts. She found that no beginning high school choir teacher from the general population programmed Baroque music, while experienced teachers tended to program a balance of literature from each era. In addition, all directors selected choral works using both technical and aesthetic criteria. Finally, she defined balanced programming as an equal representation of the five musical eras (e.g., 20% Renaissance, 20% Baroque, etc.); she then calculated the percentage of music teachers who favored each era. "Sixty-eight percent of the teachers reported that they programmed 20% or more music from the twentieth century. Classical music was 20% or more of the total literature programmed in 17.2% of the schools; Romantic literature was 20% or more in 12.7% of the schools; Baroque literature was 20% or more in 8.3% of the schools; and Renaissance literature was 20% or more in only 4.5% of the schools."<sup>19</sup>

Other research seems geared primarily toward selection for the aesthetic experience in musical performance. In his textbook *Teaching Choral Music*, Don Collins provides a summary of aesthetic experiences as they relate to the choral musician.<sup>20</sup> His summary includes musings from *Foundations of Music Education*.<sup>21</sup> Collins outlined six points regarding the aesthetic experience, and several relate to repertoire selection: feelings, intellect, focused attention, a firsthand experience, and enrichment. These aspects of the aesthetic experience are significant because directors engage students' entire person through the vehicle of the repertoire. Leonhard<sup>22</sup> asserts that selections vary in quality; he considers the degree to which a work elicits a response and assumes good works will express while lesser works will not, at least not to the same degree. He continues with an interesting discussion regarding value judgments in music and purports quality music will have an expert's craftsmanship, subtlety in musical elements, evoke strong feelings, and other merits.

Other research extols repertoire choices for vocal and pedagogical development. Collins's section regarding

# Most Recommended Choral Music

literature choice for adolescents considers level of difficulty, sociological and cultural appeal, and educational value. In addition, the author includes special considerations for middle school choirs, all-male choruses, multicultural influences, and religious music in the public school. Collins, and journal writers, including Christine Bass,<sup>23</sup> Michele Kaschub,<sup>24</sup> and others, advocate repertoire selection for educational value in developing musicianship and vocal technique.

Finally, several authors advocate choices from a standard body of literature. Like the English professor who requires benchmark reading lists, choral directors may propose performing works that have stood the test of time, introduce important historical genres, and provide exposure to the finest composers. Certainly these authors would advocate for selections that are musically, educationally, and aesthetically valid, but a primary concern is the finest music that is most revered, accepted, and performed.

One could argue this category includes music of the highest quality. Charles Leonhard and Robert William House argue for quality as concrete criteria in craftsmanship and expressiveness.<sup>25</sup> Choral music is valued as a quality art form, worthy of study. Some recognize a standard body of literature that is significant because of its ability to express the human condition. Whatever the case, some research is dedicated to preserving a canon of the benchmark works. Along these arguments, Jessica Rikard defines the standard choral canon. She includes works that are over 100 years old yet still performed, works that are well known in the field, high-quality literature, and music from the standard Western composers (e.g., Bach, Mozart, Brahms).<sup>26</sup>

Forbes, Reames, Wyatt, and others discuss a body of historically important works that come most recommended for high school choirs. Allison Harbeck Beavan follows with music lists as a rich resource in repertoire selection.<sup>27</sup> Robert Boyd, Diane Hires, and Mary Hopper list their favorite works that belong to the standard choral canon.<sup>28</sup> Their justification includes their 100-plus years of combined teaching experience, their agreement about the list, and the need to satisfy the State and National Standards.

Don Trott argues for exposing college students to a standard set of works, spanning many eras and genres because many future high school directors gain expo-

sure to an important set of pieces.<sup>29</sup> He asked an undisclosed number of ACDA Southern Division college choral directors to fill out a survey, including the title and composer for five to ten essential small works and two essential major works for undergraduate choral music education majors. The author found that college directors feel varied styles, accompaniments, genres, and languages make for the best literature choices. Trott lists the most recommended works and encourages an open dialogue about essential choral music.

Choral methods textbooks also offer advice regarding the director's pursuit of suitable choral literature. These authors advocate for selection from a body of important works. For example, Phillips offers specific resources in finding appropriate works and includes recommended choral music lists as a resource.<sup>30</sup> The choral anthologies provide a resource to facilitate the study of choral music. Robinson provides "a repertorial survey of music for the choral medium from Gregorian chant to the present . . . It is a guide to the development of the choral idiom."<sup>31</sup> Shrock chooses scores to illustrate works by important composers and styles. He picks benchmark works, lesser-known but artistically exemplary pieces and often-performed genres.<sup>32</sup> Both anthologies select from a body of standard choral literature.

Authors also discuss non-Western works. For example, Julia Shaw asks educators to seek primary musical source materials and consult with representatives from a studied culture.<sup>33</sup> In addition, she encourages choral music educators to survey or ask students from diverse cultural backgrounds to share their musical heritage. Similarly, Sharon Gratto lists challenges associated with reading sessions involving multicultural musics, acknowledging a similarity between this issue and directors' selecting world music for choral performance.<sup>34</sup> Many cultures pass music through oral tradition; arrangements may not provide enough information for authentic performance. In addition, sung languages are often unfamiliar. Finally, arrangements may lack authenticity and accuracy, being too far removed from the original source.

Fred Onovwerosuoke offers advice in programming African selections.<sup>35</sup> The author encourages consultation with African sources in preparing authentic performance elements. These challenges may explain why non-Western titles appear infrequently on high school



state choral festival repertoire lists. Vocal jazz also presents challenges associated with repertoire selection for high school state choral festivals. Several organizations do not allow vocal jazz programming.<sup>36</sup> Like non-Western music, jazz presents the issue of authenticity. Kirk Marcy notes that vocal jazz arrangements often stem from lead sheets.<sup>37</sup> He admits that some arrangements are faithful to the original while others deviate.

In sum, peer-reviewed scholarship clearly points to repertoire selection with four criteria: aesthetic appeal, musical and practical value, pedagogical and educational value, and from the standard choral canon of important choral literature. Scholars also explore non-Western cultures and vocal jazz through diverse works.

## Method

To create this listing of recommended choral music, I collected information on each title, composer, and historical style by accessing online repertoire lists and organizing relevant data. I then organized works by the number of list appearances, discarding works that lack eight appearances. The resulting compilation was organized in order by titles, composers, and styles that are represented most frequently.

This study was limited to those states that employ a vocal music association or provide an accessible choral festival repertoire list. I also limited repertoire to works for high school mixed ensembles. Because of the lack of consistency between states in determining degrees of difficulty, I did not consider this aspect.<sup>38</sup>

Beginning with the Federated State Organizations of the National Association for Music Education and concluding with the organizing body for the high school state choral festival, I identified accessible music lists.<sup>39</sup> States use varying methods to administrate the high school state choral festival. Several states utilize the High School Activities Association as the organizing body for its festival. For example, the Oregon Music Educators Association administers the OSAA Choir Championships, which is governed by the Oregon School Activities Association.<sup>40</sup> Other states employ the state chapter of the American Choral Directors Association for the choral performance assessment. The Arkansas Choral Directors Association manages the Arkansas Choral Performance Assessment.<sup>41</sup> Still others break the state into

regions associated with separate organizing bodies. The California Music Educators Association provides a useful illustration. The CMEA initiated the California State Choral Festival, which includes its section festivals with the Southern California Vocal Association. Participants from either organization's festivals must have received a unanimous superior rating to apply for the state choral festival.<sup>42</sup> Still others organize a single state vocal music association that is dedicated to developing an array of events that serve their state's choirs. These serve to organize choral festivals, honors choirs, and workshops for professional development.

I selected music lists representing these varying organizations and included the following twenty state lists: Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin. Since I limited repertoire to selections for mixed voices, I discarded works for treble, male, and three-part chorus. In addition, repertoire directors listed multiple published editions of a single work as appropriate for the festival, so



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I included only one occurrence of each work per state. I disregarded arrangers and arrangements of major works (i.e., I included the original work and composer only).

The same procedure held true for editions of works. I then modified the list for analysis. For example, I considered composer names. Some entries included “Bach,” while some listed “J.S. Bach,” and others showed “Bach, J.S.” For purposes of sorting, I aligned these and similar entries. Where possible, I deciphered specific movements from a larger work (e.g., from which mass did Haydn’s “Gloria” originate?). In this and similar cases, I searched the published editions for clarification. Where possible, I aligned these entries, verifying movements taken from larger works. I used the same process for works where the composer was not clearly listed, verifying the composer (e.g., John Ness Beck v. Andy Beck and Robert Shaw v. Kirby Shaw). Finally, I counted the number of specific titles, composers, and style appearances.

## Results

Table 1 shows works appearing *most frequently* on state repertoire lists—least seventeen appearances on the twenty music lists.

In addition, I counted composers’ appearances. For the most recommended music list, the following composers appear most frequently: G. P. da Palestrina ( $n = 8$ ), G. F. Handel ( $n = 7$ ), W. A. Mozart ( $n = 6$ ), Eric Whitacre

( $n = 6$ ), Johannes Brahms ( $n = 5$ ), Hans Leo Hassler ( $n = 5$ ), Joseph Haydn ( $n = 5$ ), Felix Mendelssohn ( $n = 5$ ), Z. Randall Stroope ( $n = 5$ ), Randall Thompson ( $n = 5$ ), and T. L. de Victoria ( $n = 5$ ).<sup>43</sup> The motet, with 59 titles, is the style that appears most frequently. I also determined the frequency of the following styles: part song ( $n = 42$ ), anthem ( $n = 34$ ), oratorio ( $n = 16$ ), Spiritual ( $n = 15$ ), folk song ( $n = 12$ ), and mass ( $n = 12$ ). I classified part songs as secular texts set after the 19th century. I classified madrigals, frottolas, and other Renaissance forms as one style, titled secular.

## Discussion

The compiled music list is a valuable resource of the most recommended works. Instead of reliance on expert opinion, I sought objective means in providing useable works ( $n = 208$ ). The twenty music lists included 13,145 total entries (e.g., 18 appearances from 18 different states count as 18 entries). All listed works come recommended, but I categorized the *most* recommended works. Choral directors identify one work as more suitable than another. One goal of the high school choral curriculum includes exposing students to important works in music history. The current study identified a comprehensive list of music that comes most recommended from multiple sources, free from publisher influence. In addition, the compiled list does not favor a single composer, style, or

Table 1. Most Frequently Appearing Works

Title	Composer	Era, Country, Style	# of Appearances on State Music Lists
<i>Cantate Domino</i>	Hans Leo Hassler	16 <sup>th</sup> century German motet	18/20 lists
<i>Ave Verum Corpus</i>	W. A. Mozart	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian motet	18/20 lists
<i>Adoramus Te</i>	attrib. to Palestrina	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	18/20 lists
<i>Locus Iste</i>	Anton Bruckner	19 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian motet	17/20 lists
<i>Three Madrigals</i>	Emma Lou Diemer	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	17/20 lists
<i>Sicut Cervus</i>	G. P. da Palestrina	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	17/20 lists
<i>Exultate Deo</i>	Alessandro Scarlatti	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	17/20 lists





preference. It is my hope that this list become a resource for both high school vocal music educators and university choral methods professors. In addition, I identified a benchmark list of works that repertoire directors may use. States that are currently revising their music lists may wish to reference this compilation for comparison.

The current study also identified an array of composers and styles that repertoire directors include in their lists. Teachers could explore this core group of composers and styles, searching out quality works for their music library and gaining curiosity to explore other works written by these composers in these and additional styles. ■

*Editor's Note:* A full list of the resources referenced in this article is available for download and online viewing at: [acda.org/files/BibliographyWatson2017.pdf](http://acda.org/files/BibliographyWatson2017.pdf)

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Nancy Cox, "Repertoire Standards: Children's Choirs—Selecting Choral Literature for Children's Choirs: A Closer Look at the Process, Part I," *Choral Journal* 47, no. 5 (November 2006): 101.
- <sup>2</sup> "Music List," Florida Vocal Association, Note from the Music Committee, accessed February 2, 2016, <http://fva.net/mpa/music-list/>.
- <sup>3</sup> Many states use an oversight committee. Others do not use a music list. I used the term "repertoire director" to refer to anyone serving in this role.
- <sup>4</sup> Ray Robinson, foreword in *Choral Music: A Norton Historical Anthology* (New York: Norton, 1978), xi.
- <sup>5</sup> Dennis Shrock, preface in *Choral Repertoire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), v.
- <sup>6</sup> Heather J. Buchanan et al., *Teaching Music through Performance in Choir* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2011), 138.
- <sup>7</sup> "High School State Choral Festival," MSVMA, accessed February 02, 2016, <http://msvma.org/HSSStateChoral>.
- <sup>8</sup> Rebecca R. Reames, "High School Choral Directors' Description of Appropriate Literature for Beginning High School Choirs," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 49, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 123, doi: 10.2307/3345864.
- <sup>9</sup> Taken from David L. Brunner, "Choral Repertoire: A Director's Checklist," *Music Educators Journal* 79, no. 1 (1992): 29-32, doi: 10.2307/3398573. Many others outline selection criteria.
- <sup>10</sup> Kenneth H. Phillips, *Directing the Choral Music Program* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 152-154.
- <sup>11</sup> Michele Holt and James Mark Jordan, *The School Choral Program: Philosophy, Planning, Organizing, and Teaching* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2008).
- <sup>12</sup> Barbara A. Brinson, *Choral Music Methods and Materials: Developing Successful Choral Programs (Grades 5 to 12)* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996).
- <sup>13</sup> Hilary Apfelstadt, "First Things First: Selecting Repertoire," *Music Educators Journal* 87, no. 1 (2000): 19-22, 46, doi: 10.2307/3399672.
- <sup>14</sup> Guy W. Forbes, "The Repertoire Selection Practices of High School Choral Directors," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 49, no. 2 (2001): 111, doi: 10.2307/3345863.
- <sup>15</sup> Reames, "High School Choral Directors' Description of Appropriate Literature for Beginning High School Choirs."
- <sup>16</sup> Guy W. Forbes, "The Repertoire Selection Practices of High School Choral Directors."
- <sup>17</sup> Reames, "High School Choral Directors' Description of Appropriate Literature for Beginning High School Choirs."
- <sup>18</sup> Larry D. Wyatt, "High School Choral Literature Selection: Composers, Genres, and Country of Origin" *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 1989, 8-9.
- <sup>19</sup> Reames, "High School Choral Directors' Description of Appropriate Literature for Beginning High School Choirs."
- <sup>20</sup> Don L. Collins, *Teaching Choral Music* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), 60-61.
- <sup>21</sup> Charles Leonhard and Robert William House, "Philosophical Foundations of Music Education," in *Foundations and Principles of Music Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book, 1972), 83-120.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Christine C. Bass, "Repertoire & Standards: Senior High Choirs—Vocal Transformation of the Secondary School Singer: The Choral Director as Vocal Coach," *Choral Journal* 49, no. 10 (April 2009): 49-53.
- <sup>24</sup> Michele Kaschub, "Repertoire & Standards Committee Reports: High School Choirs—Setting High Standards for the Selection of Quality Repertoire," *Choral Journal* 41, no. 1 (August 2000): 49-50.
- <sup>25</sup> Charles Leonhard and Robert William House, *Foundations and Principles of Music Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book, 1972), 102.

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- <sup>26</sup> Jessica Rickard, “Feeding the Choirs: The Beginner’s Recipe Guide to Selecting Repertoire,” *Choral Journal* 56, no. 1 (August 2015): 69-71.
- <sup>27</sup> Allison Harbeck Beavan, “Repertoire & Standards: Senior High Choirs—Quality Repertoire Selection: Forgotten Essential Resources,” *Choral Journal* 47, no. 2 (August 2006): 49.
- <sup>28</sup> Robert A. Boyd, “Teaching with Standards: Repertoire in the Age of ‘Glee’” *Choral Journal* 51, no. 7 (February 2011): 24-43.
- <sup>29</sup> Don Trott, “Repertoire & Standards Committee Reports: Essential Choral Repertoire for the Undergraduate Choral Music Major,” *Choral Journal* 44, no. 8 (March 2004): 46-48.
- <sup>30</sup> Kenneth H. Phillips, *Directing the Choral Music Program* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- <sup>31</sup> Ray Robinson, foreword in *Choral Music: A Norton Historical Anthology*.
- <sup>32</sup> Dennis Shrock, *Choral Scores* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), xiii.
- <sup>33</sup> Julia Shaw, “The Skin That We Sing: Culturally Responsive Choral Music Education,” *Music Educators Journal* 98, no. 4 (June 2012): 75-81, doi: 10.1177/0027432112443561.
- <sup>34</sup> Sharon Davis Gratto, “Repertoire & Standards: Ethnic & Multicultural Perspectives—The Challenges of Multicultural Choral Reading Sessions,” *Choral Journal* 49, no. 8 (February 2009): 57-58.
- <sup>35</sup> Fred Onovwerosuoke, “Contemplating African Choral Music: Insights for Non-Indigenes and Foreign Conductors,” *Choral Journal* 42, no. 10 (May 2002): 9-19.
- <sup>36</sup> “MSVMA—District Choral Festival,” MSVMA—District Choral Festival, 2016, Performance, accessed March 02, 2016, <http://msvma.org/DistrictChoral>.
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- <sup>38</sup> I compared the guidelines listed in note 36 with “OSAA Choir,” OSAA, 2016, accessed February 17, 2016, <http://www.osaa.org/activities/cho>, and other states. No system prevails.
- <sup>39</sup> “Federated State Associations—National Association for Music Education (NAfME),” NAFME, January 15, 2016, accessed February 20, 2016, <http://www.nafme.org/about/federated-state-associations/>.
- <sup>40</sup> “OSAA Choir,” OSAA, 2016, accessed February 17, 2016, <http://www.osaa.org/activities/cho>.
- <sup>41</sup> “Choral Performance Assessment/State Festival Manual (4),” Arkansas Choral Directors Association, accessed April 28, 2016, <http://arkcda.org/Manuals/cpamannual.htm>.
- <sup>42</sup> “California State Choral Festival,” 2016 State Choral Festival, [http://www.calmusiced.com/images/2016\\_State\\_Choral\\_Fest.pdf](http://www.calmusiced.com/images/2016_State_Choral_Fest.pdf).
- <sup>43</sup> I did not provide the entire twenty-state list, but the following composers appear most frequently: Johannes Brahms (380), G. F. Handel (257), W. A. Mozart (252), J. S. Bach (223), Joseph Haydn (206), and Felix Mendelssohn (202).
- <sup>44</sup> I made a good-faith effort to determine from which mass each state’s “Gloria” originated.
- <sup>45</sup> I combined Rachmanifhoff’s *Bogoroditse Devo* and the *Ave Maria* into one title with fourteen state music list appearances.

Table 2. Most Recommended Works

Composer	Title	Era, Country, Style	# of Appearances on State Music Lists
Aguiar, Ernani	<i>Salmo 150</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Argentinian anthem	16/20
Alfven, Hugo	<i>Aftonen</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Swedish folk song	10/20
Ames, Jeffery	<i>In Remembrance</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	8/20
Arcadelt, Jacques	<i>Ave Maria</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Franco-Flemish motet	10/20
Bach, J. S.	<i>Sicut Locutus Est</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century German motet	14/20
Barber, Samuel	<i>Reincarnations</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	9/20



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Barber, Samuel	<i>Sure on this Shining Night</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	14/20
Bartok, Bela	<i>Four Slovak Folk Songs</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Hungarian folk song	8/20
	<i>Three Hungarian Folk Songs</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Hungarian folk song	10/20
Basler, Paul	<i>Alleluia</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	8/20
Beethoven, Ludwig van	<i>Hallelujah from the Mount of Olives</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German oratorio	13/20
Bennet, John	<i>Weep, O Mine Eyes</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century English anthem	12/20
Berger, Jean	<i>Rose Touched by the Sun's Warm Rays</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century French anthem	11/20
Biebl, Franz	<i>Ave Maria</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century German motet	12/20
Billings, William	<i>Chester</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	10/20
	<i>David's Lamentation</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	8/20
Brahms, Johannes	<i>Der Abend</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German part song	13/20
	<i>How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German requiem	11/20
	<i>In Stiller Nacht</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German part song	12/20
	<i>O Schöne Nacht</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German part song	10/20
	<i>Wondrous Cool, Thou Woodland Quiet</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German part song	15/20
Bright, Houston	<i>Rainsong</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	10/20
Bruckner, Anton	<i>Ave Maria</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian motet	14/20
	<i>Christus factus est</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian motet	14/20
	<i>Locus Iste</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian motet	17/20
	<i>Os justi meditabitur sapientiam</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian motet	11/20
Busto, Javier	<i>Ave Maria</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Spanish motet	10/20
Butler, Eugene	<i>Three Contemporary Madrigals</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	9/20
Byrd, William	<i>Ave Verum Corpus</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> century English motet	15/20
	<i>Haec dies</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> century English motet	8/20
	<i>I Have Longed For Thy Saving Health</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> century English anthem	15/20
Carissimi, Giacomo	<i>Plorate filii Israel</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> century Italian oratorio	9/20
Casals, Pablo	<i>O Vos Omnes</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Spanish motet	13/20
Clausen, René	<i>All That Hath Life And Breath Praise Ye The Lord</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	14/20
	<i>Set Me As a Seal</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	16/20
Clements, John	<i>Flower of Beauty</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century English folk song	15/20
Copland, Aaron	<i>Ching-A-Ring Chaw</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American folk song	14/20
	<i>Promise of Living</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American opera	8/20

Table 2. Most Recommended Works continued

Composer	Title	Era, Country, Style	# of Appearances on State Music List
Croce, Giovanni	<i>Cantate Domino</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	9/20
Dawson, William	<i>Ain'a That Good News</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	13/20
	<i>Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	8/20
	<i>Ezekiel Saw de Wheel</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	10/20
	<i>Soon-Ah Will Be Done</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	15/20
Debussy, Claude	<i>Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder!</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century French part song	14/20
Dello Joio, Norman	<i>A Jubilant Song</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	15/20
Dennard, Brazeal	<i>Hush! Somebody's Callin' My Name</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	10/20
des Prez, Josquin	<i>El Grillo</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century French secular	9/20
Dickau, David	<i>If Music Be the Food of Love</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	13/20
	<i>O, My Love's Like a Red, Red Rose</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	10/20
Diemer, Emma Lou	<i>Three Madrigals</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	17/20
Donato, Baldassare	<i>All Ye Who Music Love</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian secular	13/20
Dowland, John	<i>Come Again, Sweet Love</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> century English secular	9/20
Durufle, Maurice	<i>Ubi Caritas</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century French motet	16/20
Dvorak, Antonin	<i>Gloria from Mass in D</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century Czechoslovakian mass	8/20
Erb, James	<i>Shenandoah</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American folk song	13/20
Farrant, Richard	<i>Call to Remembrance</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century English anthem	8/20
Fauré, Gabriel	<i>Cantique de Jean Racine</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century French sacred	16/20
Ferguson, Edwin	<i>Ye Followers of the Lamb</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	11/20
Finzi, Gerald	<i>My Spirit Sang All Day</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century English part song	13/20
Foltz, David	<i>She Walks in Beauty</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	9/20
Gallus, Jacobus	<i>Ascendit Deus</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Slovakian motet	8/20
Gawthrop, Daniel	<i>Sing Me To Heaven</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	13/20
Gerrish, John	<i>The Falcon</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	8/20
Gjeilo, Ola	<i>Ubi Caritas</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Norwegian motet	10/20
Goemanne, Noel	<i>Cantate, Sing to the Lord</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	10/20
Gorczycki, Grzegorz	<i>In Virtute Tua</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Polish motet	9/20
Hairston, Jester	<i>Poor Man Lazarus</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	10/20
Halloran, Jack	<i>Witness</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	11/20
Handel, G. F.	<i>Awake the Trumpet's Lofty Sound</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century English oratorio	9/20
	<i>Hallelujah, Amen</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century English oratorio	15/20
	<i>Let Their Celestial Concerts Unite</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century English oratorio	10/20

Handel, G. F.	<i>Music, Spread Thy Voice Around</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century English oratorio	9/20
	<i>Praise the Lord</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century English oratorio	11/20
	<i>Sing Unto God</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century English oratorio	14/20
	<i>Your Voices Tune</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century English oratorio	8/20
Hassler, Hans Leo	<i>Agnus Dei</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century German mass	11/20
	<i>Cantate Domino</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century German motet	18/20
	<i>Dixit Maria</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century German motet	8/20
	<i>Kyrie from Missa Secunda</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century German mass	12/20
	<i>Verbum caro factum est</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century German motet	8/20
Haydn, Joseph	<i>Achieved Is the Glorious Work</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian oratorio	8/20
	<i>Awake the Harp</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian oratorio	8/20
	<i>Gloria from Heiligmesse</i> <sup>44</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian mass	16/20
	<i>O Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian anthem	11/20
	<i>The Heavens Are Telling</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian oratorio	9/20
Hennagin, Michael	<i>Walking on the Green Grass</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American folk song	10/20
Hogan, Moses	<i>Battle of Jericho</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	11/20
	<i>Elijah Rock</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	9/20
	<i>I'm Gonna Sing 'Til the Spirit Moves in My Heart</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	11/20
Holst, Gustav	<i>I Love My Love</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century English folk song	12/20
Hovland, Egil	<i>Saul</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Norwegian anthem	8/20
Isaac, Heinrich	<i>Innsbruck, Ich Muss Dich Lassen</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century German secular	14/20
Ives, Charles	<i>Psalm 67</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	8/20
Jennings, Kenneth	<i>With a Voice of Singing</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	9/20
Johnson, Hall	<i>Ain't Got Time to Die</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	10/20
Kopylow, Alexander	<i>Heavenly Light</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century Russian anthem	9/20
Lange, Kinley	<i>Esto Les Digo</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American sacred	14/20
Lauridsen, Morten	<i>Dirait-On</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	15/20
	<i>O magnum mysterium</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American motet	14/20
	<i>O Nata Lux</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American motet	11/20
	<i>Sure on this Shining Night</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	10/20
Leavitt, John	<i>Festival Sanctus</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American mass	12/20
	<i>Kyrie</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American mass	8/20
Lotti, Antonio	<i>Crucifixus</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century Italian mass	13/20
	<i>Kyrie</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century Italian mass	11/20
	<i>Miserere mei</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	12/20



Table 2. Most Recommended Works continued

Composer	Title	Era, Country, Style	# of Appearances on State Music List
Manuel, Ralph	<i>Alleluia</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	13/20
Manz, Ruth	<i>E'en So Lord Jesus Quickly Come</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	9/20
Martin, Joseph	<i>Come to the Music</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	8/20
	<i>The Awakening</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	9/20
Martini, G. B.	<i>Domine, ad adiuvandum me festina</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	11/20
McCray, James	<i>Rise Up, My Love, My Fair One</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	9/20
Mendelssohn, Felix	<i>Die Nachtigall</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German part song	13/20
	<i>He, Watching Over Israel</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German oratorio	15/20
	<i>Heilig</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German motet	13/20
	<i>How Lovely are the Messengers</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German oratorio	11/20
	<i>There Shall A Star Come Out of Jacob</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German oratorio	10/20
Monteverdi, Claudio	<i>Ecco mormorar l'onde</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> century Italian secular	9/20
	<i>Si ch'io vorrei morire</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> century Italian secular	8/20
Moore, Undine	<i>Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	9/20
Morley, Thomas	<i>April is in My Mistress' Face</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century English secular	10/20
	<i>Fire, Fire My Heart</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century English secular	10/20
	<i>Sing We and Chant It</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century English secular	11/20
Mozart, W. A.	<i>Ave Verum Corpus</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian motet	18/20
	<i>Dixit Dominus</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian motet	10/20
	<i>Lacrymosa from Requiem</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian requiem	12/20
	<i>Laudate Dominum</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian motet	9/20
	<i>Laudate Pueri</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian motet	8/20
	<i>Placido e il Mar</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian opera	10/20
Mulholland, James	<i>A Red, Red Rose</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	11/20
Nystedt, Knut	<i>Cry Out and Shout</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Norwegian anthem	8/20
Offenbach, Jacques	<i>Neighbors' Chorus</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century French opera	11/20
Orbán, György	<i>Daemon Irrepiit Callidus</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Hungarian motet	13/20
Palestrina, attrib.	<i>Adoramus Te</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	18/20
Palestrina, G. P. da	<i>Alma redemptoris mater</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	11/20
	<i>Exultate Deo</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	8/20
	<i>O Bone Jesu</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	12/20
	<i>O Domine Jesu Christe</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	9/20
	<i>Super flumina Babylonis</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	12/20

Palestrina, G. P. da	<i>Tu es Petrus</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	11/20
	<i>Sicut Cervus</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	17/20
Parker, Alice	<i>Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	12/20
Passereau, Pierre	<i>Il est bel et bon</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century French secular	14/20
Patriquin, Donald	<i>J'entends le moulin</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Canadian folk song	8/20
Pfausch, Lloyd	<i>Musick's Empire</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	13/20
	<i>Sing Praises</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	8/20
Pitoni, G. O.	<i>Laudate Dominum</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	9/20
	<i>Cantate Domino</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	16/20
Poulenc, Francis	<i>Hodie Christus Natus Est</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century French motet	10/20
Praetorius, Michael	<i>Psallite</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> century German motet	14/20
Rachmaninoff, Sergei	<i>Ave Maria</i> <sup>45</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Russian motet	14/20
	<i>Bogoroditse Devo</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Russian motet	8/20
Rossini, Gioachino	<i>O salutaris hostia</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	8/20
Rutter, John	<i>Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century English part song	14/20
	<i>For the Beauty of the Earth</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century English anthem	13/20
	<i>Good Ale</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century English folk song	9/20
Saint-Saens, Camille	<i>Praise Ye the Lord of Hosts</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century French oratorio	10/20
Scarlatti, Alessandro	<i>Exultate Deo</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	17/20
Schubert, Franz	<i>Der Tanz</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian part song	8/20
	<i>Lebenslust</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian part song	14/20
	<i>Sanctus</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century Austrian mass	12/20
Schumann, Robert	<i>Zigeunerleben</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century German part song	16/20
Schütz, Heinrich	<i>Cantate Domino</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> century German motet	8/20
Seiber, Matyas	<i>Three Hungarian Folk Songs</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Hungarian folk song	8/20
Shaw, Martin	<i>With a Voice of Singing</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century English anthem	11/20
Smith, W. H.	<i>Climbin' Up the Mountain</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	9/20
	<i>Ride the Chariot</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American Spiritual	11/20
Spencer, Williametta	<i>At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	13/20
Stanford, C. V.	<i>The Blue Bird</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> century English part song	8/20
Stanford, Charles	<i>Beati Quorum Via</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> century English motet	10/20
Stravinsky, Igor	<i>Pater Noster</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Russian motet	8/20
Stroope, Z. Randall	<i>Amor de mi Alma</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	11/20
	<i>I Am Not Yours</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	10/20
	<i>Inscription of Hope</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	9/20
	<i>Lamentations of Jeremiah</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American motet	12/20

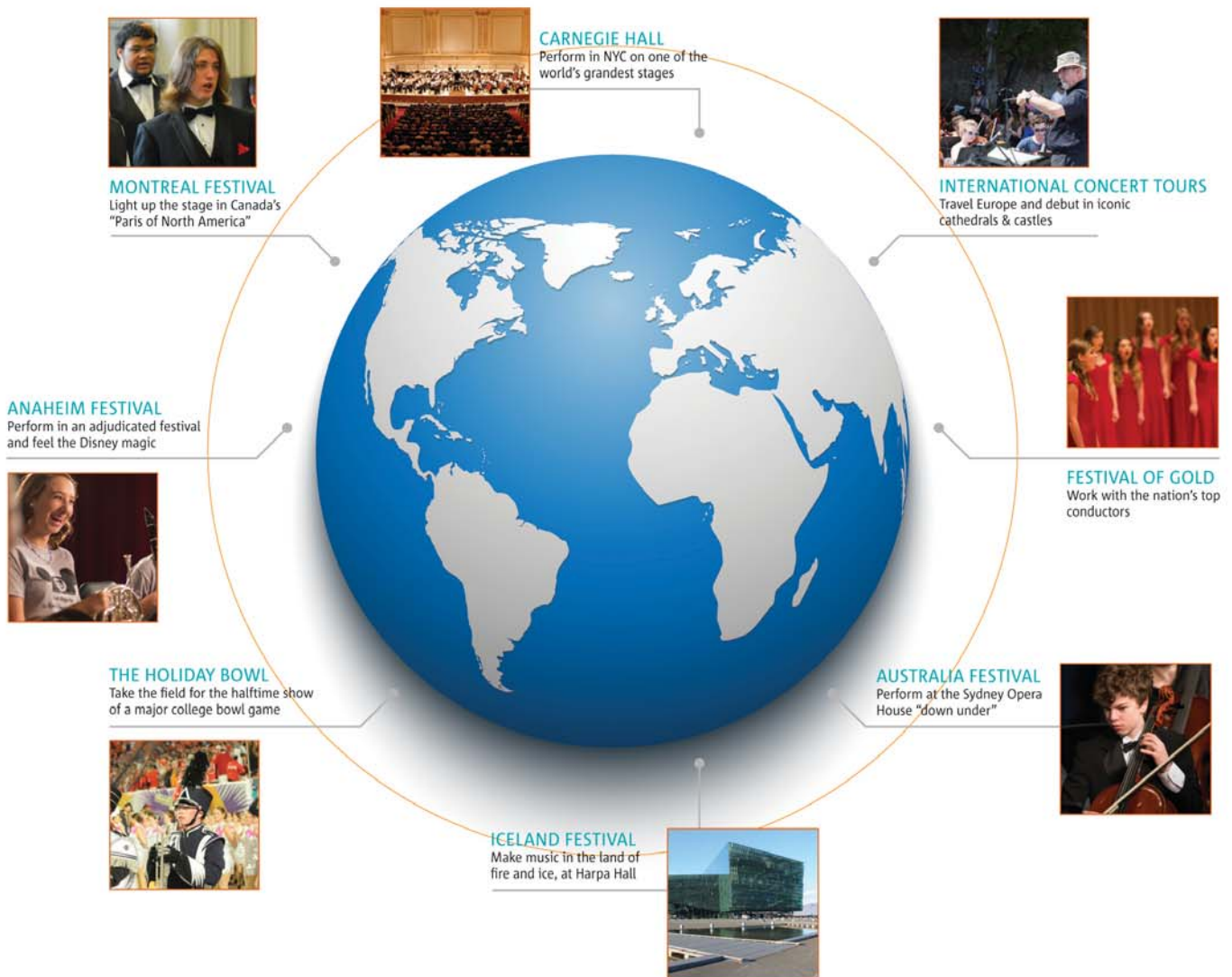
Table 2. Most Recommended Works continued

Composer	Title	Era, Country, Style	# of Appearances on State Music List
Stroope, Z. Randall	<i>Omnia Sol</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	8/20
Sweelinck, J. P.	<i>Hodie Christus Natus Est</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> century motet	15/20
	<i>Venite, exultemus Domino</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> century Dutch motet	9/20
Tallis, Thomas	<i>If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century English anthem	12/20
Thomas, André	<i>Keep Your Lamps</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American spiritual	12/20
Thompson, Randall	<i>Alleluia</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	14/20
	<i>Choose Something Like a Star</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	11/20
	<i>The Last Words of David</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American anthem	12/20
	<i>The Paper Reeds By the Brook</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	10/20
	<i>The Road Not Taken</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	13/20
Ticheli, Frank	<i>Earth Song</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	8/20
	<i>There Will Be Rest</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	12/20
Vecchi, Orazio	<i>Fa Una Canzona</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian secular	15/20
Viadana, L. G. da	<i>Exultate justi in domino</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	12/20
Victoria, T. L. de	<i>Ave Maria</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Spanish motet	15/20
	<i>Jesu dulcis memoria</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Spanish motet	13/20
	<i>O magnum mysterium</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Spanish motet	16/20
	<i>O vos omnes</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Spanish motet	12/20
	<i>Vere Languores</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> century Spanish motet	10/20
Vivaldi, Antonio	<i>Cum Sancto Spiritu</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century cantata mass	12/20
	<i>Domine fili unigenite</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century cantata mass	12/20
	<i>Gloria in excelsis Deo</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century cantata mass	12/20
Warlock, Peter	<i>Benedicamus Domino</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century English motet	8/20
Whitacre, Eric	<i>A Boy and A Girl</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	9/20
	<i>Lux Aurumque</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American motet	9/20
	<i>Sleep</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	9/20
	<i>The Seal Lullaby</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	11/20
	<i>Water Night</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	8/20
	<i>With a Lily in Your Hand</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century American part song	8/20
Willan, Healey	<i>Rise Up, My Love, My Fair One</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century Canadian folk song	10/20
Williams, R. V.	<i>Rest</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century English part song	8/20
	<i>Sweet Day</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> century English part song	12/20
Zingarelli, N. A.	<i>Go Not Far From Me, O God</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century Italian motet	9/20



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# Edward Elgar's *The Apostles*

## A Major Oratorio Standing Outside Tradition

Thomas Lloyd

Edward Elgar's *The Apostles* (1903) stands apart from the oratorio genre in its presentation of the mission of Christ viewed primarily through the eyes of Mary Magdalene and Judas Iscariot, two relatively minor characters who are given few words of their own in the Bible. The title of the oratorio itself is belied by featuring a woman who was not one of "The Twelve" and a man who was the one apostle to defect from the rest. There may be biographical resonances in Elgar's highly unusual choice to make these two "outsiders" the main subject of an oratorio ostensibly concerned with the life of Christ and his inner circle of disciples. Some biographers have suggested that Elgar perceived his own origins as a working-class Catholic outside the more aristocratic Anglican cultural environment he needed

to impress as a composer. Some of his letters and quoted remarks also suggest that he struggled with his own faith more than it may have appeared from his public persona.<sup>1</sup>

Elgar's distinctive use of Wagnerian *leitmotif* technique permeates the expansive form of the work, resulting in an exceptional example of the late Romantic juxtaposition of the cosmic and the personal in a multi-layered texture. Though *The Apostles* has been widely recognized as one of Elgar's most important works, it has rarely been performed in the United States. While its inspired prologue is still sung as an anthem in some churches (a choral setting of Luke 4:18, where Jesus quotes Isaiah to proclaim his mission to the poor) the remainder of the work is seldom heard in American concert halls or churches.<sup>2</sup>



### A Provincial Composer Rises to Prominence

When Edward Elgar (1857-1934) began composing *The Apostles* in 1900 at the age of forty-three, he had recently received his first broad public acclaim for the masterful *Enigma Variations* for orchestra. Until then, this largely self-taught Catholic son of a provincial pianotuner had made his way in the overwhelmingly Anglican, upper-class culture of the London music world as a freelance musician and little-recognized composer. An outwardly shy and self-conscious man, Elgar's mature oratorios soon to follow (*The Dream of Gerontius* and *The Apostles*) reflect some of the internal struggles he faced throughout his life related to class, religious identity, and personal faith.

*The Dream of Gerontius* was a setting of a poem by the Catholic Cardinal John Henry Newman that had been important to Elgar for many years. It explores the death, final judgement, and entrance into Purgatory (with the promise of heaven) of its faithful subject. (Antonin Dvořák had once conferred with Newman about setting the poem but put it aside.<sup>3</sup>) While Elgar's *Gerontius* later came to be performed more frequently than *The Apostles* (especially in the United States), its first performance was less than ideal for a number of production reasons unrelated to the music. It was also perceived by critics as representing a distinctly Catholic, emotive piety that seemed foreign to the more restrained ethos of the Protestant majority dominant in Britain at that time.

### Elgar and Victorian Views of Music and Musicians

When we look at a photograph of Elgar from this period [see above], we might never guess the sense of social inferiority and artistic insecurity he is said to have felt by those who knew him well. According to Elgar scholar Byron Adams, "To mitigate his feelings of exclusion, Elgar modeled his public persona on the popular image of the "English Gentleman": his bearing was rigid and quasi-military; he strove for emotional reticence in society; his politics were Tory and staunchly Imperialist; his clothing was immaculately tailored; and at times he disavowed any knowledge of, or interest in, his own unfashionable [because it was considered effeminate] musical profession."<sup>4</sup>



Elgar in 1900, the year he started work on *The Apostles*

While some of Elgar's music (such as his *Pomp and Circumstance* marches) reflects this hyper-masculine, emotionally controlled aesthetic, his great oratorios and extended symphonic works reveal a more expressively complex inner world capable of both grand and intimate statements.

### The Origins of *The Apostles*

In *The Apostles*, Elgar sought to focus on how the early disciples of Jesus were ordinary men and women like himself—not of high education or social status—who faced serious doubts about their faith, as did he. He long treasured the words of a boyhood teacher in his Catholic school, Mr. Reeve, who said, "The Apostles were poor men, young men, at the time of their calling; perhaps before the descent of the Holy Ghost not cleverer than some of you here." Elgar wrote that he had started collecting texts for his oratorio from that time.<sup>5</sup>

Instead of using preexisting texts such as the pietistic Catholic text he used for his *Dream of Gerontius*, Elgar decided to compile his own text solely from the Bible, with hopes this would be more acceptable to his predominantly Anglican audience. The essential stories from the gospels are represented in the libretto (though often not

# A Major Oratorio Standing Outside Tradition

in the foreground).

It was so important to Elgar that *The Apostles* be better understood and respected by the Protestant English establishment than was *Gerontius*, that he took the unusual step of publishing separate, detailed analyses of the music and of the libretto in advance of the first performances. He asked his publisher and close personal friend, A. J. Jaeger, to write a detailed thematic musical analysis of the entire work<sup>6</sup>; and he asked C. V. Gorton, the Anglican cleric who helped him compile the biblical texts used, to write an extended programmatic analysis of the libretto.<sup>7</sup>

## Judas, Mary Magdalene, and Peter

Following his primary interest in the personal struggle with religious belief, Elgar initially planned to build the oratorio around three central characters who would represent distinct approaches to faith in Christ: one who despairs of faith in pursuit of worldly success (Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Jesus), the repentant woman of the world who is converted (Mary Magdalene), and the forthright believer and visionary leader (Peter, founder of the church).

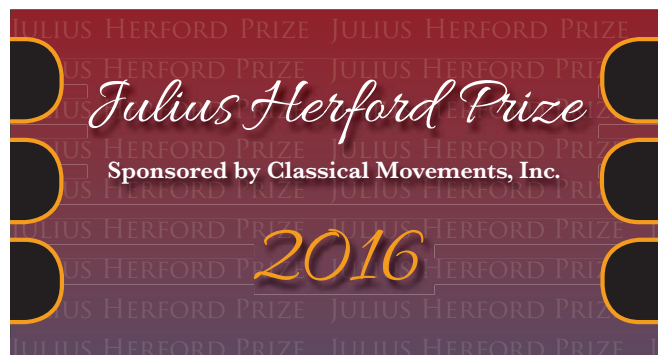
In the end, Elgar narrowed the scope of *The Apostles* to Mary and Judas, leaving Peter for his next oratorio, *The Kingdom*. The entire second half of Part I of *The Apostles* is devoted to a portrayal of Mary Magdalene as a social outcast who moves from doubt to faith in the presence of Jesus. Her prominence in the oratorio is all the more remarkable because she was not considered one of the twelve (all male) Apostles in the Gospel accounts (even though she was named as a biblical witness to the empty tomb).

The first half of Part II is devoted to Judas Iscariot. Elgar was inspired by a theological view of his time that saw Judas as a genuine believer from the start who went astray by becoming possessed by worldly ambition for himself through Jesus. In this view, Judas misunderstood Jesus's mission as one of political ambition in *this* world, in opposition to the Romans, rather than spiritual fulfillment in the next. A letter to the priest C.V. Gorton who had helped him compile the libretto may reveal something of the composer's close identification with the character of Judas, the ultimate "outsider": "To my

mind *Judas'* crime or sin was despair; not only the betrayal, which was done for a worldly purpose. In these days, when every 'modern' person seems to think 'suicide' is the natural way out of everything (Ibsen, etc., etc.) my plan, if explained, may do some good."<sup>8</sup>

It is also worth noting that while the central events of Christ's passion, crucifixion, and resurrection are represented in *The Apostles*, they are given very short scenes of mostly symbolic importance, serving primarily to provide the necessary bridge from the extended scene of Judas to the climactic chorus of the Ascension. As a result, there is little in the music itself or in Elgar's statements about it to indicate he was looking to the Bach passions or even the nineteenth-century English oratorio for models.

When scholars and critics have made comparisons to other works, they have looked primarily to Wagner (to



## Call for Nominations

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whom Elgar himself referred frequently). In particular, comparisons are made to *Parsifal* for the aesthetic of its treatment of religious themes and to the *Ring Cycle* as a model for the cycle of oratorios Elgar originally planned for *The Apostles*, *The Kingdom*, and *The Last Judgment*. Though the third oratorio in this cycle was never completed, Elgar did incorporate a few common leitmotifs across *Gerontius*, *The Apostles*, and *The Kingdom*.<sup>9</sup>

Assigning such extended roles to characters about whom little information is provided in the Bible presented a special challenge for Elgar in meeting his goal of using only biblical texts. What words could he have them sing, since none were assigned them in the scriptures? For this he sought help from his friend Canon Gorton, constructing monologues by piecing together lines from various books of the Hebrew and Greek Testaments, most especially the Psalms and Wisdom literature. (See Table 1 for examples of these monologues, with scriptural attributions.<sup>10</sup>)

Table 1.

The texts assigned to Mary Magdalene and Judas Iscariot are drawn from a number of biblical sources:

**Mary Magdalene** [Part I: rehearsal # 86-94]

‘Ye that kindle a fire,  
walk in the flame of your fire,  
walk among the brands that ye have kindled.  
This shall ye have of Mine hand;  
ye shall lie down in sorrow.’ (Is. 50:11)

God of Israel, the soul in anguish,  
the troubled spirit, crieth unto Thee.  
Hear and have mercy. (Is. 24:8)

The mirth of tabrets ceaseth;  
the noise of them that rejoice endeth,  
our dance is turned into mourning. (Lam 5:15)

‘This shall ye have of Mine hand;  
ye shall lie down in sorrow.’ (Is. 50:11)

**Mary Magdalene** [Part I: rehearsal # 107-111]

Who stilleth the raging of the seas,  
Who maketh the storm a calm? (Ps 107:29)  
Thy providence, O Father, governeth it: (Ps. 77:19)  
for Thou hast made a way in the sea,  
and a safe path in the waves;  
shewing that Thou canst save from all danger.

Thy face, Lord, will I seek. (Ps. 27:8)  
Thou hast not forsaken them that seek Thee. (Ps. 9:10)  
Thy Face, Lord, will I seek.  
My soul followeth hard after Thee:  
Thy right hand upholdeth me.  
Thy Face, Lord, will I seek. (Ps. 63:8)

**Judas** [Part II: rehearsal # 176-184]

‘Rest from the days of adversity.’  
Never man spake like this Man; (John 7:46)  
He satisfied the longing soul,  
and filled the hungry soul with goodness. (Ps. 107:9)

Our life is short and tedious,  
and in the death of a man there is no remedy;  
neither was there any man known to have returned  
from the grave.  
For we are born at all adventure,  
and we shall be hereafter as though we had never  
been;  
for the breath in our nostrils is as smoke,  
and a little spark in the moving of our heart,  
which being extinguished, our body shall be turned  
into ashes  
and our spirit shall vanish as the soft air  
and our name shall be forgotten in time,  
and no man have our work in remembrance;  
and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud,  
and shall be dispersed as a mist,  
that is driven away with the beams of the sun,  
and overcome with the heat thereof.  
(Wisdom of Solomon 2:1-4)



## Elgar's View of Jesus and Kramskoi's Painting

While Elgar's choice of Mary and Judas for central roles may be unexpected, it is not surprising that the next most important solo role is assigned to Jesus. In this case, there is a particular painting that we know represents Elgar's sense of Christ's loneliness, the 1872 painting "Christ in the Wilderness" by the Russian painter Ivan Kramskoi. When the composer saw this painting during a visit to his friend C. V. Gorton, Elgar described it as "my ideal picture of the Lonely Christ as I have *tried* (and tried hard) to realise...." Leon Botstein writes of this painting, "Christ is real, but he seems to be an everyman, a real human figure whom we can personally identify as both human and divine. He is real and ideal, modern and timeless, particular and general. The viewer of the painting, like the listener and participant in Elgar's music, is elevated by identification, through art, all consonant with a noble idealistic tradition."<sup>11</sup> Elgar's depiction of Jesus is intensely personal but elevated beyond sentimentality by the nobility of his music. Elgar shared postcard copies of this painting with the singers before the first performance.<sup>12</sup>

## New Models for the English Oratorio

The formal and harmonic innovations of Richard Wagner took longer to gain favor in England than in France. Victorian sensibilities of late nineteenth-century Anglican England found the rootlessness of his harmonic chromaticism to be unduly sensual, ruminative, and effeminate, preferring instead the more emotionally stable language of traditional diatonic harmony.

However, the poetic, sensitive, and more freely expansive artistic imagination of Elgar was deeply influenced by performances he heard of Wagner's *Parsifal* and *Ring Cycle*. He was inspired to create a distinctively English form of this new language in his mature symphonies and oratorios. In retrospect, it could be said that it was Elgar's very *independence* from the Victorian national style that led to him becoming the first internationally acclaimed "English" composer since Purcell and an important influence on a long line of prominent English composers who followed in his footsteps, including Vaughan Williams, Holst, Howells, and Britten.

The first performance of *The Apostles* was on October



*Ivan Kramskoi – Christ in the Wilderness (1872)*

14, 1903, at the Birmingham Musical Festival, a triennial festival that had also commissioned Elgar to compose *Gerontius*, *The Kingdom*, and *The Music Makers* (the latter for its final season, in 1912). With a much more advantageous rehearsal situation than faced with *Gerontius*, and the advance publication of listening guides by Jaeger and Gorton, the premier under the composer's direction gave a strong representation of the work. This performance received generally positive reviews, along with some qualifications about his unconventional treatment of the subject matter and his use of Wagnerian leitmotif technique.<sup>13</sup>

This early success led to frequent performances in England up to the time of the composer's death in 1934. Between 1934 and its revival in the early 1970s, *The Apostles* was not performed as frequently as *Gerontius*.<sup>14</sup> It is now a staple of the repertoire of British choirs, including four excellent commercial recordings (see discography at end of this article) but has yet to find a place in the repertoire of choirs in the United States.

## The Overall Form and Thematic Relationships

The scene titles given in the score are not particularly helpful in discerning the distinct tableaux in the overall form of the oratorio. The outline in Table 2 (with approximate durations of the major scenes) shows several

parallels that can be viewed as forming an overall chiasmic structure, a form viewed as symbolic of the cross in Christian iconography generally and the works of J. S. Bach in particular.<sup>15</sup> Even without explicit evidence of Elgar's intentions in this regard, the weight of the major choral/orchestral sections at the beginning and the end of the oratorio, the balance of the extended Mary Magdalene and Judas scenes in the middle, and the shorter movements separating these larger scenes on both sides seems too obvious to be accidental.

Table 2. Chiasmic structure in *The Apostles*

Part I

- [A] Prologue/Calling of the Apostles (27')
- [B] Beatitudes (8')
- [C] Mary Magdalene's scenes (22')
- [D] Concluding chorus (6')

Part II

- [D] Introduction (5')
- [C] Judas' scenes (22')
- [B] Crucifixion/Resurrection (9')
- [A] Ascension/Final chorus (17')

What follows is a description of the flow of the scenes and the major themes that tie them together:

## Part I

### Prologue

An extended orchestral/choral prelude introduces the underlying theological premise of the work (Christ's calling the Apostles to a mission of mercy and forgiveness) through a series of eight primary melodic themes—the Spirit of the Lord, Christ the Man of Sorrows, The Gospel, Preachers, Christ's Mission, Comfort, The Church, Divine Christ—shown in Figures 1-8.



**Figure 1.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, Part I. Prologue, mm. 2–5. The Spirit of the Lord  
Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.



**Figure 2.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, 3 measures before rehearsal 3. Christ, The Man of Sorrows  
Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.



**Figure 3.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, 1 measure before rehearsal 3. The Gospel  
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**Figure 4.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 3.  
Christ's Mission

Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.



**Figure 5.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*,  
2 measures before rehearsal 5.  
Preachers

Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.



**Figure 6.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 5.  
Comfort

Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.



**Figure 7.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, 1 measure after rehearsal 7.  
The Church

Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.



**Figure 8.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 9.  
Divine Christ

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## I. The Calling of the Apostles

*The Dawn/Morning Psalm/Calling of the Apostles:*

*In the Mountain—Night [Christ alone at prayer]:*

Of the three gospel passages concerning the calling of the Apostles, Elgar chose the one that describes Jesus as first going off alone to pray all night (Luke 6:12). Though praying on a mountain rather than on the shore, this scene is the first to conjure the image of Christ alone as depicted in the Kramskoi painting. We hear only the orchestra except for brief solo pronouncements from the Angel Gabriel. Two more of Christ's key themes are introduced (Figures 9 and 10) along with extension of the important Comfort theme (seen in Figure 6).

This tableaux begins with a brief section for the sounding of the Shofar at morning worship in the Temple, which serves to situate the calling of the Apostles in the Jewish synagogue. It is followed by unison chanting of Psalm 92 using an "Ancient Hebrew melody" (to be heard again toward the end of Part II) (Figure 11).

The psalm setting transitions to one of the grandest orchestral passages in the oratorio (Rehearsal 32-36), which sets the scene for the calling of the Apostles, announced by the tenor evangelist. The Apostles (represented by the chorus, led by the soloists John, Peter, and Judas) respond with enthusiasm to Jesus's call. The primary themes are The Apostles (Figure 12), Choosing the Weak (Figure 13), The Apostles' Faith (Figure 14), and The Church, seen earlier in Figure 7. The voice of the character of Jesus is dramatically heard for the first time



**Figure 9.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 15.  
Prayer of Christ

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**Figure 10.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*,  
2 measures before rehearsal 20.  
Christ's Loneliness

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**Figure 11.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 27.  
The face of all the East

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toward the end of the scene (“Behold, I send you forth”).

## II. By the Wayside

This is a relatively brief, pastoral section, setting the Beatitudes as a call-and-response recitation between Jesus and the Apostles, here represented by the chorus and a quartet of soloists (Mary, Mother of Jesus, John, Peter, and Judas). For the first time, we begin to see Judas’s perception of Jesus’s mission as distinct from the others.

## III. By the Sea of Galilee

These are the longest and most complex scenes of Part I both musically and dramatically, with Mary Mag-

dalene squarely at the center; the music is continuous to the end of Part I.

*In the Tower of Magdala/Fantasy [storm scene]:*

Observing Jesus in the distance from her tower, Mary Magdalene prays fervently for forgiveness for the sins of her past life. Her themes include Anguished Prayer, Forgiveness, and Sin.

Mary then sees her past life played out in a choral/orchestral “Fantasy” incorporating some of Elgar’s most colorful and virtuosic orchestration. Mary looks on from her tower as Jesus calms the sea in a vividly orchestrated storm scene, paralleling the “storms” of her own past life. In response to these visions from her tower, Mary passionately declares her faith and intention to encounter Jesus (“Thy face, Lord, will I seek”).



**Figure 12.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 39.  
The Apostles  
Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.



**Figure 13.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 40.  
Choosing the Weak  
Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.



**Figure 14.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 44 (Peter).  
The Apostle’s Faith  
Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.

## *In Caesarea Philippi:*

The Wayside theme (Figure 15) from the earlier Beatitudes scene brings the listener's perspective down from the tower to Jesus and the Apostles below.

Jesus establishes Peter as the "rock" on which he will build his church (Figure 16), leading to a grand, climac-

tic response from the chorus incorporating the Christ's Prayer, Gospel, and Apostles themes (page 100 in the vocal score). Jesus then grants the Apostles the "keys of the kingdom of heaven": the power to forgive sin.

This section leads without pause to the entrance of Mary Magdalene, again singing, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." First, however, she encounters Mary, Mother of Jesus, who comforts her with one of the most poignant ariosos of the entire oratorio ("Hearken, O daughter") (Figure 17).

When Mary then approaches Jesus, the women of the chorus rebuke him for allowing such a sinner to draw near. Mary nevertheless pleads for forgiveness ("Hide not thy face far from me") and is forgiven by Jesus, who sings the words "Go in Peace" over the emblematic three chords of the "Christ the Man of Sorrows" theme (Figure 18).

## *Concluding Chorus*

An expansive final chorus brings Part I to a close ("Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope"). In contrast to the

Figure 15. Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 111.

Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.

Figure 16. Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 113.

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Figure 17. Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 120.

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Figure 18. Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, 1 measure before rehearsal 127.

Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.





## [Within] the Temple:

At this point, Elgar notably switches the voice of the evangelist from the tenor to the contralto (the same soloist for the role of Mary Magdalene in Part I). After her introduction, there is a riveting scene where Judas sings freely of his belated realization of guilt (“My punishment is greater than I can bear”) over the chorus’ ritualistic singing of a hymn-like song of judgment (“O Lord God, to Whom vengeance belongeth”).

## Without the Temple:

Judas then leaves the Temple for an extended soliloquy. As he philosophically contemplates his mortality and his misguided actions and condemnation, he is interrupted by cries of “Crucify him!” in the distance. The full orchestra intones the three-chord Judas theme (see Figure 21, almost an inversion of the Christ the Man of Sorrows theme). Jaeger’s commentary suggests this is the moment of Judas’s suicide. Back in the Temple, the chorus concludes their hymn with the words “He shall bring upon them their own iniquity.”

The final three scenes of Part II are continuous, briefly representing the crucifixion of Christ and the empty tomb, followed by an expansive chorus for the Ascension.



**Figure 21.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, 3 measures before rehearsal 192.

Judas

Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.



**Figure 22.** Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 236.

Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.

## V. Golgotha

The orchestra alone intones the last words of Christ on the cross (“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” as indicated in the score) to which the chorus responds, “Truly this was the Son of God.” This leads to a surprising and revelatory cadence on F<sup>b</sup>-major. Mary, Mother of Jesus, and John (the Beloved Disciple) then share a ruminative conversation on the meaning of Christ’s suffering.

## VI. At the Sepulchre

With the soloist who sang Mary Magdalene in Part I again heard as the narrator, the disciples (now silent) approach the empty tomb, where they hear the men of the chorus chant the “Ancient Hebrew melody” (see Figure 11) from the opening scene of Part I as they again greet the Dawn. In response, a female chorus of Angels is heard, recalling the angelic chorus commiserating with Peter at his denial. They sing their first of many “Alleluia” and announce, “He is not here, but is risen.”

## VII. The Ascension

Elgar does not skimp on the closing chorus of his visionary oratorio. As with the concluding chorus of Part I, the finale begins ruminatively. But this time, instead of remaining subdued, Elgar employs a complex layering of texture to create the most extended and climactic section in the work. The sopranos and altos of the chorus represent the Angels in Heaven, the tenors and bases represent the Apostles on Earth, with the soloists Mary, Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John mediating between the two. The resulting texture involves multiple central themes being sung and played, often simultaneously (see Figures 27 and 28). This section surely ranks among the most glorious culminating passages in Late Romantic literature. Elgar allows the scene to slowly recede before introducing one last theme—the “Christ’s Peace” theme from *Gerontius* (Figure 22) concluding with the words, “In His love and in His pity He redeemed them.”

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## Elgar's Distinctive Use of the "Leitmotif"

A primary aspect of Wagner's formal innovations was the emblematic use of melodic themes or chord progressions to provide symbolic signposts in the midst of the greatly expanded dramatic arch of his operas. An earlier use of such a device that might have also influenced Elgar can be found in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, though Wagner would not acknowledge the Jewish-born composer's influence on himself. Elgar would have heard *Elijah* frequently as one of the three most regularly performed oratorios in England (alongside Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *The Creation*).

There are obvious parallels between Mendelssohn's central placement of the psychological/spiritual torment of the character of Elijah and Elgar's development of the characters of Judas and Mary Magdalene. But Elgar goes further than either of his predecessors in the

use of this method. His representational melodies are often longer and are frequently used in combination with other themes. Elgar's *leitmotifs* fully permeate *The Apostles*, with no fewer than sixty-two distinct motives labeled in Jaeger's monograph.<sup>16</sup>

While most themes appear only a few times in one or two scenes, there are a number that appear at significant points throughout the work. The themes vary quite widely in length, expressive affect, and in their differing melodic/rhythmic/harmonic contours, as can be seen from the examples displayed in this article. For the purpose of introduction, we will look more closely at two of the most important themes and examine how Elgar uses the *leitmotif* technique to create a cohesive overall form made up of interwoven strands of psychological narrative.



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**Thematic Example 1:**  
**“Christ, The Man of Sorrows”**

One of the central themes of *The Apostles* is a progression of three chords heard in the orchestra in twelve different passages.<sup>17</sup> These comprise a striking set of “color” chords with an easily identifiable, if fleeting, harmonic profile (see Figure 2). Supporting the rising whole-tone melody in the upper voice, the first and third chords are a simple G<sup>b</sup> major triad in first inversion and a B<sup>b</sup>7 chord. But the second chord, unnamable as a functional harmony, contains a B<sup>b</sup> that forms a dissonant diminished octave equidistant from both the bottom B<sup>b</sup> and the upper A<sup>b</sup>. This unstable passing harmony in the middle of two otherwise stable chords has an unmistakable identity to the ear.

The clarity of this musical icon, created by Elgar with the label “Christ, The Man of Sorrows” (attributed by

his publisher and close friend Jaeger) can be observed by comparing some of the twelve passages where this central harmonic theme appears.<sup>18</sup> Elgar weaves the theme into the fabric of various scenes in quite different ways:

- as an important symbol of Christ’s identity introduced at the culmination of other themes: in the orchestral introductions for Christ alone “In the Mountain – Night” early in Part I (Figure 23) and the Garden of Gethsemane scene at the beginning of Part II (Figure 24);
- to highlight moments when an individual Apostle expresses faith in Christ: Mary Magdalene in response to the Beatitudes (page 61 in the vocal score), when she first sees Jesus walking on the waters to calm the storm (page 87 in the vocal score), and for Peter’s declaration of faith (see Figure 16);



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- as a sharp reminder when an Apostle denies faith in Christ: Peter’s denial (Figure 20) and Judas’s suicide (page 165 in the vocal score);
- at pivotal moments in Jesus’s life and mission: his calling of the Apostles (Figure 25), his absolution of Mary Magdalene near the end of Part I (see Figure 18), his ascension near the end of Part II (page 181 in the vocal score) and the final declaration from Heaven of the completion of his mission (pages 194-196 in the vocal score).

Figure 23 shows rehearsal 14 of Edward Elgar's *The Apostles*. The score is for Oboe 1 and Oboe 2, with a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Pastoral theme' and the key signature is one flat. The score includes markings for [E. H.], [Oboe 1], [Oboe 2], [Strings] CMoS, and [Hns., WW].

Figure 23. Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 14.  
Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.

## Thematic Example 2: “The Prayer of Christ”

In contrast to the brevity of the “Christ, The Man of Sorrows” theme, “The Prayer of Christ” theme (Figure 9) is more typical of the kind of extended leitmotif found throughout *The Apostles*. These longer melodic phrases are often sequenced together with themselves or with other themes to provide the underpinning for grand, climactic

Figure 24 shows rehearsal 143 of Edward Elgar's *The Apostles*. The score is for piano accompaniment, featuring a 'Christ, The Son of God theme'. The tempo is marked 'Più lento' and 'molto rit.'. The score includes markings for [Strings, Tbn., Tuba], [Hns., WW], and [CMoS].

Figure 24. Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 143.  
Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.

Figure 25 shows 6 measures before rehearsal 56 of Edward Elgar's *The Apostles*. The score is for a vocal line (Jesus) and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Jesus' and the key signature is one flat. The score includes markings for [Horns], [Timp.], and [Vln. 2 & Vla.] CMoS.

Jesus  
He that re - ceiv - eth you, re - ceiv - eth Me,

Figure 25. Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, 6 measures before rehearsal 56.  
Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.

passages. The characteristic chromatic harmonic progression that is part of the theme's identity allows Elgar to shift tonal centers for dramatic effect.<sup>19</sup>

The importance of "The Prayer of Christ" theme is underscored by the two rising whole steps that begin its melody, the same pattern that defines the top voice of the "Man of Sorrows" theme. Its chromatically shifting harmonic progression also parallels that of the shorter theme. The ascending pattern of these central two themes, along with the ascending thirds at the end of the "Spirit of the Lord" theme (introduced in the opening measures of the whole work) point to the importance given by Elgar to the Ascension as the subject of the expansive choral finale at the end of the oratorio.

Looking at the six occurrences of the "Prayer of Christ" theme<sup>20</sup> it is remarkable that Elgar uses this theme not only in moments of the most intimate contemplation (such as Figure 26 from "In the Mountain—Night") but as a central theme in much more extroverted, expansive phrases toward the end of each Part. In these passages, the full solo, choral, and orchestral forces are brought to bear and other themes are layered in counterpoint to the Prayer theme.

One passage near the beginning of the Ascension chorus marked *pianissimo* from beginning to end for the full orchestra and chorus (Figure 27) combines both of these "public" and "private" sides of Elgar's palette and personality. A semi-chorus of angels in heaven sings the

words of Jesus's farewell prayer using the Prayer theme ("Holy Father, keep those whom Thou hast given me...") while the soloists sing the "Apostles' Faith" theme to proclaim the evangelical mission of the Apostles ("All the ends of the worlds shall remember and turn unto the Lord...").

### The Perspective of the Outsider

A consideration of Elgar's sense of being an "outsider" as a composer with a working-class Catholic background in a musical world dominated by upper class Anglicans may lead us to better understand why he made the unusual choice of placing two biblical outsiders as the central characters in an oratorio about a group of establishment insiders into whose circle they did not quite fit.

Even later in life, when his international status was beyond question, Elgar expressed intense grievance at his perceived lack of acceptance due to his working-class, self-educated Catholic roots. In 1922, when asked to contribute money toward the gift of a dollhouse for Queen Mary, he protested to his friend Sassoon, "I started with nothing, and I've made a position for myself! We all know that the King and Queen are incapable of appreciating anything artistic; they've never asked for the full score of my Second Symphony [dedicated to the father of the reigning king, Edward VII] to be added to

15 Adagio ♩ = 56  
[Strings, Horns, & Harp]

*pppp*

Figure 26. Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 15.


Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.

# A Major Oratorio Standing Outside Tradition

the Library at Windsor. But as the crown of my career I'm asked to contribute to—a DOLL'S HOUSE for the QUEEN!! I've been a monkey-on-a-stick for you people long enough. *Now I'm getting off the stick.*"<sup>21</sup>

From what we know about the likely intensity of Elgar's private inner life and faith, his mastery and remolding of the Wagnerian *leitmotif* techniques provided an ideal vehicle to bring the vivid life of his spiritual imagination to the concert stage. Elgar's pervasive use of symbolically weighted melodic material enabled him not only to hold together an otherwise broadly expansive form but to bring the "private" spiritual ruminations of his central characters to the foreground against the background of a few selected narrative events that are presented on the "public" stage outside of the characters' internal imaginations.

Elgar was known both for composing some of the best-known public works in the repertoire (such as the

*Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1*) and being closely identified with a work with an explicitly "private" meaning (his *Enigma Variations*<sup>22</sup>). A major oratorio with characters and text such as *The Apostles* provides a rare opportunity to experience those opposing dimensions interwoven in the same work. That Elgar's *The Apostles* is so rarely performed in the United States is the true enigma. 

## Complete Recordings of Edward Elgar's *The Apostles*

Adrian Boult conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir with soloists Helen Watts, Sheila Armstrong, Robert Tear, Benjamin Luxon, Clifford Grant, John C. Case; Connoisseur Society, 1976; His Master's Voice, 1974.

221  
IN HEAVEN: Semi-chorus (SAA) – Prayer of Christ Theme  
*pp mistico*

S  
"Ho - ly Fa - ther, keep through Thine own name those whom

A1  
*pp mistico*  
A2  
"Ho - ly Fa - ther keep those whom Thou hast

ON EARTH: Unison Solo Quartet – Apostle' Faith Theme  
[Mary, Mary-Magdalene, John and Peter]  
*pp molto legato*

Solo Quartet  
All the ends of the world shall re - mem - - - ber and turn un - to the Lord:\_\_\_\_\_

S  
Thou hast giv - en Me,\_\_\_\_\_ that they may be one, as We are."

A1  
A2  
given Me, that they may be one, as We are."

Solo Quartet  
— And\_ all the Kin - dreds of the na - tions shall wor - ship be - fore Thee.

Figure 27. Edward Elgar, *The Apostles*, rehearsal 221.

Public Domain, London: Novello & Co., 1903.

Richard Hickox conducting the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus with soloists Alison Hargan, Alfreda Hodgson, David Rendall, Bryn Terfel, Stephen Roberts, Robert Lloyd; Colchester, Essex, England: Chandos, 1990.

Richard Cooke conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra and Canterbury Choral Society with soloists Anna Leese, Louise Poole, Andrew Staples, Colin Campbell, Robert Rice, Roderick Williams; England: Independent Music & Media Alliance, 2005.

Mark Elder conducting the Hallé Orchestra and Choir with soloists Rebecca Evans, Alice Coote, Paul Groves, Jacques Imbrailo, David Kempster; England: Hallé, 2012.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See Byron Adams, "The 'Dark Saying' of the Enigma: Homoeroticism and the Elgarian Paradox," *19th-Century Music*, XXIII/3 for references to more recent discussions about Elgar's sense of social and religious identity.
- <sup>2</sup> This article is a result of the author's experience conducting a performance of *The Apostles* on April 10, 2016, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Doylestown, PA, with the Bucks County Choral Society, the Riverside Symphonia, and soloists Sally Wolf, Suzanne DuPlantis, Timothy Bentsch, Jason Switzer, Daniel Teadt, and Kevin Deas. This may have been the first full performance in the Philadelphia region. There is no record of a performance of this work in the archives of the Philadelphia Orchestra. An online study guide created for the audience can be found at <[http://www.buckschoral.org/news-and-archives/resources/edward-elgar-the-apostles-a-study-](http://www.buckschoral.org/news-and-archives/resources/edward-elgar-the-apostles-a-study-guide)

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# A Major Oratorio Standing Outside Tradition

guide/intro/>. During the preparation of this article, the work received a rare New York performance by Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall: [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/14/arts/music/review-elgars-the-apostles-american-symphony-orchestra-leon-botstein.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/14/arts/music/review-elgars-the-apostles-american-symphony-orchestra-leon-botstein.html?_r=0).

<sup>3</sup> Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1984), 291.

<sup>4</sup> Byron Adams, 223. Adams quotes friends and acquaintances of Elgar such as Siegfried Sassoon recalling that “Elgar led me to the music-room and played the piano for nearly an hour .... It was splendid to see him glowing with delight in the music, and made me forget (and makes me regret now) the ‘other Elgar’ who is just a type of ‘club bore.’ At lunch, regaling us with longwinded anecdotes (about himself), he was a different man. The real Elgar was left in the music-room” (*Siegfried Sassoon, Diaries: 1923-1925*, ed. Rupert Hart-Davis [London, 1985]151-152).

<sup>5</sup> Robert J. Buckley, *Sir Edward Elgar* (London: The Bodley Head, 1905), 8, 74; as quoted in the forward to Edward Elgar, *The Apostles—An Oratorio*, Elgar Complete Edition (London: Novello, 1983).

<sup>6</sup> A. J. Jaeger, *The Apostles by Edward Elgar, Op. 49, Book of Words with analytical and descriptive notes* by A. J. Jaeger (London: Novello, 1903).

<sup>7</sup> C. V. Gorton, *The Apostles: A Sacred Oratorio by Edward Elgar: An Interpretation of the Libretto by C.V.Gorton, M.A., Rector of Morecambe, Hon. Canon of Manchester* (London: Novello, 1903).

<sup>8</sup> Manuscript letter of July 17, 1903, cited by Jerrold Northrop Moore in *Edward Elgar – A Creative Life* (London: OUP, 1984) 295.

<sup>9</sup> See Figure 8 for an example of a theme common to *The Apostles* and *Gerontius*. For an extended discussion of the relationship of Elgar’s oratorios to preceding models, see Charles Edward McGuire, *Elgar’s Oratorios—The Creation of an Epic Narrative* (England: Ashgate, 2002) 34-38.

<sup>10</sup> For complete attributions of scriptural texts to the libretto of *The Apostles*, see <<http://www.buckschoral.org/news-and-archives/resources/edward-elgar-the-apostles-a-sudy-guide/intro/>>. I owe thanks to Ruth Geiger (a singer in the Bucks County Choral Society) for help in looking up these attributions; I was unable to

find a libretto with attributions in any of the published sources.

<sup>11</sup> Leon Botstein, “Transcending the Enigmas of Biography,” in *Edward Elgar and his World*, ed. Bryon Adams (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007): 398.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Edward McGuire, “Measure of a Man: Catechizing Elgar’s Catholic Avatars,” in *Edward Elgar and his World*, 21.

<sup>13</sup> For a thorough discussion and reprinting of early reviews of *The Apostles*, see Aidan J. Thomson, “Early Reviews of *The Apostles* in British Periodicals” in *Edward Elgar and his World*, 127-172.

<sup>14</sup> *Elgar’s Oratorios*, 34.

<sup>15</sup> See Melvin P. Unger’s “Chiastic reflection in the B-minor Mass: lament’s paradoxical mirror,” Chapter 7 in *Exploring Bach’s B-Minor Mass*, edited by Yo Tomita, Robin A. Leaver, and Jan Smaczny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Jaeger, *The Apostles*.

<sup>17</sup> One could speculate if this number of passages is related to the number of Apostles, but there is little evidence Elgar applied numerology to composition.

<sup>18</sup> For a complete listing of examples of the “Man of Sorrows” theme, with orchestral cues and rehearsal numbers, go to [[acda.org/files/ManOfSorrowsTheme.pdf](http://acda.org/files/ManOfSorrowsTheme.pdf)].

<sup>19</sup> See especially the movement from Gb to C# in Figure 23 from Part I, and from Ab to Eb in Figure 26 from the end of Part II.

<sup>20</sup> For a complete listing of examples of the “Prayer of Christ” theme, with orchestral cues and rehearsal numbers, go to [[acda.org/files/PrayerOfChristTheme.pdf](http://acda.org/files/PrayerOfChristTheme.pdf)].

<sup>21</sup> Sassoon, *Diaries*, 169, quoted by Bryon Adams in “Elgar and the Persistence of Memory,” in *Edward Elgar and his World*, 74.

<sup>22</sup> Some have even conjectured that the secret meaning of the *Enigma Variations* has to do with the inner conflict growing from the intensity of his relationship with his lifelong friend August Jaeger; see the Byron Adams article “The ‘Dark Saying’” cited above.

# Searching for an Icon

Eric Whitacre on Composing & Conducting

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In 2006, GIA press wanted to expand their “Composers on Composing” series to include choral composers for a book titled *Composers on Composing for Choir*.<sup>1</sup> The idea was to interview recognized composers using a common set of questions. When considering who to include in the initial offering, Eric Whitacre was at the top of the list. While conversations with Eric provided some initial responses to the common questions, his schedule was such that a chapter could not be edited in time to include in the book. Ten years later, GIA gave permission to share the initial interview with the readers of *Choral Journal*.

As editor of the original GIA book, I contacted Eric for his permission to release the material, and we agreed that since so much time had passed, we should conduct an entirely new interview for 2017 based on the format of the original questions. The interview was conducted via phone on Thanksgiving morning, November 24, 2016. We spoke about his thoughts on the creative process, working with text, how conductors should approach his music, and how his life has changed in the last ten years. The question-and-answer interview follows a short biography.



### Biography

With no formal musical training before the age of eighteen, Eric Whitacre’s first experiences singing in college choir changed his life. He completed his first concert work, “Go, Lovely, Rose,” at the age of twenty-one and went on to the Juilliard School, studying with Pulitzer Prize- and Oscar-winning composer John Corigliano. His concert music has been performed throughout the world by millions of amateur and professional musicians alike, while his ground-breaking Virtual Choirs have united singers from over 110 different countries. Whitacre was recently appointed Artist in Residence with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, having completed a five-year term as Composer in Residence at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University, UK. In 2001, he became the youngest recipient of ACDA’s Raymond Brock commission.

As conductor of the Eric Whitacre Singers, he has released several chart-topping albums including 2011’s Grammy Award-winning *Light and Gold*. A charismatic speaker, Whitacre has presented keynote addresses for many Fortune 500 companies and global institutions including Apple, Google, the World Economic Forum in Davos, the United Nations Speaker’s Programme, and two main-stage TED talks.

# Searching for an Icon

## Interview

### How would you describe the creative process?

Every time I start a piece I feel like a complete novice. What I tend to do now is I go back and look at earlier works and deconstruct them. Certain things seem to work and that sets a foundation. I have also taken to writing out existing works by composers like Bach or Debussy and literally copying by hand in pencil. I want to write exactly what Bach wrote so I can get a sense of how he builds a piece.

I look for structural, perhaps numerical, icons that are connected somehow to the theme of the piece. Then I start to build the composition around it. For instance, with *Ghost Train* I used my girlfriend's phone number, and that unrequited theme with the last number missing appears all over the piece itself. In *When David Heard*, the passage I set is from Second Samuel, Chapter 18, verse 33. In the beginning of the composition of the piece the measures are grouped in sets of either 18 or 33 (two groups of nine or three groups of six). I make those choices before I write any music.

Once I have the structure or emotional architecture of the piece, I start to develop my palette much like a painter develops a color palette. It is either a chord or a musical gesture with a couple of notes, and somehow I know that these are the colors that will work together and paint the picture. Like a painter, you never stray from those colors. You might mix them a little bit and scatter the motives, but you keep those colors at the forefront. It's kind of a way of putting myself in a box.

For me, music is profoundly personal. It is an extension of my personality and ultimately my philosophy—I suppose my ethos and how I see the world. The older I get, the only way to continue to be authentic and have music resonate for me and for performers and listeners is to become more and more vulnerable. I really have to get in there and dig in the dirt. Each piece now seems to be more and more personal in that I have cracked open wider who I am. Who I am can be, "I don't know what I am doing," and that goes into the piece as well. The things happening in my life—a joy or a tragedy, an important event such as when my son was born—all of these things find their way onto the page.

### How has becoming a father changed the way you write?

Your whole world view changes, and sometimes almost daily from the moment they are born and you bring them home and you realize this person is here! Then you realize there is no user manual. Every day you are retaught how to be a human being. Seeing the world through their eyes, the world gets electric. From the big and the small: first there is the juicy, innocent, excited, ecstatic way a child sees the world. Since my son was born, a lot of the pieces have had that cover in them. Then there is the pragmatic change. Before he was born I could write until 4:00 in the morning and compose wherever the muse took me. Now I have to write between the hours of 8:00 am and 3:00 pm and I still have not gotten used to being disciplined like that. Once he gets out of school, I am hoping to get back to the four-in-the morning writing.

*Seal Lullaby* I still sing to my son, and he is now eleven. It has become kind of the family song. I set the beginning of the children's book (*The White Seal* is a beautiful story, classic Kipling, dark and rich and not at all condescending to kids) for soprano solo and string orchestra, and that has also become a family song. There is no separation anymore between the intimacy of our family life and the music that seems to be pouring out.

### What is your approach to text?

I am sure I have said this somewhere before, but for me, the text is the alpha and omega. It is what separates our art form from every other art form. It is the combination of words and music that elevates our art to a place very few others can reach. I take great care and pride in choosing only the best poetry. There are a lot of poems that I have read and I thought, "I wish I could set that but it really doesn't need me." More than that it is not pregnant with music swimming underneath the words. I search a lot and read a lot of poetry, constantly looking for poetic lines or ideas, maybe even dialogue in movies that might make an interesting musical setting for something beautiful and true.

I start by memorizing the poem. When I find that poem, my job as a composer is to do exactly what the



# Eric Whitacre on Composing & Conducting



poem is asking to be done. My most successful settings are the ones where I simply got out of the way, listened to the poetry, followed the architecture of it, and the music came out hidden right underneath the words. It is tough to talk about and tends to sound esoteric.

## How would you like conductors to approach your music?

Often I will have a choral conductor write to me and say, “Do you prefer a quarter note to equal 60 or 76 in this section because I have heard it both ways.” For me, those things are relatively liquid. I know now, after having conducted for a while, that there is no right, perfect way to perform a piece. The acoustic, the size of your group, the age of your group, the ability of the group, whether you are performing in the morning or at night, the size of the audience, all of these dramatically affect the tempo and the piece itself.

From a conductor’s point of view, there has to be a certain coherent logic to how the piece unfolds. That means, ultimately the piece blossoms in a specific way. When you are conducting it, the rest of the piece should follow suit. Everything should be about the desire and ability to communicate the depth of the text to the audience. The most important thing for a conductor is to make sure the story of that text is being told. My dream always is that it can be told without the audience having the poetry in front of them. Even if you can’t understand every word or it is Latin and you can’t understand any of the text, the conductor and the group work together to communicate the essential drama of

the piece directly to the audience so that just by listening to it they understand everything they need to know.

## How do you feel about having your pieces translated into other languages?

I have mixed feelings. It should be translated into ten languages because the whole goal is to communicate. I wrote the pieces in English and had a certain sound in mind, and sometimes the translation does not automatically match what I had in mind for the colors of the piece. But, if the English does not communicate the text to the audience, then the original language should be changed. It is almost a case-by-case basis. The overarching aesthetic is: Does the music communicate? Are the words connecting with the audience?

Back to interpreting my music. Conducting “A Boy and a Girl” on the *Light and Gold* album is a perfect example. In my mind there is right tempo for that piece and a way that it unfolds perfectly. When we got to London, suddenly the urgency that I originally heard in my mind in *A Boy and a Girl* disappeared and it was all about the silences and the beautiful spaces. In order to make a coherent performance, in order to justify those spaces being so open and empty and long, the rest of the piece has to slow down so that there is a sense of balance in the whole thing.

Years ago I was talking to Dr. Ron Staheli around the time he was performing *When David Heard*. He was a real champion of my music and recorded an album of my pieces, and every time he did one of the pieces he would ask me what I thought. My opening bell was always that it needed to be faster. I thought it was too slow and being too precious with the melodies and harmonies and it needed to push forward. His reply to me was, “When you are a little bit older, let’s have this conversation again.” While recording *Light and Gold*, I started smiling and thought, “He’s so right!” The older I get now, things slow down. It is not even about the music anymore, it is just about, “What is the big hurry here. Let’s stop and appreciate these moments a little more.” I think about him every time I slow down a piece like that.

# Searching for an Icon



*Eric Whitacre conducting the LA Master Chorale. Photo credit Tao Ruspoli and Marie Noorbergen*

## **Has having your own choir changed the way you conduct?**

Yes, dramatically. For the vast majority of my conducting career I have been a guest conductor. Frankly, that is the easiest gig in the world. You don't have to build a program, audition the singers. When you are building your own group from scratch, it is a totally different experience. You have got to deal with personalities, build the right voices and the right relationships, and all of a sudden you realize that over months and years you build your own sound. And it is a huge learning curve where you realize, "They don't sound the way I want them to exactly. How do I effect that change?" I am constantly approaching music in a completely different way than I would have before as a conductor.

I am working with the Los Angeles Master Chorale as their artist in residence. A funny thing happened. We were getting ready for their Christmas concert. I found myself endlessly asking for very specific things from the

singers, things that before I was in London I never really asked. "Sopranos, we need a clearer, cleaner tone. In this section can you not give any vibrato? Altos, I need you to lighten up so that it is blending more. Basses, back off a bit so that it is shinier with a little more vibrato." One of the singers came up to me after rehearsal and said, "It is okay for you to ask us to be more British."

What I realized was that I was not really trying to make them more British. In order for my music to shimmer, there are some very specific things that have to happen. Vibrato often doesn't work because you lose the coherence of the clusters and the dissonances. I would imagine that if there ends up being an Eric Whitacre sound, what it really becomes is a combination of the Brigham Young University's clear, pure tone combined with my college choir at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. That sound is what is most frequently in my ear with the sound of these cathedral choirs that I have been working with in Britain.

## **Has conducting choirs on a more regular basis changed the way you compose?**

Oh my, yes! First, I would like to think that my compositions are becoming, in the very best way, more and more pragmatic. This will sound so simple, but it took me a long time to learn. You can write piano with a huge crescendo to forte. You can detail all of those things, or you can simply start the voices in a lower register and move them up higher in their register. The crescendo naturally happens. I learned that most through conducting music of other composers. Music that really, really works is music that is inherently written well for the voice in terms of breath, line shape, phrase arch, and vowel color—if you are going to take them way up high you can't put them on an oo vowel because it makes the voices work harder than they need to. So now, as a conductor, I think from the very first notes that I write down, in a very pragmatic way, what is the best way to make this thing unfold in an effable way for the performer. That has changed me.

## **Many of your early pieces, like *Sleep*, can be successful with many different levels of choirs. Is that intentional?**

There was a period of time, right about the year 2000, where, for whatever reason, it all clicked. Within a two-year period, I wrote *Songs of Faith*, *Lux Aurumque*, *Sleep*, *Leonardo*, *A Boy and a Girl*, and works like *Sleep* and *Lux* are pieces that just sort of work. Regardless of the level of choir they more or less unfold the way they ought to and singers understand them very quickly. They know their place and what they are doing and how the piece is supposed to work. I would like to think that because I was starting to conduct about that time, I was starting to understand other pieces in the classical literature that did the same kind of thing.

For example, *Sleep* is very much inspired by Bruckner's *Os Justi*. If you put them side by side, you can hear some of the parallels. *Os Justi* is in eight parts, but you start singing it and the singers realize, "O yes, this is what I am supposed to do." It almost sings itself. I was drawing from some of those waters for *Sleep*.

## **You mentioned *Leonardo*. What impact did receiving ACDA's Raymond Brock Commission have on your career?**

It totally changed everything for me. I had written some music, *Water Night* and *Cloudburst*, and those were getting some attention on the west coast, but I think generally I was a relatively unknown composer. When ACDA called me up and offered me this piece that would be performed in front of thousands of other choral conductors, I was humbled and thrilled, and ten minutes after I hung up the phone I was terrified. This is the audience you can literally write for and say what you want to say as opposed to any other audience because they will understand it on a much deeper level.

I had this title in my mind for years: *Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine*. Without knowing the piece or what it would be, I went to my friend Tony Silvestri, and we decided we would make this piece that sounds like Monteverdi dreaming. We wrote it knowing it was going to be premiered at a choral conductor's convention and wanted to put in quotes of Palestrina and Thomas Tallis all kind of melting with twentieth-century techniques into a soup of things that we all knew. Somehow, inexplicably, Charles Bruffy let me conduct the Kansas City Chorale on that premier. I had not been conducting very long. It was so gracious and kind for him to do that. The impact on my career was not only did I get to premier this piece, which was a high honor, but Charles let me conduct one of the world's best choirs. I can probably point back to that commission and that performance as the huge launching point for much of the rest of my career.

## **What is your approach to taking commissions?**

Some years ago I largely quit taking commissions. I was finding that when people commission a piece of music, they don't want my "next piece." What they really want is *Cloudburst* meets *Water Night* with their favorite part of *Leonardo* thrown in. They don't say, "Wherever you are in your developmental process is fine with us."

Commissions don't come with open-ended ideas. Nobody wants a commission for a spring concert. They want a commission for the hundredth anniversary of their school or for the memory of someone who has



# Searching for an Icon



*Eric Whitacre rehearsing the 2017 ACDA High School Honor Choir*

died. The music is to mark some sort of major event and there is usually an expectation even if it doesn't have a clear form. People are hoping that the commissioned work will cause the clouds to open, the angels to weep, and peace and democracy to reign!

As a composer and perfectionist, I place enough pressure on myself that I don't need more pressure from outside influences before this little piece of music ever has a chance to grow. Now I will compose a piece almost to completion and then perhaps consider offering it to a group to commission; that way they know exactly what they are getting. Inspiration to compose is a beautiful text or concept and not a performance date, honored though I am to be invited to write for some incredible celebrations and commemorations.

My goal is to write a piece that will go into publication and can be performed by thousands of choirs all over the world for the next hundred years. For example, if I were writing a piece for a choir that had a weak tenor section, I would never simplify the tenor line just because they have weaker singers. I try to write the piece for the

music itself, knowing that somebody somewhere will get it right, even if it is not the first group to perform the composition.

That said, I am getting a number of requests to write pieces that are not quite so difficult with fewer independent lines and that require less sustaining of breath. I continue to try to be pragmatic when I compose. The *Hebrew Love Songs* are accessible to most high school choirs even though it was commissioned by the University of Miami, which has a great choir. I think in the back of my mind I was writing a piece that would reach out to a wider audience.

**What can you share about *Paradise Lost: Shadows and Wings* and the influence of music theater in your writing?**

That is my passion project. I stumbled into music theater. The man who changed my life, David Weiller, was the conductor who got me singing in choirs. When I was twenty-two years old and I had never conducted

# Eric Whitacre on Composing & Conducting

anything except a couple section rehearsals in choir, he asked me if I would be interested in being an assistant conductor with him during the summer at the College Light Opera Company in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. He had been conducting for years and years as one of the principal conductors. I said yes, not having a clue what I was getting myself into. Basically they did nine shows in nine weeks, fully staged, where you rehearse the show during the day that would go up the next week and at night perform the show you rehearsed the week before. I think there is no human way you can do that with a full orchestra and yet they do it every summer. I did that for three summers and got twenty-seven shows under my belt.

As associate conductor, I was responsible for teaching all of the choral parts, I was at all of the blocking rehearsals, and I did some orchestral conducting including a matinee each week. It was boots-on-the-ground training and the best training I can possibly imagine as a conductor. In terms of music theater, there are so many moving parts. You look up on stage and the person you cued thirty seconds ago is on the other side of the stage. There are stops and starts and it is very visceral conducting. You learn to turn the page and scan two pages for meter changes and fermatas. I started to see the music in terms of “What do they need from me” as opposed to what am I bringing. It became almost a service industry.

Because of those years spent conducting and being around musical theater, I fell in love. I thought it was a beautiful art form to tell a dramatic story in a contemporary way with words and music. I started in 2001 writing this show, *Paradise Lost*, that I am still to this day working on. I have put it up, taken it down, torn it apart, and put it back. I think it is better. For me, the missing piece was seeing *Hamilton* (Lin-Manuel Miranda), which totally changed my life. It is one of the great art works I know. I realized that *Hamilton* tells the story with such velocity in a way few other musical theater works do. I see now what I am hoping *Paradise Lost* will ultimately be.

**As conductor of the ACDA High School Honor Choir for the 2017 ACDA National Conference, how did you go about selecting your repertoire?**

I really struggled between doing a concert of all kinds

of different composers with new music of other composers and highlight how it helped my career, or just do my own music. What I decided to do was just my own music, not out of a sense of vanity, but I thought at this point in my life I think I can be considered an authority on the music of Eric Whitacre. It was the one unique thing I, as a conductor, might be able to bring to their experience. I am the guy who wrote this, so here is the inner machinery of how all of this works. That is why it was an all-Whitacre program.

With Decca records I am doing things besides my own music. In fact, my choir was invited to perform at the ACDA conference. We programmed other pieces besides mine, which I love to do, and I am learning so much both as a conductor and as a composer by doing other people’s music. With the high school honor choir, the final kicker for what to program was when I was talking to Tim Sharp (ACDA’s executive director). I had done a couple of concerts with the Minnesota orchestra. I asked Tim if there was any way we could get the orchestra involved in the concert. When he said yes, I knew exactly what we would program. I chose pieces of mine that were either written for orchestra and chorus or could use orchestra and chorus together. If it were up to me, we would have done a three-hour concert.

**What are your thoughts on the topic of mentoring young composers?**

That could be a whole chapter, couldn’t it? For aspiring composers, and even for established composers, the simple lesson, and one I am constantly relearning myself, is that the simple ideas are the best. Limiting ideas is the best. The reason why Bach is so profoundly great is because he starts with simple musical motives and doesn’t stray from them. That is all he uses to make an entire piece, and he has a very elegant mathematical algorithm that can produce reams and reams of music. The trap that I used to always fall into was that I would get stuck on a piece of the music and I would have to write something original to write my way out of it. The truth is, every time I do that now I just go back to the material I have already written so that the piece is really only about one or two things even if it is a big piece.

For composing, I have found that finishing a piece

# Searching for an Icon

is more important than it being good. There is a huge learning curve a composer has to go through no matter where they are in their career, and sometimes you have to write five pieces to get to the piece you want to write and the four pieces along the way are not that good. The process of starting them, struggling with them, and finishing them is the important part. I try to put myself into these profound little boxes where a piece can be no more than a minute long, I can only use these four notes, and it has to be finished by tomorrow morning, no matter what. More often than not I learn so much with that simple technique.

Ten years ago I said, "Get your hands dirty, search your soul, and ask some specific questions about who you are." I am becoming a pragmatist. What I worry about, as I talk to young composers, is that I can see how this can be motivational, but there is also a bit of despair

in their eyes. Searching your soul doesn't actually get notes on the page. You hope some of your soul gets onto the page, but at the end of the day it is about the cruddy work of writing and finishing and polishing.

**In your blog, "Advice for the Emerging Composer," you write, "My first scribbles on the page aren't pretty. I write as fast as I can, and often-times I won't even worry about the rhythm, or the key, or 'proper' notation." Can you give an example?**

I often begin with a scribbled picture of images—drawings of the piece before writing any music. I break up the text and structure. *Equus* was an example where the spinning motive in the first sketch (see Figure 1) becomes the document with my original intention that

**Figure 1**



# Eric Whitacre on Composing & Conducting

finds its way throughout the piece.

This piece I am writing for the LA Master Chorale right now I started doing sketches and put a couple of them on an instrumental page. It is endlessly helpful to try to see what this is going to be. The best part for me is that it gets me out of my head and stops this obsession of this note versus that note. Somehow drawing pictures brings a more child-like innocence to the process.

## What are your thoughts on the future of choral music?

Ten years ago I am not even sure Facebook really existed. It is interesting, in terms of social media and what is possible. I have found in the past couple of years a more measured relationship with social media. I am not sure if others can relate to this, but I have the heart of a very empathetic person. I love people and adore being around them and being authentic with them. Social media is not just me posting something. It was never a monologue for me. It was always a dialogue, so if somebody posts something that is halfway meaningful, you can feel across media that they are bearing their soul. I

can't just "like" that; I am in it with that person because a connection has been made. Between Twitter and Facebook and Instagram and Snapchat, there are a lot of connections. I started, on a personal level, to realize I was not doing a very graceful job of carrying those connections. I could not be in this quiet place long enough in order to compose and be able to feel connected to all of these people in this intimate and specific way. Over the past few years I have given myself this little bit of distance. Mostly that means spending less time on social media. That being said, I still check in several times a day.

Ten years ago the Virtual Choirs were not even a thought and now we are working on number five. What we want to do, always, is not just bigger and the same kind of thing. What we did with four we added the electronics as a way to see what we can do with this genre. With the next one, I think I am onto an idea which unfortunately I cannot talk about yet, but because of the sheer magnitude of these projects, we have to become pragmatic. How do we finance and pull this thing off? With virtual choir four, we set it up so that you could upload your file, but until you hit submit we wouldn't in-



*Eric Whitacre rehearsing the 2017 ACDA High School Honor Choir*

# Searching for an Icon

clude the video. The idea was that if people uploaded a video but were shy about sending, they wouldn't have to.

What we could see behind the scenes was that while we ultimately had 8,400 submissions from 101 countries, we had over 50,000 people uploading videos. For virtual choir five, we are looking at numbers now that

---

“**My biggest goal is that young people feel permission to be a choir geek.**”

---

are in the stratosphere. What could it be if we made the music simple enough and hooked as many people as possible? Imagine 100,000 video files and how to sync them. It has become this project I never could have imagined. Now we are really taking our time to be sure all of our ducks are lined up in order to pull off the tech side and to make it something really unique and special. We want to honor the community that has been formed out there.

## **Is there anything else you would like to share with *Choral Journal* readers?**

I stumbled into choirs at the age of eighteen in order to meet girls, and this man, David Weiller, changed my life completely. He instilled my passion for choral music. I wish there were a platform for me to thank each and every person who is involved in our shared art form. I am eternally grateful for the gift that was given to me by all these people, and somehow I get to be a part of this community. It is supremely dedicated to humanism and beauty, and these things are so rare these days in our strange fracture of the urban world. I wish I could bring every one of them down and buy them a martini. I am eternally humbled.

When I was in high school, I thought being a rock star was all about glory. It was about walking out to this adulation. Choral conducting isn't anything like that at all. It feels like it is a service, so the adulation is for what we are all doing together. My biggest goal is that young

people feel permission to be a choir geek. That all these things—crying at the ends of rehearsals, being transformed in your life by three bars of music you sing with your friends—that these things are cool. Those things are good, and it is okay for them to be a central part of your life for the rest of your life. **C**

\* \* \*

**For further information on Eric's background, his approach to composing, the virtual choir, and more advice for emerging composers, visit:**

Eric Whitacre answers your questions (May 2011) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgzSq-bUGew>

Creativity and Connection: The Humanism of Technology - Eric Whitacre, at USI (June, 2014) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BaF\\_\\_rxarI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BaF__rxarI)

Eric Whitacre - Full Address at Oxford Union (June, 2015) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pyou2XXhyUU>

“Advice for the Emerging Composer Blog Series” <http://ericwhitacre.com/?s=advice+for+the+emerging+composer>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Tom Wine, editor, *Composers on Composing for Choir* (GIA Publications, 2007). Contributing composers: David N. Childs, René Clausen, Libby Larsen, Morten Lauridsen, Kirke Mechem, James Mulholland, John Rutter, Z. Randall, Stroope, André Thomas, and Gwyneth Walker.





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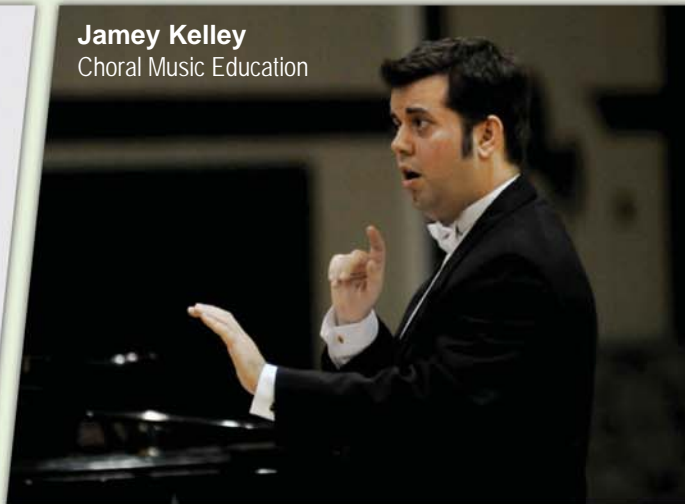
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## Changing the Expressionless Faces that Sing in Your Choirs

by Micah Bland

Rowe High School, McAllen, Texas

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Editor's note: The following article was printed in *ChorTeach*, Spring 2017.

It was 2003, and the Vocal Majority Chorus was once again favored to win the International Barbershop Competition in Montreal, Canada. As an internationally renowned chorus with, at the time, nine gold medal championships to its record, word spread among the convention delegates as to where the chorus would be holding its first rehearsal.

As the choir assembled for its much-anticipated rehearsal, the ballroom quickly filled to standing room only. The impromptu audience, anticipating a preview of an award-winning performance, instead witnessed a much different type of rehearsal. For the first twenty minutes, the chorus director rehearsed the group without singing a single note. Instead the rehearsal was focused on perfecting facial expression and choreography. The lyrics were virtually inaudible to the spectators. What would prompt a director to use such valuable rehearsal time to rehearse visual expressiveness on the

eve of an international singing competition?

From the early 1970s to mid-1980s, a fascination with choral body movement became a popular topic in music circles. Since then, particularly in the past three decades, the use of movement by choirs has become underutilized. The choral tradition continues to emphasize improvement of tone quality, often neglecting visual expressiveness.

Unquestionably, the quality of auditory elements is the most important feature in a musical performance; the significance of visual expression by a choir, however, should not be underestimated.

Most choral directors recognize the importance of movement in vocal development and incorporate movement exercises into their rehearsals; however, these exercises are not transferred or intended to be included in performance. While show choirs, musical casts, and performances of popular music frequently contain extravagant displays of visual expression, choral directors too often resist allowing any form of visual expression in the formal con-

cert setting. Students are frequently instructed to stand motionless, as if turned to stone by Medusa. Consequently, choral performances throughout America are greatly fulfilling to hear but often uninspiring to watch.

Recent research has validated the importance of visual expressiveness in musical performance but has not been effectively assimilated into American musical culture. In 2008, Juchniewicz evaluated the effect of physical movement in solo piano performance. The results demonstrated that heightened levels of facial, head, and full-body movement increased a listener's perception of musical quality. In addition, "as the pianist's physical movements increased, so did the participants' ratings of phrasing, dynamics, rubato and overall musical performance."<sup>1</sup>

As a choral director and ensemble member who has performed both with no expression and with highly expressive movement, I wondered what effect, if any, visual expressiveness of singers would have on a listener's perception of musical quality. To test this question, an experiment

was designed to determine how listeners' perceived musical quality at varying levels of visual expressiveness.

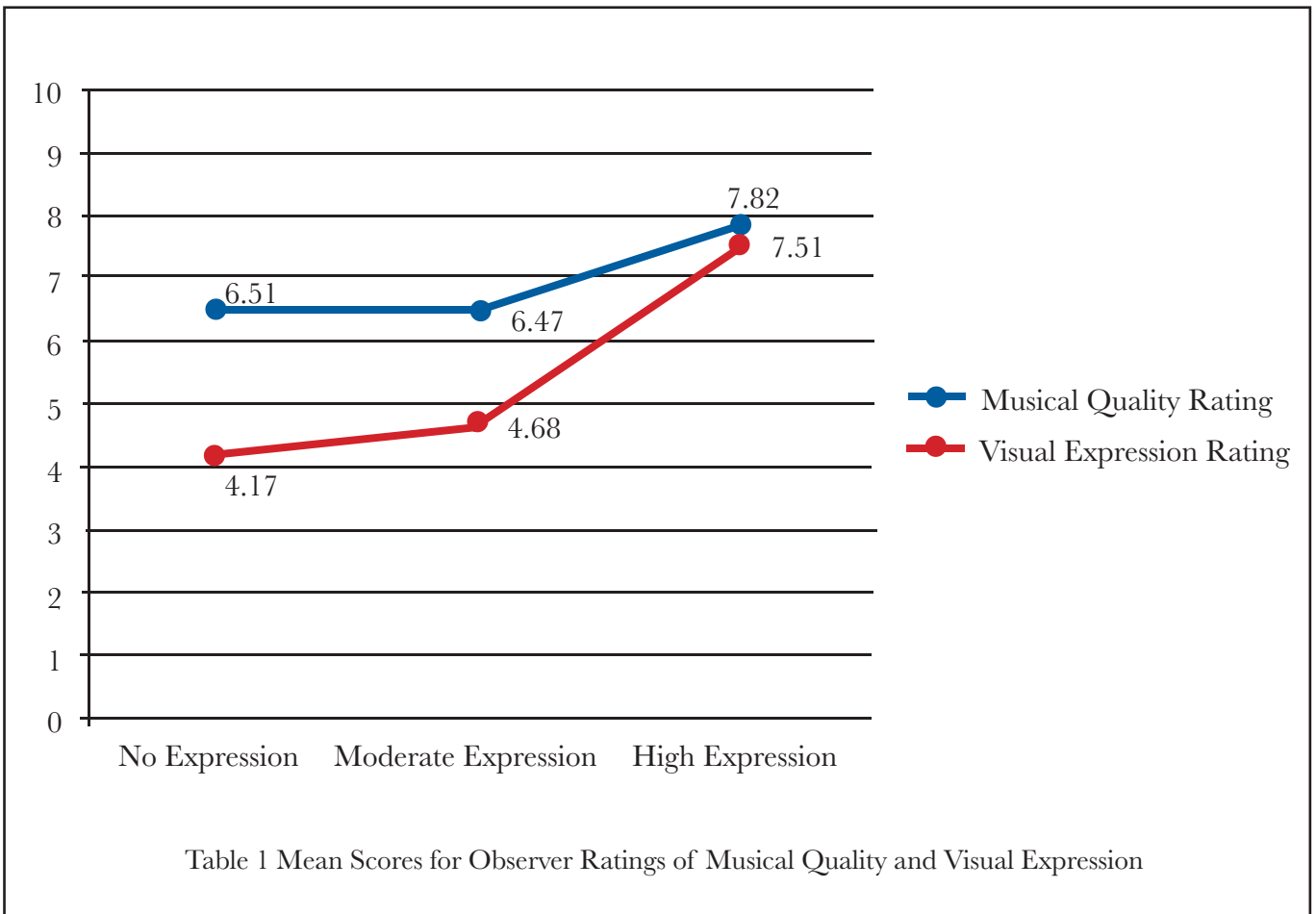
A university women's choir was video-taped lip-synching a pre-recorded audio track at three varying levels of visual expressiveness (no expression, moderate expression, and high expression). Although the audio was identical for each video, audience observers (N = 164) perceived the quality of music differently at each level of visual expressiveness. Table 1 depicts the average scores for all audience observers' evaluations of musical quality and visual expressiveness.

As the choir's level of visual expressiveness increased from no expression to high expression, the observers perceived a 20.12% improvement in the musical quality of the performance. Observer rating of musical quality increased from an average of 6.51 to 7.82 on a ten-point scale. It cannot be determined by this research if visual expression is enhancing the audience's evaluation of musical quality or if a lack of visual expression is decreasing their evaluation score. Nevertheless, these results support the importance of visual expressiveness in enhancing the perception of musical quality by an audience. We as choral directors

would be remiss not to tap the full potential of our student performers by promoting visual expression in performances.

### Rehearsal and Performance Applications

Full-body, highly expressive movement is not intended to be choreographed movement by a group. Instead, with this type of full-body movement, each individual singer should be allowed the freedom to interpret the work using not only his or her face but his/her entire body in the same fashion as any opera or musical theater performer.



For singers to appropriately display this level of expression, the director should establish expectations for posture to facilitate body movement. Performers should stand with their feet firmly planted; from the ankles up, however, the choir should be free to move with the emotional context of the song, which is often dictated by the text. To avoid undesired or distracting movement, performers' hands should remain relaxed at their sides, and singers should stand motionless at the beginning, end, and between songs.

Understandably, some choirs are not ready to perform with a heightened level of expressive movement. Middle school boys often wiggle constantly as if someone had just lit fireworks in their pants. In addition, at times the junior varsity choirs must first master correct tone and dynamics before concerning themselves with body movement. Regardless of the maturity of the choir, visual expressive training should be incorporated throughout a singer's development.

To successfully implement a heightened level of visual expressiveness in performers, choral directors should incorporate visually expressive exercises into their daily rehearsals. It is unwise and irresponsible to expect chorus members to perform with a high level of visual expression without any prior training. The following are a few examples of movement exercises that can be implemented throughout a choral rehearsal. It is important to note that these exercises do not require much additional rehearsal time and can be implemented in conjunction

with a director's personal rehearsal philosophy.

### Movement Exercises for Vocal Warm-Ups

- *Vocal/Visual Expression:* Students sing vocal exercises with different visual and vocal expressions. For example, on a five-note descending pattern on the text, "I love to sing," instruct students to sing using the following expressions: anger, joy, sadness, etc.
- *Body Stretch:* This exercise, common among directors, allows students

to explore the limits of their body movement. For example:

1. While bending at the waist, ask students to make the largest circle possible with only their upper body.
2. Without moving their feet, ask students to lean as far forward/backward as possible.
3. Have students plant their feet but move forward, backward, or side-to-side with the director's hand movements. This exercise allows students to experience the entire area of movement avail-



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able to them. For a variation on this exercise, using this same method, move with pre-recorded music.

- *Imaginary Glass:* Instruct students to imagine that they are holding a piece of glass. Press it firmly against their face. Move the imaginary glass

around in all directions, with their “pressed” face moving with it.

- *Inhalation Movement:* While inhaling one long breath, have students lean slightly forward from the ankles and not the hips. This movement can accompany any vocal exercise. It helps train singers to prepare a vowel,

breathe low and silently, and initiate sound with movement. This exercise should be the initial movement for every phrase in an ensemble’s repertoire to encourage full-body movement throughout the remainder of the phrase.

- *Kinesthetic Vocal Exercises:* Include



  
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kinesthetic body movement throughout the vocal warm-up. This is the first step in having students feel the freedom of motion available to them while performing. Allow students to improvise hand or body movement. The following are examples of kinesthetic hand movement.

1. Sweep the arm slowly in any direction. This includes vertical, horizontal, circular, and arched movement. This is useful in legato singing.
2. Pull the hand upwards, starting at the waist going up to the shoulders. This is helpful for pitch accuracy in descending passages.
3. With arms crossed at the waist, drop the arms to the side as you inhale. This movement promotes a low singer's breath.

For an additional resource, see materials by Sabine Horstmann,<sup>2</sup> Frauke Haasemann, and James Jordan.<sup>3</sup>

### **Movement Exercises for the Rehearsal**

- **Singing Gestures:** Ask students to use their hands to show the dynamics of a work. Next, have students use their bodies to visually display dynamics.
- **Lifted Cheeks and Eyebrows:** Instruct singers to lift their eyebrows and cheeks. The result is an energized face. In addition, this technique promotes a forward tone placement and is beneficial for students with a dark or heavy tone.
- **Facial Copy:** Conduct the ensemble with facial expressions only, giving cues with a lift of your chin. Have students mimic your facial expressions.
- **Performance Venue Variation:** Experiment with your performance venue. Break down the barrier of distance between performer and audience. Have your ensemble process in, encircle the audience, or sing from the balcony.
- **About-Face:** Charlene Archibeque<sup>5</sup> encourages movement by having students face and sing to each other—the front row faces the back row, second row faces third row, etc. Archibeque places the most animated singers toward the middle of the choir where they are more visible to the audience.<sup>6</sup>
- **Imagery:** The use of imagery or vi-

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sualization is a powerful tool in the choral rehearsal. This technique is most effective when connecting the music and movement to the emotional context of the song. Also, student discussion of texts of songs can evoke improved, committed singing.

### Conclusion

The initial incorporation of movement exercises may be met with resistance from students. It is important to explain to students the effect movement can have on an

audience. This will encourage both the enthusiastic and reluctant singer. Keep in mind the suppression of a performer's visual expressiveness opposes the body's natural reaction to music. From infancy, children naturally respond to music with movement. Their bodies are compelled to move with the beat.<sup>7</sup> A student might appear reluctant, but she or he may be simply shy or insecure.

The effect movement has on an audience is profound, but at the heart of the matter is a question of passion. As choir directors, are we encouraging students to openly express the music through movement or suppress it through strict posture guidelines? If we expect music to move our audiences emotionally, the performers must convey the passion of the music and the meaning of texts through nonverbal expression.

□

Lecture at the Texas Music Educators Association, San Antonio, TX, February 10, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Patricia Campbell and Carol Scott-Kassner, *Music in Childhood: From Preschool through the Elementary Grades* (Belmont, CA: Thomson Schirmer, 2006), 121.

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### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Jay Juchniewicz, "The Influence of Physical Movement on the Perception of Musical Performance," *Psychology of Music* 36, no. 4 (2008): 417–27.

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<sup>5</sup> Archibeque, Charlene. "Quick Fixes for Common Choral Ailments."

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- Brigham Young University Singers**  
Dr. Andrew Crane, conductor
- Georgia Southern Univ. Southern Chorale**  
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- Louisiana State Univ. A Cappella Choir**  
Dr. John H. Dickson, conductor
- Missouri State University Chorale**  
Dr. Cameron LaBarr, conductor
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Dr. Nicholas B. Cummins, conductor
- Syracuse University Singers**  
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- Texas Woman's University Concert Choir**  
Dr. Joni Jensen, conductor
- Trinity University Chamber Singers**  
Dr. Gary Seighman, conductor
- University of Arkansas Schola Cantorum**  
Dr. Stephen Caldwell, conductor
- University of Houston Concert Chorale**  
Dr. Betsy Cook Weber, conductor
- Utah Valley University Chamber Choir**  
Dr. Reed Criddle, conductor
- Webster University Chamber Singers**  
Dr. Trent Patterson, conductor

### Interest & Lit. Sessions

- Prof. Richard Bjella**, Texas Tech Univ.  
The Art of Successful Programming:  
Study, Selection, and Synthesis
- Dr. Joshua Bronfman**, Sam Houston State  
A New Paradigm in the Teaching of Conducting
- Dr. Melodie Galloway & Mr. Chuck Taft**,  
University of North Carolina-Asheville  
Vocal Health Pedagogy as an Integral Part of the  
Choral Rehearsal: Developing quality choral  
blend while teaching healthy singing practices
- Mrs. Susan LaBarr**, Composer &  
**Dr. Richard Sparks**, Univ. of North Texas  
Choral Works in Lesser-Sung Languages
- Dr. Andrew Morgan**, Hendrix College  
Implementing Audience Engagement  
Practices in Higher Education Choral  
Music Performances
- Dr. Stacie Rossow**, Florida Atlantic Univ.  
Irish Language Choral Music

### Panels

#### “Considering Gender in Our Choirs”

- Dr. Joshua Palkki**, CSULB – *moderator*  
**Dr. Matthew Garrett**, CWRU  
**Dr. Amelia Nagoski**, W. New England Univ.  
**Dr. Jace Saplan**, Hamilton College  
**Ms. Danielle Steele**, Earlham College

#### “Ensembles in the Collegiate Curriculum”

- Dr. Ann Howard Jones**, Boston University  
(retired) – *moderator*  
**Dr. Kimberly Dunn Adams**, Western MI Univ.  
**Dr. Karen Brunssen**, Northwestern Uni-  
versity & NATS, President Elect  
**Dr. Jason Harris**, Xavier University  
**Dr. Allen Henderson**, NATS, Exec. Director  
**Dr. William Weinert**, Eastman School of Music

### Choral Series 2017 Additions

- Ms. Carol Barnett**: *Musica, Dei donum optimi* (SATB)  
**Dr. Shane Lynch**: *Joseph and Grace* (SATB)  
**Mr. David Rossow**: *Teach Me to Love* (SATB)

### Poster Sessions

- Ms. Alison Allerton**, Univ. of TN–Chattanooga  
Toward a New Understanding of H. Distler  
on the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his Death
- Dr. Amanda Huntleigh**, Smith College  
Choristers' perceptions of Laban-based  
conducting gestures
- Dr. Dirk Johnson**, WV State University  
Early Concert Spirituals: Origins and  
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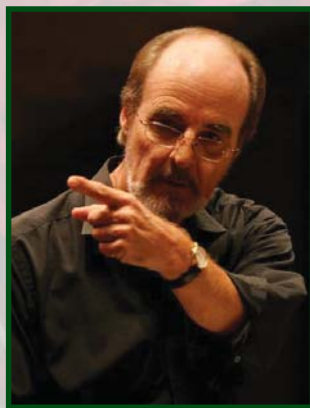
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# *In Memoriam*

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## William Dehning 1942–2017



William John Dehning passed away at the Marquette Medical Care Facility in Ishpeming, Michigan, on June 23, 2017, at the age of seventy-four. He attended Arroyo High School in El Monte, California, and received a full scholarship to study engineering at UCLA. He quickly realized he was meant to be a musician and finished his degree at UCLA in music education. After a few successful stints as a church choir director in the Hollywood area, Dehning decided to pursue a choral conducting (sacred music) degree at the University of Southern California. While there, he started his first semi-pro choir, the Verdugo Hills Chorale, one of several community choirs supported by the City of Los Angeles.

Among Dehning's many remarkable career accomplishments is his founding of the National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO) in 2005 with a group of former students that still exists and thrives to this day. He was an active member of ACDA and former California ACDA President. His many ensembles were selected to perform at multiple regional and national ACDA conferences, including performances in San Antonio (1991) and Los Angeles (2005). Dehning also formed a semi-professional chamber chorus called the California Choral Company (1985-1995).

Upon retirement, Dehning left behind a legacy of teaching that is unparalleled. He was a master teacher, having won multiple teaching awards from two universities. Dehning also won multiple international performing awards in competition with the USC Chamber Choir. He became known for his evocative choral sound that was bold and colorful and always exciting.





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5. The Cry of the Sea - instruments
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8. The Shadow of the Boat
9. The Strangers
10. The Song of Love
11. Interlude 2: Spirit, Help Me

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12. The Singer's Dance
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*"Based on Euan Tate's piercing libretto which asks big and important questions, Kim André Arnesen's compelling new work is haunting and beautiful. The audience at the premiere was highly engaged and deeply moved."*

Craig Hella Johnson, Conspirare

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duration: 50 minutes

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Requiem aeternam | 5. Rex tremendae    |
| 2. Dies Irae        | 6. Pie Jesu         |
| 3. Not in Vain      | 7. Sanctus          |
| 4. Lacrimosa        | 8. We Remember Them |

## Magnificat

Available for both SATB and SSAA chorus

solo mezzo soprano

strings, piano and organ

duration: 40 minutes

- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Magnificat anima mea | 5. Fecit potentiam |
| 2. Ecco denim           | 6. Suscepit Israel |
| 3. Qui fecit            | 7. Gloria Patri    |
| 4. Et misericordia      |                    |

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# Student Times

Jason Paulk, Editor <[jason.paulk@enmu.edu](mailto:jason.paulk@enmu.edu)>

## Letter to an Intern

by Scott Whitfield

Dear Teaching Intern,

Welcome to our school. Teaching is a wonderful and rewarding profession, and I am happy that you are considering making it your life's work. I am impressed with your training and with your university's teacher training course. Sometimes, though, the education professors don't tell you the complete story. Here are some details they may have omitted from your studies:

- Junior high boys stink. After they've been playing basketball at lunch in the ninety-degree heat, it doesn't matter how clean they were when they left the house that morning. Fifty of them in the choir room at one o'clock in the afternoon will be enough to make you spend your own money on an air freshener.
- There will be many, many faculty meetings and your principal will get really, really ticked off if you are late, no matter how good a choir director you are. He won't care about your flat tire, your alarm clock not working, or that your baby at home pooped right as you were walking out the door.
- Professional organizations do matter. Know the rules for Choral Assessment, All-Region, and All-State before you arrive at the events. Complete the forms on time. Complete them correctly. If you have any questions about how to complete them, call someone.
- Sometimes kids lie and never back down from their lies. Their parents will believe them over you.
- Parents will also blame you and call your supervisors when their children misbehave. They will say that everything is your fault. They will still not speak to you at church fifteen years later.
- Crack babies are a reality. So are kids with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. You'll have them in class.
- One bee has more power in the classroom than the teacher.
- Morning bus duty when the temperature is fifteen degrees isn't pleasant. It is just part of the job.
- Choir is not the most important thing in most kids' lives. Accept it.
- You have a greater chance surviving a trip over Niagara Falls in a barrel than you do performing Palestrina in four parts with middle school boys. Choose appropriate literature.
- The line between a sixth grader and a high school senior is very fine.
- Your university choir sounds and experiences are part of your past. Deal with it.
- Some kids in seventh grade still can't spell their name.
- Plan books and grade books—HUH??!!
- Get your master's degree.
- Teachers get a really, really raw deal on health insurance.
- Join the union. Yes, I said it.
- Multiculturalism will be your newest big word.
- Kids are not going to be quiet just because you tell them to be quiet.
- Custodians and secretaries should

be your friends. Counselors should be your best friends. They will make or break your program. Give them Christmas cards and candy each year.

- Yes, you need to have at least basic piano skills. Your odds of having a paid accompanist are about the same as having solid gold fixtures in the faculty lounge.

- Never say, “I’ll *never* teach (junior

high) (elementary) (high school) (music appreciation) (sixth-grade music rotation) (“second” band) in *that* district. When you have \$5.23 in your checking account, bald tires, past-due rent, and no job, you’ll teach anything anywhere and be happy for the work. Then one day you may look up and realize you’ve had a completely satisfactory career there.

Yes, I do really think that teaching is a wonderful and rewarding experience.

These are just some things that I have noticed over the last thirty-plus years. Please let me know what I can do to help make your student teaching experience successful. Good luck.

Sincerely,

Scott Whitfield  
Little Rock Central High  
Choral Director



*ACDA announces a new service learning program opportunity for student chapters*

**ChorTransform** takes students into settings with underserved populations—

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- Created as a service-learning project especially for ACDA Student Chapters
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Contact the ACDA National Office (Sundra Flansburg - [sflansburg@acda.org](mailto:sflansburg@acda.org)) and ask for the ChorTransform Toolkit, which describes program requirements and provides template agreements and other documents.



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Alfred Schnittke: Requiem

#### RECENT STUDENT RECITAL REPERTOIRE includes

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Brent Michael Davids: *The Uncovered Wagon*

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## QUARTERLY ENDORSEMENTS



### **CAROL BARNETT** (NEW to Project:Encore)

#### **Near Odessa**

- SSA with piano; some alto divisi; English (Patricia Kirkpatrick).
- 3'30". Sparkling freshness in a fully tonal, homophonic choral writing; supported with effervescent pianistic arpeggiation. Unity message drawing heavily upon nature imagery, from road trips through Minnesota landscape. Reasonable for HS and above. ([ProjectEncore.org/carol-barnett](http://ProjectEncore.org/carol-barnett))



### **RICH CAMPBELL** (NEW to Project:Encore)

#### **Heaven**

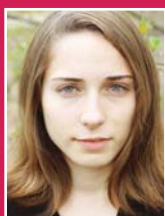
- SATB with some divisi; a cappella; English (Patrick Phillips)
- 5'30". Composer found poem on Manhattan's 1 train, part of MTA's "Poetry in Motion" series. Imitation suggests continuity with all that has been; clusters, the mystery. Modulations require solid intonation; doable by excellent HS and above. ([ProjectEncore.org/rich-campbell](http://ProjectEncore.org/rich-campbell))



### **JOY DECOURSEY-PORTER**

#### **Miserere mei Deus**

- SATB with minimal divisi; alto solo; piano; Latin, Psalm 51.
- 4'25". Plea for mercy accompanied by sense of assurance. Paired lines; some imitation. Flowing compound-meter. Pianistic support makes it very doable for solid church choirs. Lovely alternative to the many somber settings of Psalm 51. ([ProjectEncore.org/joy-decoursey-porter](http://ProjectEncore.org/joy-decoursey-porter))



### **NATALIE DIETTERICH** (NEW to Project:Encore)

#### **Conversations with Strangers**

- SSAATTBB; soloists drawn from choral texture; spoken solo; English lines (from conversations with the composer) retain their linear integrity in sung and spoken texture.
- 5'w45". Message of human willingness for self-revelation, even among those without shared history. Tight ensemble of independent singers necessary for effective delivery. ([ProjectEncore.org/natalie-dietterich](http://ProjectEncore.org/natalie-dietterich))



### **JOSHUA FISHBEIN**

#### **Psalms, Songs, and Blues**

- SSAATTBB; S,A,B soloists; orchestra of full strings, brass, percussion, harp; macaronic: English, Hebrew, Latin (Psalms and Jewish Liturgy)
- 27' in 5 movements - can be performed independently; several strong influences, Bernstein most prominently; possible companion to Chichester. Similar challenge level. ([ProjectEncore.org/joshua-fishbein](http://ProjectEncore.org/joshua-fishbein))

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## **LUKE FLYNN** *(NEW to Project:Encore)*

### ***Beneath the Wave***

- SSAATTBB; a cappella; S soloist, keening line; some non-standard sound elements; Both the Japanese text and its English translation are by the composer.
- 8'. Response to the tsunami in Japan, 2011, where the composer was a new resident composition student. Very impactful! Demanding vocally.  
(ProjectEncore.org/luke-flynn)



## **JESSICA FRENCH**

### ***Ave Maris Stella***

- SSSAA, soprano descant/semi-chorus; piano; Latin liturgical.
- 5'15". Stunning setting of traditional text, central image of which is a star's shimmering glow above the waves of the sea. A cappella chant opening expands vibrantly with introduction of compound-meter pianistic exuberance and rich texture.  
(ProjectEncore.org/jessica-french)



## **MARIO GULLO** *(NEW to Project:Encore)*

### ***O Oriens***

- SSATB; minimal alto divisi; organ; Ancient Latin (O Antiphon).
- 4'45". Chant-influenced lines. Organ scored as another independent voice; some a cap passages. Requires extremely secure high sopranos; otherwise of manageable difficulty level for a solid church group of at least 20. Stunning setting of this traditional text.  
(ProjectEncore.org/mario-gullo)



## **LAURIE BETTS HUGHES**

### ***We Learned the Whole of Love***

- SATB with piano; English (Dickinson).
- 3'35". Expansive lines in tonal context; mix of homophonic, paired-voice and imitative texture; suggestion of ever-shifting understanding of love throughout one's life. Reasonable for HS and above.  
(ProjectEncore.org/laurie-betts-hughes)



**Eighteen Scores Endorsed!**

This was our largest quarter of new endorsements to date! As a result, we'll spread out their Choral Journal presentation over two issues. Look for the PROJECT : ENCORE column in the October issue for presentation of marvelous new pieces by Chris Hutchings, Michael Kaulkin, Jamie Klenetsky Fay, William V. Malpede, Daniel Mehdizadeh, Jessica Rudman, Fahad Siadat, Donald M. Skirvin, and Karen Thomas.

And if you just can't wait, they are already in the ProjectEncore.org catalog. Enjoy!

**DEBORAH SIMPKIN KING, PH.D.**  
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# Book Reviews

Gregory Pysh, editor [gpysh@fpcmid.org](mailto:gpysh@fpcmid.org)

## ***Handel's MESSIAH: Warm-Ups for Successful Performance***

Jason Paulk and Ryan Kelly  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Hal Leonard Corporation, 2016  
224 pp. HL 00152409 (\$39.99)

Full Edition

72 pp. HL00152410 (\$2.95)

Singers Edition

Abundant sources exist to aid musicians in the study and preparation of Handel's *Messiah*, but Paulk and Kelly provide a new resource that is focused and unique. As stated by the authors, this book is "a practical guide to teaching singers how to healthily and stylistically perform this masterwork" (p. 6). *Handel's MESSIAH: Warm-Ups for Successful Performance* is presented in three sections: Part One – Introduction to Preparing *Messiah*; Part Two – Warm-Ups for Successful Performance; and Part Three – Appendices. Through their research and practical experience, the authors provide detailed information and intuitive warm-ups to assist conductors and singers in achieving optimal rehearsals and invigorating performance of this masterwork.

The first part provides concise information regarding performance practice in the Baroque era. Societal values of the period are addressed to

provide clarity regarding the aesthetic during the time Handel composed this oratorio. Paulk and Kelly summarize issues of performance practices of Baroque music for timbre, volume, vibrato, ornamentation, meter, and phrasing. The information provided is immediately understandable both for those engaging in a first performance and a reminder to the most experienced conductors. For those who wish to further explore the issues of performance practice, the authors have provided a recommended reading list.

The final pages of the first part provide key clear instructions for introducing the warm-ups and engaging the warm-ups throughout rehearsals to achieve the greatest efficacy. Conductors will find the information accessible and immediately applicable to their rehearsals without exhaustive study or preparation. Further, the key for pronunciation and articulation are clear and easy to assimilate.

The second section of the book provides specific warm ups for each chorus from *Messiah* to address the various challenges encountered in each movement. For example, the authors provided five exercises for "And the Glory of the Lord." The first two exercises address rhythmic stress, *messa di voce* for dotted fig-

ure, and the flipped "r" on "glory" of the opening motive. The third exercise addresses the *messa di voce* on the suspensions encountered when the text is "shall be revealed." The fourth deals with "and all flesh," while the fifth focuses on goals in the phrase with "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken." The piano accompaniments included in the director's edition facilitate each vocalize—simple, stylistically appropriate, and supportive with modulations that are manageable for even modest keyboardists.

Teaching goals introduce each warm-up and provide proactive concepts to achieve and cautions for potential issues to avoid. Conductors will find the use of neutral syllables and articulations helpful in achieving the stated goals. The authors provide neutral syllables with combinations of vowels and consonants that lead the singers to achieve ideal vocal function and ideal musical style.

An octavo-sized Singer's Edition is also available, which includes all warm-ups without accompaniment. While not crucial, the Singer's Edition is an important aid for the each singer in the ensemble.

Joey Martin  
San Marcos, Texas

## Book Reviews

### *Believe Your Ears:*

### *Life of a Lyric Composer*

Kirke Mechem

(Lanham, Maryland:

Rowman and Littlefield, 2017)

Paperback: 224 pages

ISBN: 978-1538104385

\$35.00

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

Winner of the 2016 ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for Outstanding Musical Biography, *Believe Your Ears: Life of a Lyric Composer* is the autobiography of Kirke Mechem, considered by many to be the “dean of American choral music.” He has some 250 published titles, most notably four operas, including *Tartuffe*, the work Mechem considers the

turning point in his career.

The author traces his unique path from boyhood piano lessons to Stanford and a change in major (from English to music), then graduate study with Randall Thompson at Harvard. In a conversational and engaging style, Mechem shares his life experiences, including his time as a newspaper writer and tennis

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pro, and his encounters with Dimitri Shostakovich, Billie Jean King, The Grateful Dead, Benjamin Britten, and Aaron Copland.

The central theme of the book is the trajectory of classical music in the second half of the twentieth century, and the conflict between tonality and atonality. His lyric style belongs to no particular “school” except the tradition of beauty found in great art. Mechem asks music lovers to believe their own ears, not the lectures of “experts.” He writes:

When this book was taking shape I had to make a decision about its format. Should it concentrate on the battle between tonality and atonality, using my personal experiences sparingly? Some suggested that would be a more influential book. I decided, however, that a narrative about my musical life would all of my opinions to emerge naturally... My path to composition was unorthodox; it makes a good story. It has enough ups and downs to create emotion and suspense.... That is why this book is both a memoir and a serious discussion of how classical music shot itself in the foot... My chief aim has been to give an accurate picture of a chaotic musical era as experienced by one composer (ix-x, xiii)

The twenty-four chapters take the reader through the composer’s musical journey and personal life and especially the genesis of his choral, orchestral, and operatic works.

He does not attempt to analyze his music but instead focuses on the circumstances behind the creation of each piece. Mechem also relates the stories of the composition of his operas, the challenges of securing performances for these works, and the

state of opera performance today from a composer’s viewpoint.

Of special interest will be the three appendices, which include “The Text Trap,” a reprint of a *Choral Journal* article from November 2005, and most especially the

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## Book Reviews

Coda, a fascinating summation of the atonality/tonality debate from Mechem's perspective.

*Believe Your Ears: Life of a Lyric Composer* is highly commended to conductors. Opera lovers and composers for the generous insight and practical approaches Kirke Mechem offers, not only into his own works, but especially the world of music composition in the mid-twentieth century.

Gregory Pysh  
Midland, Texas

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### ***The Composer's Craft: A Practical Guide for Students and Teachers***

Blake Henson & Gerald Custer  
Chicago: GIA Publications  
208 pp  
Hardback, \$24.95  
ISBN: 978-1579999766

*The Composer's Craft: A Practical Guide for Students and Teachers* is for both experienced and novice composers. Written with a mixture of personal and professional prose, the

authors have crafted a text that is both interactive and educational. Blake Henson and Gerald Custer, well-known composers and educators, guide the reader through the why, how, and what of composing music. Not only does this book center on composing for choral ensembles, the authors also discuss writing for solo instruments, solo voice, vocal ensembles, instrumental ensembles, and the piano.

The authors also place an exercise at the end of each chapter to guide the reader toward understanding each chapter's importance to the composer's craft. A few examples of these include "Write five opening gestures, each employing a different combination of tempo and dynamic..." (Chapter 4, The Anatomy of a Composition), "Write out the four-note motive that appears at the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Create a fifteen-to-twenty bar phrase consisting entirely of various transformations of the motive" (Chapter 5, Putting Ideas in Writing). All of the exercises are organized to be a step-by-step guide, allowing the reader to understand

the processes used by the authors/composers to develop their compositional technique.

Within this book are two valuable features that I found unique: reflections and exercises. The reflections are useful in guiding the readers to question, reflectively, important factors of how and why they compose music. The exercises guide the reader toward understanding each aspect of the composer's craft and are organized to be a step-by-step guide, allowing the reader to understand some of the processes used by both authors/composers to develop their composing techniques.

*The Composer's Craft* is unique in its presentation of both the creative and academic components of crafting music. While the authors share their individual journeys, composers and conductors reading this book can gain valuable insight and practical understanding into the artistic nuances composers harness to create their music.

Alan Davis  
Brighton, CO

A promotional graphic for ChoralNet. It features a background image of a white coffee cup with a dark beverage, a white keyboard, and a stack of round, patterned cookies. The ChoralNet logo is prominently displayed in blue, with the text "American Choral Directors Association" underneath. A yellow hand icon is positioned to the right of the logo. Below the logo is a search bar containing the website address "www.choralnet.org".

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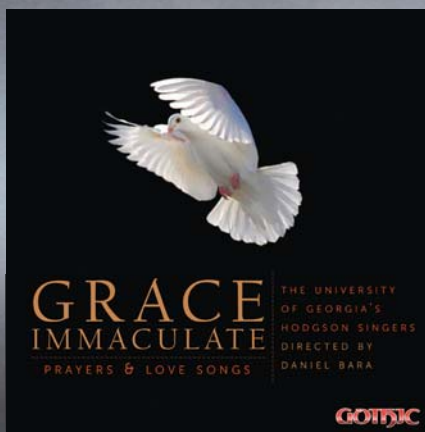


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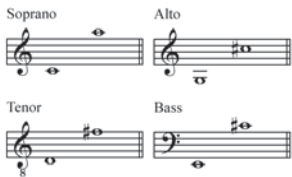


# Choral Reviews

Kevin Dibble, editor kevin.dibble11@houghton.edu

## Sanctuary

David Squires (2015)  
SATB unaccompanied  
Performance Link:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sys\\_YTVHxq4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sys_YTVHxq4)



Publisher: available through the composer at david.squires@twu.ca

*Sanctuary* is the most recent choral work from the pen of Canadian composer David Squires. This striking piece sets portions of Psalm 73 as selected by the composer's wife Colette (the work's dedicatee). The music follows the Psalmist's words in tracing a path from uncertainty and despair to confident affirmation.

Set in a slow, triple-time E minor, the work opens with basses and tenors introducing a searching, upward motive that comes to rest on an E/F-sharp/A aggregation. Several measures later, the women's voices respond with a descending motive initially harmonized as an i64 chord, a sonority that appears frequently and in many voicings in this composition. The initial words, "Whom have I in heaven," are repeated, in

the twenty-second measure to fresh melodic material. Here the melodic writing is more angular, tracing minor and major sevenths by way of an intervening third.

Variety is achieved as this motive is placed at various pitch levels, by turns on F-sharp, C, A, and G, appearing in the tenor, soprano, and bass voices. There is a good deal of splitting of the four choral parts, and this texture is exploited to the fullest in the lush seven-part harmonies of measures 48-52. The entire opening section culminates with four *tutti* measures that finish, not with a section-closing cadence, but with a ton-

ally ambiguous chord and a measure of silence. The second section introduces the listener to a sonoric depiction of the "sanctuary of God." The relatively simple rhythms of the first section give way to more complex supertriplets and gentle syncopations.

The final section sees a consolidation into five choral parts (only the basses dividing) and the most tonal music of the piece, now in the parallel key of E major. The opening melody is reworked in the soprano part of the hymnic texture, with the second basses low E undergirding the part writing. The second melodic

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# Choral Reviews

idea reappears in measure 118 and then the music rises ever upward, culminating with a powerful set of chords to the words “But God is the strength of my heart.” The final measures repeat the word “forever,” eschewing a concluding cadence to E major in favor of a repeated series of three chords that become softer to the point of imperceptibility. The composer suggests the option of having the singers recess from the performance hall during the repeated final measures (gradually reducing the number of choristers singing is given as an alternative when a recession is not practicable). The metaphor of the ending that seems to stretch into eternity is extremely

effective and would make the work particularly apt for a sacred setting.

All in all, the work is well within the capabilities of a good college choir and would provide a worthwhile challenge to a good church choir (one large enough to cover the often divided vocal parts). There are several sections of moderate rhythmic difficulty, some close harmonies, and Mixolydian modal tinges, but overall this is an approachable piece conceived well within an idiom of extended tonality.

Jon Thompson  
Langley, British Columbia

## *Winter Roses*

Anthony Bernarducci  
2016  
SSA, piano (3'15")



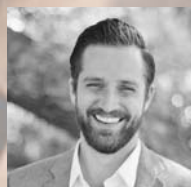
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Anthony Bernarducci has written an accessible setting of an excerpt from the 1883 poem *Winter Roses* by John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892). Part of the Andre J. Thomas Choral Series and scored for SSA choir, it would be highly appropriate for a high school women's choir, especially one that is just beginning to sing in three parts, or even an advanced middle school treble voice ensemble. Set in D minor (with hints of D major and F major along the way), in common time, the narrow voice ranges are nearly interchangeable, perhaps allowing early part singers the opportunity to explore singing in different parts of the harmonic texture. The lovely piano accompaniment is of easy to moderate difficulty.

The form of the piece consists of three large sections. The first and last are united by an atmospheric piano introduction that paints a picture of a winter landscape. Some long





One welcome aspect of this piece is that there are many opportunities for young choirs to create a musical performance. There are detailed dynamic indications throughout the score, and a couple of places where

*ritardando* is indicated. When the notes and rhythms of a piece are not particularly challenging, it is often a good time to focus a choir’s attention on realizing the composer’s intentions with expressive elements such as dynamics and tempo changes, not to mention the interpretations of the conductor.

It is often a challenge to find secular texts for a winter concert. This piece would help to fill the void. Young singers may need to consider some of the ideas in the text from the point of view of an older person. For example, a line like “And Nature’s winter and my own/Stand, flower-

less, side by side” may need some perspective. However, the hopeful ending of the poem evokes images to which all ages can relate: “Come sweetest fragrance, shapes and hues, The rosy wealth of June!”

### Connections

[www.anthonymbarnarducci.com](http://www.anthonymbarnarducci.com)  
[www.bartleby.com/372/452.html](http://www.bartleby.com/372/452.html)  
(complete text of Whittier’s poem)

John Devorick  
Grantham, Pennsylvania

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