

# CHORAL JOURNAL

DECEMBER 2019



“FOR HE IS OUR  
CHILDHOOD’S PATTERN”:

A FESTIVAL  
OF NINE LESSONS  
AND CAROLS AS AN  
INTERGENERATIONAL  
MODEL



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concert  
productions

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This year's **Broadway Series**



**On the Cover** The cover shows King's College Cambridge in the background, where the Christmas Eve service of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols has been presented for over a century.

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## STANDING COMMITTEES

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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

## World Choral Day



On Sunday, December 8, 2019, the American Choral Directors Association joins with the choral organizations of the world in celebrating World Choral Day. The International Federation for Choral Music instituted this day of choral advocacy in 1990, and since then, millions of singers across the globe have been involved in World Choral Day concerts, festivals, sing-alongs, choral seminars, days of friendship, and other events held on this day to draw attention to the choral art. World Choral Day began with the General Assembly of IFCM with the following pronouncement:

“The world is living through severe and continuous crisis of self-destruction. There are no possible reasons that can justify these actions. The majority of the human race wants to live in peace with dignity. It is time to show, with more power and strength, that our choral family contributes, through music to break down the artificial barriers product of politics, different ideologies, religious differences, and racial hatred that separate human beings. We must be able to show that MUSIC, the divine art, is more than the mere search of formal perfection and interpretative beauty, music should serve to extol the values of solidarity, peace, and understanding. We cannot work isolated, we have to make all possible efforts to have our voices heard and to let music work its own paths of communication.”

These words sound prophetic and timely to our present-day situation, even thirty years after their institution. The beauty of a World Choral Day is that our participation recognizes a universal that we believe is true for our choral expression. We continue to firmly believe that choral music is iconic as it shares a common language with the world in which we want to create: a world of balance, diversity, harmony, resonance, and blend. I believe it is also a medium of solidarity, peace, and understanding.

I would like to invite ACDA members to join this global choral event with your choir and share your love for choral singing with thousands of other choirs from all around the globe. This past summer I set foot on six of the seven continents of the world. In every place I went I found people who love their nation as I love mine; who love their families as we love ours; and who love to share their story through choral music and sing together in community and harmony. And I found that they do it very,

very well.

All participating choirs register their concerts/events on [www.worldchoralday.org](http://www.worldchoralday.org) and download the proclamation it is given in 27 languages. This proclamation shall be announced at the beginning of

Here is how you can participate on December 8: Register your choral event of any description at [www.worldchoralday.org](http://www.worldchoralday.org) and post the above proclamation, print it in your program, (available on the website in twenty-seven languages), and/or read it at your performance or event. After the concert, post any pictures or video you are able to capture to the site for increased visibility and connection to the event. Direct your performers and audience to the website to demonstrate solidarity with this world community. Participants are given a diploma for participating in the event, which I would ask you to continue to display on your own website and future programs.

Over the years, I have been approached by many members, industry members, staff members, and other stakeholders with ideas of some variation on this theme of a day dedicated to choral music. My response is and remains to be, "We have one! Let's participate in it." My desire is to continue to connect World Choral Day to other advocacy activities that help unite us as a global choral community and advance our superpower of peace and understanding: choral music.



[sharp@acda.org](mailto:sharp@acda.org)

## 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 ?



- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Dec 5-7   | IFCM Executive Committee<br>Lisbon, Portugal         |
| Dec 8     | World Choral Day                                     |
| Dec 14-15 | "Angel Band" Premiere<br>Aitken, SC                  |
| Dec 20    | ACDA Staff Celebration<br>Oklahoma City, OK          |
| Jan 18-19 | Children's Choir<br>Conductor Retreat<br>Atlanta, GA |

What's on Tim's Ipad?



*A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*

by Edwin H. Friedman

*Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress*

by Steven Pinker

What's Tim's Latest App?



Netflix

What's Tim Listening to?



*Sunrise Mass*

Ola Gjeilo

Westminster Williamson Voices

Hear more at [www.acda.org](http://www.acda.org).

Log in and click on the First Listen icon

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l y n n e \_ g a c k l e @ b a y l o r . e d u

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k f e r n a n d @ j w p e p p e r . c o m

# From the PRESIDENT



Lynne Gackle

Excitement is building as registration and preparation for the 2020 ACDA Regional Conferences continues. Each conference will have unique themes, which have been visioned by the leadership within each Region. These conferences will reflect the outstanding choirs and choral artistry within each Region. Whether your plans take you to Milwaukee, WI; Rochester, NY; Little Rock, AR; Salt Lake City, UT; Spokane, WA; or to Mobile, AL, you are sure to be uplifted, rejuvenated, and inspired. For the past ten months, National Vice President André Thomas and his outstanding Steering Committee have been preparing for the next National Conference in Dallas, TX, March 17–20, 2021. No doubt this will be a national conference that will be life changing for all those in attendance. These conferences offer inspiration, ideas, and opportunities to network with new colleagues and renew friendships across the country.

Indeed, these conferences have become a true professional event in the lives of so many in our membership. The planning for these conferences begins literally four years prior to the actual regional conference and up to as much as six year prior to the national conferences. Every effort is made to place the conferences in locations that: 1) are easily accessible (airports, driving distance), 2) boast outstanding performance venues, and 3) offer the hospitality and cost factors our membership has come to expect. Contracts for hotels and facilities are signed by ACDA and conference cities years ahead of the actual conference to assure that prices and venues are locked in. Finally, the key element for the success of these conferences stems from the tremendous creativity and untold hours of planning resulting from the commitment of the leadership both at the regional and national levels.

We all recognize that there are political decisions that affect all of our lives on a daily basis. Similarly, recent decisions such as those that exist in California prohibiting state-funded institutions from doing business with other states whose laws do not reflect like-minded opinions are now affecting organizations such as ACDA. In this issue, you will find an “open message” to the membership from ACDA (page 7). ACDA and the Executive Committee is committed to, within the boundaries of our control, doing our absolute best to make sure that future national conference sites are chosen so that all members feel welcome and all members are able to use their states’ travel funds.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming regional conferences!

# From the EDITOR



Amanda Bumgarner

This December 2019 issue of *Choral Journal* includes the final issue for two members of our board. Kristina Boerger has served as article reviewer on the Editorial Board since 2010 and has provided invaluable feedback on many of the articles published over the past nine years. She has brought a wealth of knowledge, with specific areas of interest that include

early music, vocal chamber music, cultural topics, and the countries of Spain, Latin America, and Germany. She was also the guest editor of the “Social Justice and Choral Communities” focus issue in October 2018.

On page 89, you will find the final column of Recorded Sound Reviews under David Puderbaugh’s editorial leadership. Over the past eight years, David has worked with reviewers and publishers to share reviews of CDs with the readers of *Choral Journal*. He has also served as feature article reviewer, with special interest and expertise in the area of Baltic choral music. I want to publicly thank both Kristina and David for their work on behalf of ACDA. We opened up Editorial Board applications in 2018, and as a result of that search, Debra Spurgeon will be replacing Kristina starting in January 2020.

There will be another open position beginning in January 2021, so look for a call for applications early in 2020 for the *Choral Journal* Editorial Board. We have not yet filled the open position for Recorded Sound Reviews editor; if that sounds interesting to you, please see the Call for Applications on page 88 and contact me at [abumgarner@acda.org](mailto:abumgarner@acda.org) with any questions. There is also an opening for an editor for the *Choral Journal*’s Research Report column, currently edited by Patrick K. Freer. You can find more information about that position on page 88.

The 2019 calendar year of *Choral Journal* has featured three focus issues: Relevance (April, guest edited by Jo Ann Miller); Children’s/Community Youth Choirs (June/July, guest edited by Cheryl Dupont); and Advocacy and Collaboration (September, guest edited by Karen Bruno). This coming January 2020 will feature a full preview of the interest sessions and performances available at all six regional conferences.

Please consider how you may want to contribute to any of ACDA’s publications in the coming year. Submissions are open for *Choral Journal*, *Chor-Teach*, and the *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing*. You can find out more information at [acda.org](http://acda.org) under the “Publications” dropdown. I look forward to continuing to share resources that will help you grow in your profession.

## Choral Journal

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# Letters to the EDITOR



Dear Editor,

I want to thank you for Dr. Patrick Freer's August 2019 *Choral Journal* article, "An Ethical Response to the 'Gender Trouble' in Choral Music." I cannot think of an article in recent memory that I so thoroughly digested. I wish to publically thank Dr. Freer for acknowledging the various communities that are the make-up of ACDA and our other professional organizations as choral musicians and educators.

I welcomed the reading of an article that did not over-simplify the issue of gender and provided substance from which all conductor-teachers may approach their singers. I appreciated the points that were brought forth to assist in the discussion of areas of unity in our profession, by first recognizing that we may not all be of the same mind and philosophy on how to approach this issue. Patrick addresses the complexities surrounding gender issues that perhaps are not adequately being brought forth in the overall discussion. Gender issues in the choral setting are not simplistic, involving areas of vocal health, mental health, emotional well-being, and personal identity. Those who are in transition who wish to teach choral music face additional issues that we as choral music teacher educators must help them face with not only support and love, but with honesty.

If we are to help our choral singers and those studying to teach choral singing, then we as an organization have a responsibility to hear all voices. This includes those who feel conflicted about

or unsure of how to best approach gender issues in their choral settings. Choral directors need to feel that ACDA is a safe space for discussion. My hope is that Patrick's article will serve as a catalyst for open, honestly diverse discussions in which all ACDA members feel welcome.

Sincerely,  
Jamila L. McWhirter  
Professor of Choral Music Education  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Chair, ACDA Education and Communication  
Standing Committee

I just finished reading Mark Grizzard's article "Castle of Light: A Snapshot of Latvian Choral Music as the Nation Turns 100" (October 2019) and want to compliment the author on a beautifully written piece that brought back so many wonderful memories. In 1998, I and one of my students from Cal State Fullerton participated in the Latvian National Song Festival as guest members of the Los Angeles Latvian Choir. There are simply no words to describe the feeling of being one of 750+ second tenors singing in a choir of 15,000! Even during breaks in the full-day rehearsal preceding the concert, people were singing in the stairwells and throughout the fairgrounds. Also, it was raining on the day of the rehearsal, but that didn't have any effect except that choir members simply opened their umbrellas and continued to sing. I only wish we had some similar mass choral event in this country! I am and will be forever grateful for the opportunity to have shared in one of the world's most amazing choral events.

Vance Wolverton  
vdwolvman@yahoo.com





## An Open Message to the Membership

The American Choral Directors Association and its member musicians, artists, scholars, and citizens stand in solidarity with the LGBTQIA community against hate, violence, exclusion, or discrimination in any form.

As conductors, teachers, musicians, performers, and scholars, we have a responsibility to all of those in our care. As professionals who are charged with the musical education of our children, youth, university students, and adults, it is incumbent upon us all to stand strong against those who seek to demean, impoverish, harm, and exclude others. We know that the power of the human voice joined in song sends a powerful message of unity, love, and community. We also know that in order to be the greatest advocates for those whose lives we touch, we must always seek to build strong communities of trust, respect, and understanding.

Building a community starts with making sure each of our members feels welcome at and are given the same opportunities to attend ACDA-sponsored events. In 2017, California instituted a state law banning the use of taxpayer funds to support travel to certain states that, according to the bill: “(1) authorizes discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, or (2) voids or repeals existing state or local protections against such discrimination.” This ban applies our 2021 national conference state, Texas. Because of this, many of our California members will struggle to find the requisite funds to join us in Dallas. We hear the frustration of both the California membership at large and the LGBTQIA community specifically.

Our conference sites are secured up to six years in advance. We look at many aspects of how the conference site will impact all constituents, including hotel costs, appropriate venue availability, and accessibility of the city by air travel. At the time of negotiation for our 2021 conference site, the California ban was not in place. Pulling out of Dallas is a financial impossibility for our organization at this point. However, both the repercussions of this ban and the response from our members have had a major influence on Dr. André Thomas’s artistic vision and programming for the 2021 National Conference.

Moving forward, the Executive Committee is, within the boundaries of our control, doing our absolute best to make sure that our future national conference sites are chosen so that all members feel welcome and all members are able to use their states’ travel funds.

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# International Calendar of CHORAL EVENTS

**Corsham Winter School, United Kingdom, Dec 28 2019-Jan 2, 2020.** An Iberian Nativity ~ Christmas music by Lobo, Guerrero and Victoria in a small Cotswolds town directed by Will Dawes.

Contact: Lacock Courses,  
Andrew van der Beek  
Email: avdb@lacock.org  
Website: www.lacock.org

**Komitas International Festival, Yerevan, Armenia, Feb 28-Mar 9, April 10-17, 2020.** Festival featuring the Hamburg Girls Choir (Germany) from February 28 till March 9, and the Ugnelė Children's Choir (Lithuania) from April 10 till 17. Concerts will take place in different cities of Armenia.

Contact: Little Singers of Armenia  
Email: alsccc@hotmail.com  
Website: http://www.alsccc.am

**26th International Choir Festival of Paris, France, Mar 12-15, 2020.** Friendship concerts with local choirs and choirs from all over the world. Final concert of all attending choirs at La Madeline Church. Contact: Music&Friends by Emile Weber

Email: musicandfriends@vew.lu  
Website: www.musicandfriends.lu

**9th International Gdansk Choir Festival, Poland, Mar 13-15, 2020.** For all kinds of choirs. Competition part in six categories, concerts, non-competitive participation possible, meeting of choirs in the famous city of Solidarity. Apply before Oct 15, 2019.

Contact: MELODY & Polonia  
Cantat

Email: mail@gdanskfestival.pl  
Website: www.gdanskfestival.pl

**16th Concorso Corale Internazionale, Riva del Garda, Italy, Apr 5-9, 2020.** For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Beside the competition, Meeting Music will organize further festival activities such as Evaluation Performance, Individual Coaching, meeting in music Friendship Concerts and a Choir Parade through the streets of Riva.

Contact: Meeting Music  
Email: info@meeting-music.com  
Website: www.meeting-music.com

**Barcelona Workshop "Easter Week and Religious Choral Music," Spain, Apr 6-9, 2020.**

Intensive workshop with Josep Prats (Spain) as main guest conductor. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona  
Email: stage@corearte.es  
Website: www.corearte.es

**6th International Children's & Youth Chorus Festival 'StimmenKlangRaum', Weimar, Germany, Apr 16-19, 2020.** Four day festival full of music, recreation and social interaction in inspiring environment full of parks, historical buildings and modern architecture. All concerts are non-competitive and non-judged.

Contact: Schola Cantorum Weimar  
Email: sg@schola-cantorum-weimar.de  
Website: www.schola-cantorum-weimar.de

**3rd Michelangelo International Music Festival, Florence, Italy, Apr 18-20, 2020.** Competition and festival for choirs and orchestras.

Contact: Florence Choral  
Email: chairman@florencechoral.com  
Website: www.florencechoral.com

**Slovakia Cantat, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, Apr 23-26, 2020.** International Choir and Folksong Festival. Competition, workshop, concerts of sacred and secular music. The Slovak capital Bratislava opens its gates and invites choirs to its charming centre in spring. Apply before Dec 15, 2019.

Contact: Bratislava Music Agency  
Email: info@choral-music.sk  
Website: www.choral-music.sk

**10th International Messiah Choir Festival, Salzburg, Austria, Apr 23-26, 2020.** 10 selected choruses or orchestras of any age and composition (also dance groups). Performances in Salzburg and surroundings.

Contact: Chorus MM  
Email: messiah-salzburg@cc-a.at  
Website: messiah-chorfestival-salzburg.jimdo.com/

**66th Cork International Choral Festival, Ireland, Apr 29-May 3 2020.** For 5 wonderful days Cork City and County will welcome some of the finest amateur competitive and non-competitive choirs from around the world for a programme of choral concerts,

national and international competition, and internationally renowned performers as thousands of participants bring Cork to life. Join us in Cork for one of Europe's Premier Choral Festivals. Bringing a city to life with song since 1954!

Contact: Cork International Choral Festival

Email: [info@corkchoral.ie](mailto:info@corkchoral.ie)

Website: [www.corkchoral.ie](http://www.corkchoral.ie)

**8th Queen of the Adriatic Sea Choral Festival and Competition, Cattolica, Italy, Apr 30-May 3, 2020.**

Competition for Equal Voices, Mixed, Chamber, Youth, Children, Sacred Music, Folk and Spiritual Choirs. Concerts at the beautiful San Leo medieval cathedral. Apply before Mar 31, 2020.

Contact: Queen Choral Festival and Competition

Email:

[office@queenchoralfestival.org](mailto:office@queenchoralfestival.org)

Website:

[www.queenchoralfestival.org](http://www.queenchoralfestival.org)

**68th European Music Festival for Young People, Neerpelt, Belgium, Apr 30-May 4, 2020.**

Categories: children's, single-voice youth, mixed-voice youth, pennant series children, pennant series single-voice youth, pennant series mixed-voice youth, free series: vocal and vocal-instrumental ensembles such as close harmony, vocal jazz, folk music, gospel & spiritual.

Contact: Europees Muziekfestival voor de Jeugd

Email: [info@emj.be](mailto:info@emj.be)

Website: [www.emj.be](http://www.emj.be)

**WORLD SYMPOSIUM ON  
CHORAL MUSIC 2020**

The WSCM will be in Auckland, New Zealand, from July 11 to 18, 2020. The 2020 host, the New Zealand Choral Federation, a federation with more 20,000 members, is a member of the International Federation for Choral Music. It is a member of the Asia-Pacific Forum.

**WSCM Theme in 2020**

The connection and tensions between people and land, between urban life and the natural world. The expression *tangata whenua* (literally “people of the land”) is the name the indigenous Maori of New Zealand use of themselves and a concept that sits at the heart of NZ culture. The *tangata whenua* are guardians of our natural resources, environment and sustainability—values and priorities shared by all New Zealanders, regardless of race.

In WSCM2020 we want to explore through choral music the relationship humans have with the land that supports them: the sense of identity they derive from it and the tensions that arise out of it.

As Tim Sharp said after his recent visit to New Zealand, “With choral music, we are story-tellers at heart with our ensembles, and this reality has been captured by the New Zealand architects at work for the 2020 WSCM. I have personally been moved by the Māori experience and how the people of New Zealand have learned to live and work and perform in empathy with their heritage.”

<https://wscm2020.com>

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## Hallelujah, Amen!

Aspects of American culture demonstrate an “Anglophilia” or an admiration of English places, people, and culture. This is seen in the popular culture, with admiration for The Beatles, a fascination with English royalty, and especially in television, where shows like *The Great British Baking Show* and *The Crown* captivate viewers. In the religious sphere, the King James translation of the Bible, Handel’s *Messiah*, and services of choral evensong are all examples of English contributions to Christianity globally.

Another contribution, the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is now a much beloved and global Christmas tradition. The liturgy, which serves as a model for intergenerational worship, has long been associated with King’s College, Cambridge, where the chapel choir has been presenting the Christmas Eve service for over a century, though it originated as early as 1880 with Edward White Benson at Truro Cathedral in Cornwall. The simple liturgy comprises alternating biblical lessons and sung carols—either by choir or congregation. After its introduction, the service caught on quickly, and its popularity was spread further by way of radio and television broadcasts.

This article reflects on the ways in which the service broadly exhibits intergenerational worship, both participatory worship of all ages and the responsibilities of worship leadership shared by young and old alike. In addition to the model provided by King’s College, Cambridge, we will explore other variants, such as Lessons and Carols services for other seasons (such as the Advent Lessons and Carols associated with St. John’s College, Cambridge); the service adapted for other institutions (for example, Brown University’s annual Lessons and Carols Service); and even creative and challenging uses of extrabiblical readings (such as W.H. Auden’s *For the Time Being*). The adaptability of the liturgy extends its utility especially for places seeking to explore intergenerational participation and leadership.



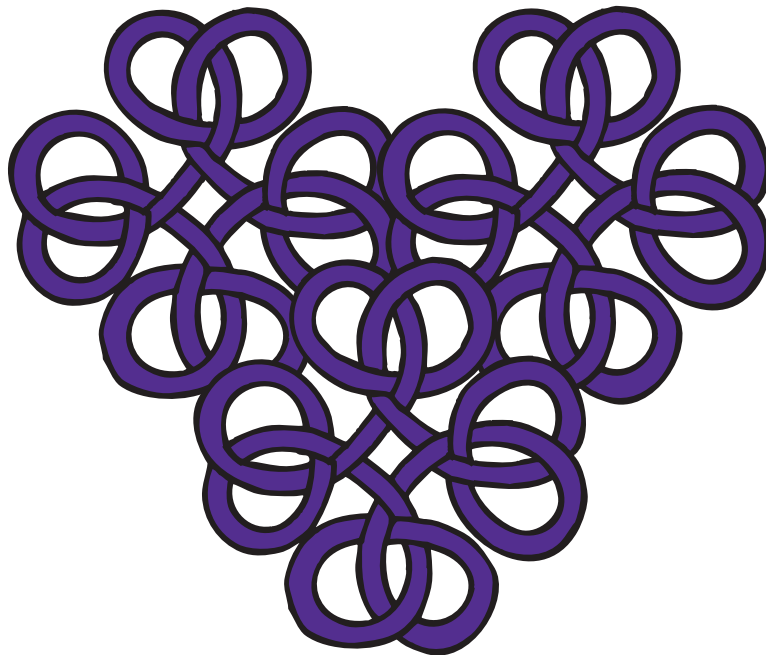
Eternal Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named: Unite us, as we worship thee here, with all who in far-off places are lifting up their hands and hearts to thee; that thy Church throughout the world, with the Church in heaven, may offer up one sacrifice of thanksgiving; to the praise and honour of thy holy.

—Eric Milner-White,  
*Daily Prayer*

# For Heisar Childhood's Pattern

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols as  
an Intergenerational Model

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# For He is our Childhood's Pattern

## A Global Popularity

This new service at King's College Chapel, which premiered only six weeks after Armistice Day, was well received. For a population broken by the violence and loss of the Great War, the portion of the bidding prayer "let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore" must have been incredibly poignant and relevant. Initially a local phenomenon, it was first broadcast on the radio in 1928. It has since been broadcast annually by BBC radio with the exception of 1930. The reason for a lack of broadcast that year has been the source of speculation, but journalist and author Alexandra Coghlan speculates that this was due to the challenging acoustical conditions at King's Chapel, which made recording difficult.<sup>1</sup>

Coghlan notes that the initial broadcast "arrived with little fanfare—a quick glance through the *Radio Times* for December 1928 finds only a small notice of the programme, tucked between adverts for Bovril, Veno's Lightning Cough Cure and Hovis."<sup>2</sup> Over the next decade, the broadcast increased its audience, leading one newspaper to describe it as "the most lovely annual event of the year, and one of those most appreciated by listeners."<sup>3</sup> In 1938, the service reached America through service of the Mutual Broadcasting System of America.

The radio broadcast continued even through World War II, when, in 1941, the chapel's stained-glass windows were removed for safe keeping. Both Boris Ord and David Willcocks (an organ scholar at the time), as well as a number of the choral scholars joined the armed forces. But music at the school continued to function under the leadership of Harold Darke and some volunteer choristers. The broadcast proved to be a morale booster during the war, inspiring those at home and in service abroad. There is even record of reenactments of the service, with a 1954 issue of *Radio Times* reporting:

In several German prisoner-of-war camp[s], carol services with Lessons were held. At the Opera House of Caserta in Italy an Anglo-American choir of troops sang carols, and the Lessons were read in a series starting with a private, ending with a general. In a Japanese

prisoner-of-war camp the curtain rose on a scene representing a room at the BBC. An announcer said, "We are taking you to King's"; then it rose again on two rows of prisoners, dressed in white costumes, meant to look like surplices, and singing carols to the accompaniment of camp-made instruments.<sup>4</sup>

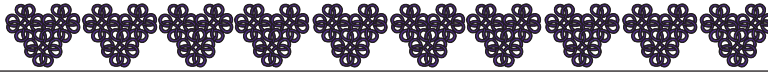
An article in the *New York Times* claims that the BBC has reported some 370 million listeners worldwide, though this is a rough estimate.<sup>5</sup> In addition to radio, the service has been broadcast on television since 1963. Audio and visual recordings and online streaming have aided in making the service accessible to listeners far and wide. In a description on the King's College website, the service is described as "public property," being enjoyed by many, a Christmas gift to those in the Cambridge community and around the globe.<sup>6</sup>

The broadcast takes the service outside of the King's College chapel doors, reaching an audience of both believers and non-believers. Routley observes a peculiar tendency of the Christmas season more generally, writing: "It happens that at Christmas the barriers are still almost down, people gather 'round the public Christmas Tree to sing carols who never go to church, and people spare a thought for the Birth of Christ to whom His Death and Resurrection are no more than a fable."<sup>7</sup>

Bruce David Forbes, an ordained Methodist minister and a professor of religious studies, distinguishes between a "cultural Christmas" and a "Christian Christmas," noting that some are involved in one or the other, but that most people are involved in both.<sup>8</sup> The popularity of Christmas, even among the unchurched, must be related to both the cultural and Christian Christmas. It is true that there seems to be some special allure during the Christmas season, enticing those who may only attend church once or twice each year.

## Intergenerational Origins

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols (also known as "A Ceremony of Lessons and Carols" and often abbreviated "Lessons and Carols") originated not at King's College but rather sometime prior at Truro Cathedral in Cornwall.<sup>9</sup> The cathedral building was undergoing



construction at the time, and the temporary building was a wooden structure—a humble and fitting place for a Christmas tradition to be born. Around the year 1880, two Anglican priests, George Henry Somerset Walpole and Edward W. Benson, were experimenting with the format of their Christmas Eve services.<sup>10</sup> Walpole is perhaps best known as the father to the prolific author Hugh Walpole. Benson would later become the Archbishop of Canterbury.

There is a widespread notion that this service was intended to provide a Christmas Eve alternative to the pub, and that story could indeed be a part of the inspiration. Better documented is the new Service of Lessons and Carols as a replacement for the practice of singing carols in the community on Christmas Eve. Ray Robinson, writing on the origins of the service, quotes an article in a Cornwall newspaper, describing the growing popularity of the newly implemented carol service:

The choir of the Cathedral will sing a number of Carols in the Cathedral tomorrow evening (Christmas Eve), the service commencing at ten o'clock. We understand that this is at the wish of many of the leading parishioners and others. A like service has been instituted in other cathedrals and large towns, and has been much appreciated. It is the intention of the choir to no longer continue the custom of singing carols at the residences of the members of the congregation.<sup>11</sup>

The carol services at Truro seemed to attract large numbers of attendees, with one newspaper noting that the cathedral “was crowded, many Nonconformists as well as church-goers being present.”<sup>12</sup> The service was organized around nine biblical texts and nine carols—stemming from a Medieval custom to mark the greatest feast days with nine lessons.<sup>13</sup> The lessons were read by various officers within the church, beginning with a young chorister and ending with the Bishop. These early versions involved a sermon, multiple selections from *Messiah*, a Magnificat and a Benediction. The format of the service grew in popularity and spread to other churches.

In 1918, the first service of Nine Lessons and Carols

took root at King’s College, Cambridge, being planned by the dean of King’s, Eric Milner-White and music organized and rehearsed by Arthur Henry Mann, organist at King’s from 1876 to 1929. Milner-White felt that, in the aftermath of World War I, a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols would be more uplifting and relevant than a Christmas Eve evensong service. Since choral evensong was sung daily at King’s College, this service would provide something distinct and extraordinary.<sup>14</sup>

In its earliest form at King’s, the choir would have comprised sixteen boy treble voices and adult lay clerks singing the men’s parts.<sup>15</sup> Arthur Henry Mann replaced the lay clerks with undergraduate student “choral scholars.”<sup>16</sup> Today, fourteen college-aged undergraduates sing with the boy choristers: four counter-tenors, four tenors, and six basses.<sup>17</sup> This ensemble represents a variety of ages.

It is with the innovations of Dean Milner-White that the service was perfected, reaching its familiar form by 1919. Milner-White concerned himself with the care of musical standards at King’s, collaborating with college organists A.H. Mann and Boris Ord. After premiering the Lessons and Carols liturgy in 1918, Milner-White continued to tinker with the elements and ordering—for example by adding the bidding prayer, Lord’s prayer, and by removing the Magnificat and Benediction. The service leads to the Ninth Lesson—the story of the Incarnation—a climactic moment in the liturgy during which the congregation stands. These changes were not arbitrary. As a liturgist, Milner-White strove to maintain purpose and dignity, writing: “The purpose of the particular Act must be crystal clear. When such a service is requested from the Minister, I usually begin by asking the promoters, ‘What is it you are wanting to say to God?’ And from that moment the whole approach is apt to change.”<sup>18</sup> In the environment of King’s College, where traditions are honored and preserved, a new service structure must be intentional, meeting a perceived need, not change for the sake of change. Milner-White felt that reform was needed, and he sought to provide a liturgy that was more relevant to the people.

Milner-White served as an army chaplain during World War I. His experiences in the Great War exposed him to the reality of the average troop’s ignorance with regard to matters of faith, causing him to question and

criticize the effectiveness of the *Book of Common Prayer*. He writes:

We are a new race, we priests of France, humbled by much strain and much failure, revolutionaries not at all in spirit, but actually in fact; and while often enough we sigh for the former days, the procession of splendid offices and the swell of the organ, these will never again content us unless or until the great multitude also find their approach to God through them.<sup>19</sup>

Transformed by the experiences of war, Milner-White does not propose abandoning the extant liturgies where they are working but rather seeks to explore more inclusive schemes of popular devotion. Rather than deserting the prayer book, he desired to add new liturgies “that can be known and loved by all from childhood; simple in language, intimate in feeling, and alight with the story and heart of our Lord; that can sink into peaceful, homely prayer, and spring into the beloved hymn effortlessly; and draw our eyes to Christ and our hearts to His Church in new and richer ways.”<sup>20</sup> The dean called for experimentation in church practice in an attempt to universalize the worship experience for “all ages of man, from childhood onward.”<sup>21</sup>

Dean Milner-White's efforts to build upon extant historic liturgies and prayers demonstrates considerable creativity. The Nine Lessons and Carols service builds upon historical forms—such as The Lord's Prayer and scriptural sequences—yet arranges them in new and thoughtful ways. His *Daily Prayer*, first published in 1959, is a collection of prayers for various occasions, drawn from a variety of sources, both ancient and modern. With this collection, he again explores the foundation of historic prayer models and the ways they can be adapted and abbreviated for modern use. The idea of building upon the past traditions and histories while keeping them fresh and relevant for the current times are concerns at the heart of intergenerational worship efforts.

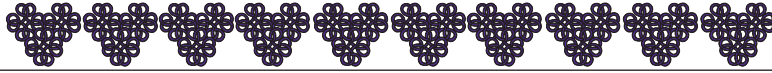
### Examining the Service through an Intergenerational Lens

Borrowing Allan G. Harkness's definition, intergenerational participation here is defined as the interaction across age groups in which there is a sense of mutual collaboration and shared experience.<sup>22</sup> Regarding Lessons and Carols, this participation includes the singers, the readers, and those in attendance both in person and via broadcast who share the experience together.

Storytelling is central to the service of Nine Lessons and Carols. This characteristic is emphasized at the outset of the bidding prayer, which encourages preparation to “hear again the message of the angels; in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.” Psychotherapist Kevin M. Bradt notes the community building properties of story, writing, “For this is what story does: it creates relationships of shared experiences of communality, of compassion and empathy.”<sup>23</sup> The service weaves together the beloved nativity story with Christmas carols and anthems, resonating with those participants who remember the story and the music from their childhood, often passed down through intergenerational sharing by some older family member.

After an organ prelude, the service at King's begins with the hymn “Once in Royal David's City,” as has been tradition since 1919. English writer David Edelsten asks, “Is there a more thrilling sound than a solo chorister's treble, thrown into and amplified by the towering vault of King's College Chapel, on Christmas Eve?”<sup>24</sup> The hymn text was authored by Cecil Frances Alexander, published in her 1848 collection *Hymns for Little Children*. The harmonization used for IRBY at King's College was composed by Mann and has been described by Erik Routley as an arrangement that “turns the homely children's hymn into a processional of immense spaciousness.”<sup>25</sup> The manner of its performance emphasizes the text and the spirit of the Incarnation, the birth and childhood of Christ. The first stanza is sung unaccompanied by a boy chorister, a voicing that displays vulnerability and innocence. The young singer is chosen at the last possible moment, “that way he doesn't have time to get nervous” says Stephen Cleobury, the retiring director of music at King's College Chapel choir.<sup>26</sup> The choir sings stanzas two through





four, and the congregation joins on the final two stanzas. The choir begins in the back and processes forward, this processional a symbol of the movement of the Church throughout history—a moving, living institution.<sup>27</sup>

The bidding prayer, a beloved component of the liturgy, is offered, providing focus and intent to the service.<sup>28</sup> This prayer was composed by Milner-White in 1919. The form leads directly into the Lord's Prayer, juxtaposing something new with something familiar. Canon Patrick Magee, who served as senior chorister at King's in 1928 and later as the Chaplain at King's, noted Milner-White's use of word pairings in the bidding prayer: "care and delight," "heart and mind," "read and mark," and "peace and goodwill."<sup>29</sup> These pairings accomplish an added emphasis and provide a more rhythmic and poetic characteristic when spoken.

The prayer specifically mentions "the aged and the little children," this pairing drawing explicit attention to both ends of the Christian life. The season of Christmas, with its emphasis on the salvation of humankind made manifest in the Christ child, lends itself to language centered around children and childhood. Of course, the bidding prayer makes reference to "the Babe lying in a manger." But Milner-White also traces a more complex theological truth, writing: "Let us read and mark in holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child." He addresses the present and the past, offering a prayer for current needs before drawing attention to the faithfully departed, a multitude with whom "we for evermore are one." This prayer acknowledges the experience of the Christian from childhood into the afterlife, drawing

### Milner-White's Bidding Prayer (1919)

Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmas Eve our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels; in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child; and let us make this Chapel, dedicated to Mary, his most blessed Mother, glad with our carols of praise:

But first let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in the dominions of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, within this University and City of Cambridge, and in the two royal and religious Foundations of King Henry VI here and at Eton:

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick in body and in mind and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; all who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

Our Father ...

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attention to this intergenerational reality of the faith. It also emphasizes unity in the worship act, a joining together of young and old, the living and departed.

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols utilizes no traditional sermon, but relies upon music and scripture readings to tell the story of the Nativity and to encourage spiritual edification. The nine lessons are read by lectors representing a variety of ages and positions. At King's College, the first reading is done by a boy chorister, then a collegiate choral scholar, and later the director of music, culminating with the college Provost. This shared responsibility of reading demonstrates a common story. But there is also the subtle implication of lingering Victorian ideals about the sinful nature of children in having a boy chorister read about sinful Adam. The biblical passages begin with the fall of mankind and the Old Testament prophecy of a forthcoming savior before moving into the New Testament narrative of the birth of Christ. The readings culminate with a passage from John 1:1-14, with the congregation invited to stand to honor the gravity and ponder the mystery of the Incarnation. Though there is a crescendo hierarchical agency present in the ordering, by utilizing readers from across ages and representations, this practice emphasizes a shared leadership.

The use of carols, a genre of song itself rooted in popular appeal and understanding, is a body of repertoire with appeal for all generations, children and adults alike. According to the Christmas Encyclopedia, a carol "in general may celebrate religious as well as secular holidays and other special events, they appeal to the public with lyrics and music with which the majority can identify."<sup>30</sup> Routley points to Percy Dearmer's description in the preface to *The Oxford Book of Carols*, which states that "carols are songs with a religious impulse that are simple, hilarious [boisterously merry], popular, and modern."<sup>31</sup> Nineteenth-century carol collector William Wallace Fyfe defined the carol as "a song intended to mingle joy with wonder."<sup>32</sup> Today, the word "carol" is most associated with Christmas, in both secular and religious forms, and there is little distinction between a Christmas hymn and a true Christmas carol. These songs are routinely taught to children and sung throughout life into adulthood. The Lessons and Carols service ends with "O come all ye faithful" and "Hark the herald angels sing," a tradition

maintained since the first service at King's.<sup>33</sup>

### Future Direction

What began as innovation has become a tradition over the course of time. The service at King's provides a consistent and well-established form, one that many congregations, especially those in the highly Anglophilic Anglican and Episcopalian traditions, imitate as closely as possible. Several components of the service are unchanging. The readings are consistent. "Once in royal David's City," "O come all ye faithful," and "Hark the herald angels sing" all have a fixed place in the liturgy. The manner of performance and general format of the service at King's College are unlikely to change in any major way.

Yet there are components of the service that do change. For example, the personnel involved at King's are in constant fluctuation, as the boys age out of the choir at age thirteen or when their voices change. The college-aged choristers and organ scholars are also relatively temporary and cycle through after a few years. The organist-music directors have been more consistent. Over the course of the twentieth century, there have been only six music directors. Daniel Hyde replaced Stephen Cleobury in October 2019, coming back to the UK after serving St. Thomas Church in New York City. This change could influence the sound of the ensemble, since Hyde has described the stereotypical English-choral sound as too "polite" and even "hooty."<sup>34</sup> In an article in the *New York Times*, Hyde mentions finding the King's College Choir "stifled by the weight that rested on such a storied ensemble, its work familiar to millions through annual Christmas radio broadcasts."<sup>35</sup> Though any change in leadership of a choir results in changes to that ensemble's sound, an appointment of a musician who is so boldly vocal, critical even, about such matters demonstrates a willingness at King's College to evolve. Since 1983, under Cleobury, a new carol has been commissioned for the service—an instance of innovation within tradition, something new within the context of something old.

This cycle of change within a stable and unchanging liturgical form can serve as a model for intergenerational relationships. The human life cycle, and even the life



of Christ, represents a move from young to old, from a beginning to an end. By interacting intergenerationally, the young are exposed to potential roles for future growth and service. For example, David Willcocks began his musical training as a boy chorister at Westminster Abbey before being appointed as organ scholar at King's College. Conversely, the choral scholars, organists, music directors, and clergy are in regular interaction with the boy choristers, a constant reminder of the vitality and potential exhibited by youth. The shared responsibility between the young and old, especially in such a high-pressure environment, with the service under global viewership and scrutiny, displays an intergenerational effort and collaboration. The boys are held to a high professional standard, the same level expected from the college-aged young men. The newest boy choristers, called "probationers," practice with the more experienced boys but get more one-on-one work and perform less frequently. In this way, the next generation of choristers is always being prepared.

This juxtaposition of old and new allows the service to maintain its relevance and appeal, a trait that Milner-White would likely have found pleasing. The service has been modified to fit a variety of liturgical seasons, most popularly being adapted for Advent. In fact, Milner-White organized an Advent Lessons and Carols service in 1934.<sup>36</sup> Appropriate musical selections must be determined, and the bidding prayer must be contextualized when used for a different season. The choir of St. John's College, Cambridge, does for Advent what King's does for Christmas, adapting the service for a new liturgical season. Many parish churches, especially where the choir is composed of volunteers, may find it easier to schedule a Lessons and Carols service in the season of Advent rather than Christmas, since many people travel to be with family.

One of the challenges of intergenerational gatherings is the use of language that is accessible across the age spectrum, honoring the range of comprehension present in such an assembly. Often, music and readings are selected that are diluted for one group and incomprehensible to another. Finding a balance to satisfy both groups can be challenging. Thomas Travisano describes this aim as living in the place where childhood and adulthood metaphorically play tug-of-war, "pulling the child forward

into adulthood and pulling the adult back into a world of child-experience that the adult may pride himself on having grown beyond."<sup>37</sup> Christmas carols do this well, through simple language and memorable tunes.

The selection of readers for the lessons demonstrates a hierarchy of position and, as discussed previously, begins with a boy chorister reading the first lesson and culminating with a priest or bishop reading the ninth lesson. This progression of age could stand as a symbol of moving through life from young to old, but it could also imply that children are somehow less important than adults. Care should be taken to examine the agential implications of such an ordering, placing an emphasis on a fair representation of the community rather than a hierarchical progression. In striving to represent the community, considering members of all ages should be prioritized.

The cathedral model is not an accurate depiction of what is happening in all parish churches, and the services and traditions at King's do not represent what is going on everywhere the Lessons and Carols service takes place. Colin Durrant writes:

The English...choral tradition is recognized widely. To believe, however, that this is representative of a wide practice that exists today is misleading. It is a fragment of an elitist model of choral singing perpetuated by an intellectual Christian minority. It is not necessarily to be found in most of our schools for most of our children.<sup>38</sup>

Yet, these cathedral parishes do have an impact on the practices of other churches, especially with the availability of recordings and broadcasts. The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols from King's represents an ideal, a model that inspires others to follow suit. The service can be executed well even without a boy choir or trained voices. There is no British accent required. In fact, the service could be performed with no choir at all, alternating the readings with congregational song.

The service can be performed using "traditional," "contemporary," or blended styles. Songwriter and worship leader Zac Hicks considers the service to be well suited for a "postmodern" context, writing that "The

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beauty of the service is that it walks through nine choice passages of Scripture that provide Scripture's metanarrative—the story of Christ, the scarlet thread—which proclaims Messiah.”<sup>39</sup> He emphasizes the malleability of the service, which does not prescribe the songs, lessons, or instrumentation. This flexibility has led to the service being adapted across denominations.

Institutions other than the church have utilized the Lessons and Carols format. Many colleges have adapted the service for their use. Brown University celebrated its 100th service of Lessons and Carols in 2016. In the American university setting, texts can be read by representatives of the student body, faculty, and administration. Piedmont College, a small liberal arts college in Demorest, Georgia, recently performed its thirtieth service of Lessons and Carols. The service is led by the Piedmont Chorale, an intergenerational ensemble made up of community members, professors, college students, and high school students. It has become a community tradition, with the services attracting an audience that fills the chapel to capacity. Each year, the college invites a local area high school to participate in the service, helping to build intergenerational connections with the community.

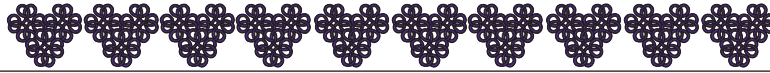
There have also been instances of radical creativity, such as the use of extrabiblical texts for the lessons, using original poetic interpretations of the lessons or modern published translations of biblical texts, or even utilizing visual and dramatic art. W.H. Auden's poem “For the Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio” has been excerpted and read as lessons during the service, a modification particularly well suited to an academic setting. The professional male vocal ensemble *Cantus* has adapted the form for their Christmas program, titled “Lessons for Our Time,” weaving together a diverse selection of poetry and music to underscore lessons on themes such as “Sacrifice” and “Seeing the Divine in All Creatures.”<sup>40</sup> The service crafted by Milner-White and popularized at King's offers a form to be filled in by the imaginative liturgist.

The service of Lessons and Carols has developed considerably since its humble origins at Truro Cathedral, and the future for the service seems bright. As recording and broadcast technologies become more advanced, an increasing number of people experience the service in

digital formats. Churches and academic institutions all over the world have adapted the liturgy for their localized contexts. As the Church explores new ways to engage intergenerational participation, traditional liturgical models, especially when approached with creativity, can provide form for such worship. Milner-White looked to the future when writing, “A hundred years will pass, and maybe a thousand experiments be made, ere England learns to pray better and to love prayer.”<sup>41</sup> A hundred years have passed since the first Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, but further experimentation is welcome and necessary. ■

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Eric Milner-White and G.W. Briggs, *Daily Prayer* (London: Penguin Books, 1959), [http://assets.newscriptorium.com/collects-and-prayers/daily\\_prayer.htm](http://assets.newscriptorium.com/collects-and-prayers/daily_prayer.htm).
- <sup>2</sup> Alexandra Coghlan, “Carols From King's: How a Tradition Was Made,” November 27, 2016, <https://theartsdesk.com/books-classical-music/carols-kings-how-tradition-was-made>.
- <sup>3</sup> Alexandra Coghlan, “Carols from Kings College Was Inspired by the Horror of the Trenches,” Daily Mail Online. Last modified January 4, 2017, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4063148/Soaring-beauty-born-slaughter-millions-s-magical-moment-Christmas-begins-ethereal-carol-service-King-s-College-know-inspired-horror-trenches.html>.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Alexandra Coghlan, “Carols From King's: How a Tradition Was Made.”
- <sup>6</sup> Michael White, “Every Christmas Eve, a Lone Choir Boy Sings to More Than 370 Million,” *New York Times*, December 23, 2018, Accessed March 05, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/23/arts/music/carols-from-kings-lessons-and-carols.html>.
- <sup>7</sup> “History of A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols,” *King's College, Cambridge*, October 10, 2017, <http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/events/chapel-services/nine-lessons/history.html>.
- <sup>8</sup> Routley, *The English Carol*, 235.
- <sup>9</sup> Bruce David Forbes, *Christmas: A Candid History* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2007),



- 142.
- <sup>10</sup> Ray Robinson, "The Service of Lessons and Carols." *Choral Journal* 31 no 5 (1990): 13.
- <sup>11</sup> "History of A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols."
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Robinson, "The Service of Lessons and Carols," 14.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> The use of boy choristers is customary in the English cathedral tradition, dating back to 1441 at King's College. The primary job for these young professionals is to furnish music at daily evensong services.
- <sup>16</sup> "History of the Choir," *King's College, Cambridge*, October 10, 2017, <http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/choir/about/history.html>.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> "The Choir Today." *The Choir Today*. October 10, 2017. Accessed July 12, 2019. <http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/choir/about/choir-today.html>.
- <sup>19</sup> Robert Tinsley Holtby, *Eric Milner Milner-White: A Memorial* (Chichester, Sussex: Phillimore, 1991), 25-26.
- <sup>20</sup> Eric Milner-White, "Worship and Services" in *The Church in the Furnace*, ed. Frederick Brodie MacNutt (London: Macmillan, 1917), 176.
- <sup>21</sup> Milner-White, "Worship and Services," 179.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 192.
- <sup>23</sup> Allan G. Harkness, "Intergenerationality: Biblical and Theological Foundations," *Christian Education Journal* 9, no. 1 (2012): 122.
- <sup>24</sup> Kevin M. Bradt, *Story as a Way of Knowing* (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1997), 149.
- <sup>25</sup> David Edelsten, "Carols for the World's Service," *The Field* 12 (1996): 62.
- <sup>26</sup> Erik Routley, *The English Carol* (London: H. Jenkins, 1958), 231.
- <sup>27</sup> Craig R Whitney, "Carols as Decreed by the King in 1453." *New York Times*, December 24, 1988. <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/12/24/arts/carols-as-decreed-by-the-king-in-1453.html>.
- <sup>28</sup> Routley, *The English Carol* 108.
- <sup>29</sup> Milner-White's bidding prayer is reproduced in the sidebar on page 15.
- <sup>30</sup> Holtby, 30.
- <sup>31</sup> "Christmas Carols," in *The Christmas Encyclopedia*, by William D. Crump (McFarland, 2013), [http://ezproxy.baylor.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/mcfc/christmas\\_carols/0?institutionId=720](http://ezproxy.baylor.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/mcfc/christmas_carols/0?institutionId=720).
- <sup>32</sup> Routley, 25.
- <sup>33</sup> Alexandra Coghlan, *Carols from King's: The Stories of our Favourite Carols from King's College* (London: BBC Books, 2016), 10.
- <sup>34</sup> Robinson, 18-19.
- <sup>35</sup> Patrick Sawyer, "New Director of King's College Choir Spoke out against 'Hooty, Polite' Tradition of English Choral Music," *The Telegraph*. May 29 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/05/29/new-director-kings-college-choir-spoke-against-hooty-polite/>.
- <sup>36</sup> Corinna Da Fonseca-Wollheim, "The New Wizard Teaching at the Hogwarts for Choir," *New York Times*, November 18, 2016, Accessed March 05, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/arts/music/the-new-wizard-teaching-at-the-hogwarts-for-choir.html>.
- <sup>37</sup> "History of A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols."
- <sup>38</sup> Thomas Travisano, "Of Dialectic and Divided Consciousness: Intersections between Children's Literature and Childhood Studies," *Children's Literature: Annual of the Modern Language Association Division on Children's Literature and the Children's Literature Association* (2000): 28.
- <sup>39</sup> Colin Durrant, "The Framing of Choirs and Their Conductors: A UK Perspective," *Oxford Handbooks Online*, Accessed March 22, 2019, <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199373369.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199373369-e-12>.
- <sup>40</sup> Zac Hicks, "A creative way for modern worship to engage tradition in Christmas," *zac hicks* (blog), November 27, 2009, accessed March 19, 2019, <https://www.zachicks.com/a-creative-way-for-modern-worship-to-engage-tradition-in-christmas/>.
- <sup>41</sup> "The Lessons and Carols," *Cantus*, accessed March 22, 2019, <https://www.cantussings.org/2012/12/13/the-lessons-and-carols/>.
- <sup>42</sup> Milner-White, "Worship and Services," 192.

There are hundreds of attractive but largely unknown nineteenth-century sacred choral masterworks from Vienna, Berlin, Paris, London, and Odessa. Some have organ accompaniment, some are unaccompanied. These pieces are well written and fall within an accessible classic-romantic idiom, within the reach of a good high school or college or community chorus. So why are they relatively unknown? They were composed not for churches but for the grand synagogues of these European capitals. Since they were out of the mainstream, these works and their composers are not to be found in the textbooks of music history or choral literature. In most cases, the only time they appear on the programs of school choirs or community choruses is for a special multicultural concert. Most of these pieces sound remarkably like the music composed for their neighboring churches; they lack distinguishing “ethnic” modes or rhythms. These musicians were determined to acculturate—to frame Jewish liturgy in the language of the dominant classic-romantic idiom.

Who are these composers, and where can we hear and see their music? The “mighty handful” of nineteenth-century synagogue music are Salomon Sulzer (1804–1890) in Vienna, Julius Mom bach (1813–1880) in London, Samuel Naumbourg (1817–1880) in Paris, Louis Lewandowski (1821–1894) in Berlin, and David Nowakowsky (1848–1921) in Odessa. Many of their original publications are available on the web and in twentieth-century user-friendly octavos. A listing is provided at the end of this article. This repertoire need not remain the sole possession of synagogue choirs or Jewish community choruses; it should find a welcome place in the regular programming of school, college, community and even some church choirs.





# Great Choral Classics You've Never Heard Of

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**Louis Lewandowski** (1821–1894) was music director at the Oranienburgerstrasse synagogue in Berlin from 1840 until the early 1890s. A Polish orphan who had arrived in Berlin, penniless, at the age of twelve, Louis's talent enabled

him to rise quickly through the ranks. He started off as just another boy soprano in an informal illiterate synagogue ensemble; within a few years the synagogue had a modern four-part choir, and he was appointed its conductor. Louis's talent also secured him a scholarship to study at the Berlin Academy of the Arts, becoming the first Jew ever admitted to that prestigious conservatory. On September 5, 1866, the New Synagogue of Berlin, the Oranienburgerstrasse Synagogue, was dedicated with an elaborate ceremony in the presence of Count Otto von Bismarck, then Minister President of Prussia. With seating for 3,200, it was the largest synagogue in Germany, and it boasted one of the finest pipe organs in the city. In his lifetime, Lewandowski saw the publication of hundreds of his own compositions, including two volumes of liturgical compositions for choir, cantor, and (optional) organ—*Todah W'Simrah*: volume 1 in 1876 and volume 2 in 1882. In an attempt to reach a larger public, Lewandowski published in 1879 *Achtzehn liturgische Psalmen für Soli und Chor mit Begleitung der Orgel*, a collection of eighteen Psalm settings in German.

Lewandowski's music resembles that of his contemporary, Felix Mendelssohn; the style is firmly rooted in the classical/romantic choral tradition. The organ accompaniments are, by and large, optional; the composer wanted to ensure that his compositions could also be performed in venues where no organ was available. Many of his works conform to a classic ABA structure. Perhaps his best-known work is his setting of Psalm 150, which opens with a brilliant fanfare in D major (Figure 1). In the middle section, pairs of voices in simultaneous imitation provide textural contrast.

A more contemplative mood is established in "Enosh," his setting of Psalm 103:15–17 for *Yizkor*, the Jewish memorial service. The dramatic nature is underscored by sudden dynamic changes and theatrical silences. For the text "humans are like grass that withers, the wind/breath comes through and then—no more," Lewandowski creates beautiful word painting with a crescendo climaxing

on a D-flat major chord (flat II) followed by *subito piano* and then silence (Figure 2). In the recapitulation he repeats the figure, but this time with imitation between the sopranos and the three lower parts, climaxing on an F# diminished seventh chord (vii° of V) followed again by the silence.

A beautiful example of the German-language compositions in Lewandowski's *Achtzehn liturgische Psalmen für Soli und Chor mit Begleitung der Orgel* is his setting of Psalm 36, *Ewiger*. A typical Lewandowski trait is the switch from major to parallel minor, which we see in mm. 11–14 for the text "Your justice like the great deep" (Figure 3 on page 24). Another typical Lewandowski feature is the *arioso* for the soloist in the middle of the composition, the B section between the A and A'. This solo sounds quite Germanic, not at all like traditional Jewish cantorial recitative, typically with free rhythms and modal melody (Figure 4 on page 25).

Listen to Lewandowski's *Halleluyah* (Psalm 150):  
<https://youtu.be/oXf7To0fhT8>

Listen to Lewandowski's *Enosh*:  
<https://youtu.be/-6EJnEHcaOA>

Listen to Lewandowski's *Ewiger*:  
<https://youtu.be/-6EJnEHcaOA?t=277>



**Salomon Sulzer** (1804–1890) was appointed cantor at the beautiful new Seitenstettengasse synagogue in Vienna in 1826. He soon became a celebrity. Those who witnessed the singing of Sulzer and his choir were enthusiastic in

their praise. The music critic Eduard Hanslick referred to Sulzer as "one of the most popular figures of Vienna ... no foreign musician leaves Vienna without having listened to the celebrated cantor."<sup>1</sup> The English author Frances Trollope wrote about Sulzer's synagogue choir, "about a dozen voices or more, some of them being boys, fill up the glorious chorus. The volume of vocal sound exceeds anything of the kind I have ever heard; and being unaccompanied by any instrument, it produces an effect equally singular and delightful."<sup>2</sup> And the





Catholic composer Joseph Mainzer wrote, “The synagogue was the only place where a stranger could find, artistically speaking, a source of enjoyment that was as solid as it was dignified...”<sup>3</sup> Sulzer composed hundreds of works for himself and his choir to sing, and he commissioned several of his Christian colleagues, including Joseph Drechsler (Kapellmeister at Vienna’s St. Stephens Cathedral) and Franz Schubert, to contribute new works for his synagogue’s liturgy. These were published in his anthology *Shir Zion*—the first volume in 1840 and the second

Figure 1 shows the first three measures of Louis Lewandowski's 'Halleluyah'. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features Soprano (S) and Tenor/Bass (T/B) vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: Ha - le - lu - yáw, ha - le - lu - yáw! / Ha - le - lu - yah, ha - le - lu - yah! The dynamics are marked *f* (forte) throughout.

Figure 1. Louis Lewandowski, *Halleluyah*, mm. 1–3.  
Broude Brothers © 1998. Used by permission.

Figure 2 shows measures 30–36 of Louis Lewandowski's 'Enosh'. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb). It features Soprano (S) and Tenor/Bass (T/B) vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: ki ru - akh ov - ro bó ve - é - ne - nu, ve - / ki ru - akh ov - ro bó ve - é - ne - nu, ve - / ló ya - kí - re - nu ód me - kó - mó. The dynamics are marked *f* (forte), *pp* (pianissimo), and *p* (piano). Measure numbers 30, 33, and 36 are indicated.

Figure 2. Louis Lewandowski, *Enosh*, mm. 30–36.  
Broude Brothers © 1992. Used by permission.

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in 1865. His son, Joseph Sulzer, published posthumous editions and arrangements of his father's music in 1890 and 1905.<sup>4</sup>

Lewandowski's main job was as a choir director, so it is no surprise that his collections feature many extended compositions for choir, with or without cantor. Sulzer, on the other hand, was employed as a cantor, and his compositions are, for the most part, shorter and focused on the solo voice. But while most of his recitatives are in the

traditional modes, his choral writing for the most part reflects his Viennese milieu. Traditional synagogues, like Catholic churches, did not admit women into the liturgical choir. Sulzer's choir, performing like angels from a hidden balcony, was made up of boys and adult men. Until his later years, Sulzer was opposed to the use of the organ in the liturgy. However, he was open to instrumental accompaniment in works written for special non-liturgical occasions. His setting of Psalm 111 (an-

7 *mf* *f*  
S A  
Dei - ne Ge - rech - tig - keit gleicht den Ber - gen Got - tes,  
T  
Dei - ne Ge - rech - tig - keit gleicht den Ber - - gen Got - tes,  
B  
*mf* *f*  
Dei - ne Ge - rech - tig - keit gleicht den Ber - gen Got - tes,  
*mf* *f*

11 *unis.* *ff*  
S A  
dei - ne Ge - tich - te ei - ner un - er - mess - li - chen Tie - fe.  
T  
dei - ne Ge - tich - te ei - ner un - er - mess - li - chen Tie - fe.  
B  
dei - ne Ge - tich - te ei - ner un - er - mess - li - chen Tie - fe.  
*ff*

Figure 3. Louis Lewandowski, *Ewiger*; mm. 7–14.  
Author's edition © 2011.



other Hallelujah<sup>5</sup>) for chorus, cantor, organ, and harp, was composed for an unspecified prince's birthday celebrations. Figure 5 on page 26 shows measures 16–25 from the revised version edited by Sulzer's son, Joseph, and published in 1905.

Sulzer's anthology also contained thirty-seven compositions that he had commissioned from some of the best-known Viennese composers of the day, including Franz Schubert. Schubert wrote a setting of Psalm 92 in Hebrew, scored for unaccompanied SATB choir with

*Solo*  
*mf* (28)  
Und Men - schen - kin - der, die in dei - ner Fit - ti - ge Schat - ten sich ber - gen,  
33 *f*  
schwel - gen von dei - nes Hau - ses Fül - le und mit dem Strom dei - ner  
38 *dolce* *mf* *p*  
Sü - ssig - kei - ten tränk - est du sie, tränk - est du sie, und mit dem  
44 *f* *cal.*  
Strom mit dem Strom. dei - ner Sü - ssig - kei - ten tränk - - - est du sie.

Figure 4. Louis Lewandowski, *Ewiger*, mm. 28–49.  
Author's edition © 2011.

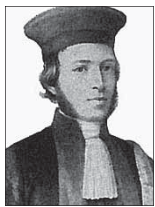




SATB quartet and, having Cantor Sulzer in mind, baritone cantorial solo.<sup>6</sup> Its style is evocative of the homophonic part songs that were popular then in Vienna. Figure 6 shows the first eight measures of Schubert's composition.

Listen to Sulzer's "Psalm 111":  
[https://youtu.be/\\_E15-1bJbVA](https://youtu.be/_E15-1bJbVA)

Listen to Schubert's *Tov Lehdos* (Psalm 92):  
[https://youtu.be/05\\_k\\_jDO2kI](https://youtu.be/05_k_jDO2kI)



**Samuel Naumbourg** (1817–1880), descendant of a long line of cantors, arrived in Paris from Munich in 1843 and within two years was appointed head cantor of the prestigious synagogue of the Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth. Among those who recommended Naumbourg for this position was the famous opera composer, Jacques Halévy. In 1856 the Conference of Chief Rabbis of France met to tackle a

number of issues facing French Jews. To ensure consistent quality and uniformity, they charged Naumbourg with the task of reorganizing the music of the services in all synagogues within the French republic. As part of this effort, Naumbourg included many of his own compositions, and compositions by several of his contemporaries. His liturgical compendium of music for the entire year, set for cantor and choir (boys and men), with and without organ accompaniment, was published in several volumes, *Chants Liturgicals des Grandes Fêtes* (1847), *Zemirot Yisrael* (1864), and *Shire Qodesh* (1864). Included in Naumbourg's anthologies are liturgical compositions by Jacques Halévy and Charles-Valentin Alkan.

Given Naumbourg's close connection with Jacques Halévy, Giacomo Meyerbeer, and Jacques Offenbach, it comes as no surprise that many of the compositions in Naumbourg's collection are reminiscent of the style of the Parisian opera houses.<sup>7</sup> Naumbourg's setting of Psalm 24:7–10 is scored for SATB chorus, optional organ (doubling the chorus), and (boy) soprano soloist. It opens with a proclamation sung by the tenors and basses in unison, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, that the King

Figure 6. Franz Schubert, *Tov Lehdos*, mm. 1–8.  
Broude Brothers © 1986. Used by permission.

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of Glory may come in,” that could easily feel at home in the grand opera (Figure 7).

One of the most striking pieces in Naumbourg’s collection was written by the great opera composer, Jacques Halévy. According to some sources, Halévy wrote this piece for his father, a Jewish cantor, when he was just eighteen years old. *Min Ha-metsar* (verses from Psalm 118) is scored for SATB chorus and three male soloists. Like Naumbourg’s *Se’u She’orim*, it also begins with the tenors and basses in unison. But here the voices are singing softly in a mysterious pianissimo. For the text “From a constricted place I called out to God,” the unison tenors and basses sing a rising line in C minor first to the minor third and then from the tonic to the dominant pitch via the plaintive tritone, F#. In the next phrase, “God answered me with expansiveness,” the voices return from their height to the tonic. When the melody is repeated by the full choir, the consequent phrase features a crescendo that lands on the relative major (Figure 8 on page 29).

Listen to Naumbourg’s *Se’u She’orim* (Psalm 24): <https://youtu.be/K-6gPDJf6qlk?t=2956>

Listen to Halévy’s *Min Ha-metsar*: <https://youtu.be/IueEanZ5Low>



**Julius (“Israel”) Mombach** (1813–1880) was born in Pfungstadt, Germany, the son of the cantor Lazarus Mombach. He must have been talented musically, and he must have been ambitious. At the age of fourteen he was brought to London to serve as a *meshorer* (a boy soprano) in the Great Synagogue at Duke’s Place to sing simple harmonies with the newly appointed cantor Enoch Eliasson, who had also just arrived from Germany. Soon the Jews of London were clamoring for a real choir—like the one Salomon Sulzer had established in Vienna. However, London’s Chief Rabbi, Solomon Hirschell, expressly forbade the use of sheet music, which he dismissed as a mere “book of strokes.” It wasn’t until Rabbi Hirschell’s death in 1840 that modern choral singing was allowed at London’s Great Synagogue. Julius Mombach was now elevated from *meshorer* to Choir Master, a post he would

**Andante maestoso**  
*unis. f*

se u - she - o - rim ro - shé - khem, ve hi -  
nos - u pis - khé ó - lom, ve yo - vó - me lekh - ha ko -  
ve yo vó me lekh ha ko vód.  
vód, ve yo vó me lekh ha ko vód.

**Figure 7.** Samuel Naumbourg, *Se’u She’orim*, mm. 1–9.  
Transcontinental Publications © 1990. Used by permission.

hold until his death forty years later. Mombach not only conducted, he also arranged and composed music for his new choir. Mombach's music was unpublished in his lifetime but appeared in 1881 in a collection edited by Rev. M. Keizer; this is our only source for the compositions.

Mombach's style is not different from that of the anthems of his age. A good example is his setting of Psalm 150, composed for the celebration of the marriage of Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild and Miss Evalina de Rothschild in 1865. The music stays within the initial key of B-flat with brief excursions to the relative minor. The texture is largely homophonic, with some contrasting eighth-note movement in the organ (Figure 9 on page 30).

Listen to Mombach's *Hallelujah*:  
<https://youtu.be/CZUI6k5f-4?t=677>



**David Nowakowsky** (1848–1921) was born in the small town of Malin, near Kiev, Russia. At the age of eight he ran away from home to escape a proverbial wicked stepmother. He settled in Berditchev, where he studied music and

served as a *meshorer*, choir-boy, in the synagogue. Then at the age of twenty-one he was invited to Odessa to serve at the Brody Synagogue as choirmaster and assistant, first to Cantor Nissan Blumenthal, and after 1891 to the great Cantor Pinchas Minkowski. More than other Russian cities, Odessa was cosmopolitan, open to the cultural influence of Western Europe. The Brody synagogue in Odessa became known as a modern house of worship, with a renowned choir, cantor, and organist. Even many non-Jews would visit the synagogue just to enjoy the beauty of its music, including Peter Tchaikovsky, who praised Nowakowsky as a first-rate talent. His most important publication was *Gebete und Gesänge zum Eingang des Sabbath für Solo und Chor mit und ohne Orgelbegleitung*, published in Leipzig in 1901.

Nowakowsky's compositions went underground after his death in 1920. Literally. In 1924, boxes of his manuscripts were smuggled out of Soviet Russia and brought to Berlin. Within a few years the Nazis had come to power and the manuscripts had to be moved again, this time to France, where they were buried in a field by a sympathetic farmer. After the war, the composer's grandson Alexandre was able to dig up the music and eventually brought the manuscripts to the United States.

Nowakowsky's greatest work is his setting for choir

**Allegro non troppo** *unis. pp*

S  
A  
T  
B

Min ha - mé - tsar ko - ro - sí-yoh, o - no - ní va - mer - khav yoh. Min ha -

5  
S  
A  
T  
B

mé - tsar ko - ro - sí yoh, o - no - ní va - mer - khav yoh.

mé - tsar ko - ro - sí yoh, o - no - ní va - mer - khav yoh.

**Figure 8.** Jacques Halévy, *Min Ha-metsar*, mm. 1–8.  
 Author's edition © 1998.

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and cantor and organ of verses from Psalm 115, *Adonoy Zekhoronu*, a work featuring many textural contrasts. Observe how in the first 10 measures, the organ uses the repeated rhythmic leitmotif building tension with the dominant of F-minor, the chorus thunders in majestically in the tonic with a three-octave unison, and then immediately morphs to supporting the tenor soloist with his calm melody in the relative major (Figure 10 on page 31.). The concluding fugue, beautifully worked out is shown in Figure 11 on page 32.

Listen to Nowakowsky's *Adonoy Zekhoronu*: <https://youtu.be/K-6gPDJ6qlk?t=3489>

## Conclusion

Often music with which we are not familiar is relegated to a program of "outliers." Music from the Jewish traditions may be featured in a concert of exotic ethnic music. Occasionally one finds the inevitable Chanukah song on a December program. Sure, there is a wonderful body of "ethnic-sounding" choral repertoire based on

Allegro maestoso ♩ = 104

S  
A  
T  
B  
Org.

ha - - ly - lu - yoh! ha - - le - lu - yoh!

ha - - ly - lu - yoh! ha - - le - lu - yoh!

Allegro maestoso ♩ = 104

5

S  
A  
T  
B  
Org.

ha - le - lu - yoh! ha - le - lu, él be - kod - shóh.

ha - le - lu - yoh! ha - le - lu, él be - kod - shóh.

Figure 9. Julius Mombach, *Hallelujah*, mm. 1–8.  
Author's edition © 2016.



Jewish folksongs and popular songs, but there are also many classical/romantic-oriented works by these *kleine meister* that could easily belong on the same program as music by Mendelssohn or Schubert or Brahms. Not just because they are “multicultural” or “interfaith,” but be-

cause they are well-written, moving compositions that deserve to be rescued from neglect, included in choral literature courses, and programmed in all sorts of concerts. **■**

The musical score is for David Nowakowsky's *Adonoy Sekhoronu*, measures 1-11. It is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat major/D-flat minor). The score includes parts for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), Cantor (C), and Organ (Org.).

- Measures 1-4:** Tempo *Poco lento*. The vocal parts (S, A, T, B) are silent. The Organ part begins with a *mp* dynamic.
- Measure 5:** Tempo *Maestoso* ( $\text{♩} = 86$ ). The vocal parts enter with the lyrics "a - dó - noy ze - kho - ro - nu, ye - vo - rékh,". The Cantor part has a *mf* dynamic. The Organ part continues with a *p* dynamic.
- Measures 6-11:** The vocal parts continue with the lyrics. The Organ part provides accompaniment. The tempo remains *Maestoso*.

Figure 10. David Nowakowsky, *Adonoy Sekhoronu*, mm. 1–11.  
Author's edition © 2016

# Great Choral Classics You've Never Heard Of

**Allegro moderato**

80 *mf*  
 S va - a - nakh - nu ne - vo - rékh yoh mé - a - to mé - a - to ve - ad ó - lom, ha - le -  
 A va - a - nakh - nu ne - vo rékh yoh *mf*

85  
 S lu, ha - le - lu - yoh, ha - le - lu - yoh, ha - le - lu - yoh, mé -  
 A mé - a - to mé - a - to ve - ad ó - lom ha - le - lu - yoh, *mf*  
 T va - a - nakh - nu ne - vo - rékh

90  
 S a - to mé - a - to ve - ad ó - lom, ha - le -  
 A mé - a - to, mé - a - to ne - ad ó - lom, mé - a - to ve - ad  
 T yoh mé - a - to mé - a - to ve - ad ó - lom ha - le - *mf*  
 B va - a - nakh - nu ne - vo - rékh yoh

94  
 S lu - yoh, mé - a - to ve - ad ó - lom, ha - le - lu - yoh.  
 A ó - lom, ha - le - lu - yoh, ha - le - lu - yoh.  
 T lu, ha - le - lu - yoh, ha - le - lu, ha - le - lu - yoh.  
 B mé - a - to mé - a - to ve - ad ó - lom ha - le - lu - yoh.

Figure 11. David Nowakowsky, *Adonoy Zekhoronu*, mm. 80–98.  
 Author's edition © 2016.



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Eduard Hanslick, “Salomon Sulzer,” *Die neue freie Presse* No. 551 (Vienna, 1866), quoted in Eric Werner, *A Voice Still Heard*, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 216.
- <sup>2</sup> Frances Trollope, *Vienna and the Austrians* (London, 1838, volume 1), p. 373, quoted in Ringer, “Salomon Sulzer, Joseph Mainzer and the Romantic a cappella Movement.” *Studia Musicologica* 2 (1969): 355–71, 356.
- <sup>3</sup> Ringer, op cit. 359-360.
- <sup>4</sup> We do not know whether Joseph Sulzer’s editions reflect his own arrangements or revisions that his father had made late in his life.
- <sup>5</sup> “Hallelujah” is a Hebrew word meaning, “Praise the Lord.”
- In the Ashkenazic synagogues of that time the word would be pronounced, “Ha-le-lu-yoh.”
- <sup>6</sup> Joshua Jacobson, “Franz Schubert and the Vienna Synagogue.” *Choral Journal*, 38 no. 1 (August 1997): 9–15.
- <sup>7</sup> These three prominent opera and operetta composers grew up in Jewish homes. Halévy’s father was a Parisian cantor and prominent Hebraist. Meyerbeer’s father was a leader of the Berlin Jewish community, who organized synagogue services in his home. Offenbach’s father was a cantor and music teacher in Cologne.
- <sup>8</sup> *Selbstverlag*, German for “self-published.”
- <sup>9</sup> An edition adapted for modern synagogue use, “Adonai Z’charanu” is available from Aurendale Associates Publications (1995).

## RESOURCES

### Scores

Many of the first editions of these nineteenth-century classics are available on the internet. The richest source is the online library at Goethe University in Frankfurt. <http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/search/quick?query=musik> (see below for individual links). But a caveat to the clicker: these original editions use a German speaker’s system of transliterating the Hebrew lyrics. For practical use by American choristers, the modern octavos are much more user friendly.

### Louis Lewandowski—original publications

Lewandowski, Louis. *Todah W’simrah: vierstimmige Chöre und Soli für den israelitischen Gottesdienst mit und ohne Begleitung der Orgel (ad libitum) 1 Sabbath*. Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1876. Reprint edition: New York: Sacred Music Press, 1954. <http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/952360>

———. *Todah W’simrah: vierstimmige Chöre und Soli für den israelitischen Gottesdienst mit und ohne Begleitung der Orgel (ad libitum) 2 Festgesänge*. Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1882. Reprint edition: New York: Sacred Music Press, 1954. <http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/952536>

———. *Achtzehn liturgische Psalmen für Soli und Chor mit Begleitung der Orgel*. Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. <http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/935508>

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## Louis Lewandowski—recommended modern octavos

*Mah Tovv.* Williamstown, MA: Broude Brothers, 1993.

*Enosh.* Williamstown: Broude Brothers, 1992.

*Halleluyoh.* Williamstown: Broude Brothers, 2000.

*Zocharti Loch.* New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1992.

*Eighteen Psalm Settings in German.* Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1994.

## Louis Lewandowski—Psalm 150 (Hallelujah) a history of modern octavos

Lewandowski's setting of Psalm 150 (Hallelujah) seems to be the first of these anthems published and distributed to the general American market. N. Lindsay Norden's edition was published in 1938 by H. W. Gray (agents for Novello in London) with English lyrics substituted for the Hebrew (Figure 1). Next was Abraham W. Binder's edition, published by Bloch Music in New York in 1941 with lyrics in both English and Hebrew. G. Schirmer picked it up in 1947 with three versions (for SATB, SAB, and SSA) edited by William Stickles, also with lyrics in both English and Hebrew. In 1947 Hall & McCreary in Minneapolis issued a version edited by Harry Robert Wilson for unaccompanied SATB chorus (followed up in 1959 with an arrangement for SAB), transposed down to C major, with lyrics in English only. Other versions in C major with English lyrics followed: Baltimore Music edited by James Dash in 1951, Carl Fischer edited by Lorrain Kingsley in 1954, Shawnee Press edited by Wallingford Riegger in 1956, Transcontinental Music in 1957, Plymouth Music edited by Robert Williams in 1958, J. Fischer edited by Elwood Coggin in 1963, and Gentry Publications edited by Jason Roberts in 1985. I also found two editions with no date: Summy Company edited by F. Clayton (English only) and oddly Butz Musikverlag edited by J. Butz, a cappella in Latin only! The author's edition (Hebrew and English) was published by Broude Brothers in 2000.

## Salomon Sulzer —original publications

Sulzer, Salomon. *Schir Zion, 1: gottesdienstliche Gesänge der Israeliten / von S. Sulzer.* Vienna: Engel & Sohn, 1865.  
<http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/1364812>

———. *Schir Zion, 2: gottesdienstliche Gesänge der Israeliten / von S. Sulzer.* Vienna: Engel & Sohn, 1865.  
<http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/1365040>

———. *Schir Zion: Gesänge für den israelitischen Gottesdienst / von Salomon Sulzer. Rev. und neu hrsg. von Joseph Sulzer.* Leipzig: Kaufmann, 1905. Reprint edition: New York: Sacred Music Press, 1954.  
<http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/1364256>

———. *Zikkaron: Gedenkblätter : XX Gesänge für den israelitischen Gottesdienst ; für Solo (Cantor), Chor und Orgel / komponiert von Salomon Sulzer. Aus dem Nachlasse hrsg. von Joseph Sulzer.* Vienna: Gustav Lewy, 1905.  
<http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/1364140>

### **Salomon Sulzer (and friends)—recommended modern octavos:**

Sulzer, Salomon. *Psalm 111 (Halleluyoh)*. New York: Transcontinental, 1991.

Schubert, Franz. *Tov Lehodos*, Williamstown: Broude Brothers, 1986.

Drechsler, Joseph. *Psalm 150 (Halleluyoh)*, Williamstown: Broude Brothers, 1992.

### **Julius Mombach—original publication**

Mombach, Julius. *Na'ım Zemirot Yisra'el: The sacred musical compositions of the late Israel Lazarus Mombach containing the services for Sabbaths and festivals, New Year and Day of Atonement, consecration hymns, psalms and choral wedding service / ed. by M. Keizer.* London: B. Williams, 1881. <http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/pageview/1358354>

### **Julius Mombach—recommended modern octavos:**

Mombach, Julius. Psalm 118 (*Boruch Ha-bo*) PDF can be licensed from [jewishchoralmusic.com](http://jewishchoralmusic.com).

Mombach, Julius. Psalm 150 (*Halleluyoh*) PDF can be licensed from [jewishchoralmusic.com](http://jewishchoralmusic.com).

### **Samuel Naumbourg—original publications**

Naumbourg, Samuel. *Zemirot Yisra'el / contenant les hymnes, les psaumes et la liturgie complète de la Synagogue des temps le plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours avec accomp. d'orgue ou piano ad libitum / par S. Naumbourg.* Paris: Selbstverl,<sup>8</sup> ca. 1847.  
<http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/1358646>

———. *Chants liturgiques des grandes Fêtes, 2.* [n.p.], 1847.  
<http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/1358784>

———. *Shire kodesh / Nouveau recueil de chants religieux à l'usage du culte Israélite / contenant: 96 cantiques, psaumes, hymnes, anciennes récitations à 2, 3 et 4 parties / par S. Naumbourg.* Paris: Selbstverl, 1864.  
<http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/1359036>

### **Samuel Naumbourg (and colleagues)—recommended modern octavos:**

Naumbourg, Samuel. *Se'u She'orim*. New York: Transcontinental, 1992.

———. *Viddui (Ono Tovo)*. PDF can be licensed from [jewishchoralmusic.com](http://jewishchoralmusic.com)

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# Great Choral Classics You've Never Heard Of

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Halévy, Jacques. Psalm 118 (*Min Ha-metsar*). New York: Transcontinental, 1997

Alkan, Charles-Valentin. Psalm 150 (*Halleluyoh*). PDF can be licensed from [jewishchoralmusic.com](http://jewishchoralmusic.com).

## David Nowakowsky—original publications

Nowakowsky, David. *Gebete und Gesänge zum Eingang des Sabbath: für Cantor Solo und Chor, mit und ohne Orgelbegleitung [Kabalat Shabat]* Leipzig: C.G. Röder, 1901. Reprint edition, New York: Sacred Music Press, 1955.

## David Nowakowsky—recommended modern octavo:

*Adonoy Zechoroni*<sup>9</sup> PDF can be licensed from [jewishchoralmusic.com](http://jewishchoralmusic.com).

## Videos

The author has produced three video lecture-concerts featuring music by these five composers. These “Majesty of Holiness” programs, featuring the Zamir Chorale of Boston, can be accessed through YouTube using the following links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVVSiHtBK-g> (Divine Majesty)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZUli6k5f-4> (The Majesty of Hallel)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-6gPDJ6qlk> (Masterworks of Majesty)

## Other Videos of Music by Lewandowski

[https://youtu.be/\\_oMfo5fOKZQ](https://youtu.be/_oMfo5fOKZQ) (*Mah Tovv, Enosh, Halleluyoh*).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXf7To0fhT8> (Psalm 150—virtual choir performance, with historical narration).

<https://youtu.be/-6EJnEHcaOA> (*Enosh and Ewiger*).

More information can be accessed at [www.jewishchoralmusic.com](http://www.jewishchoralmusic.com).

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# Interview with the 2019 National Legacy Directors Chorus Conductors

## The ACDA 60th Anniversary Series Part 6

Compiled by Amanda Bumgarner





This is the sixth and final installment in our six-part series of columns focused on ACDA's history as found within the pages of *Choral Journal* over the past six decades. The series started with Part 1 in the June/July 2019 issue—"ACDA Celebrates 20th Anniversary in 1979: Observations from Six Choral Conductors." The intention of this series was to continue the themes of legacy and history that we saw at the 2019 National Conference in Kansas City. The National Legacy Directors Chorus was an exciting collaboration between eleven iconic conductors and an intergenerational chorus. I sent all eleven conductors the same list of questions, and they each chose a few to respond to for this article, so there will be a slightly different set of answers from each interviewee. While I was, unfortunately, unable to get responses from every conductor, I hope you enjoy hearing from this legendary group of individuals, and I thank them greatly for their time and participation. The interviews are presented in alphabetical order.

## Participant Testimonials

"Participating in the Legacy Directors' Chorus was life-changing! To sing under the rehearsal and performance of eleven renowned and powerful conductors inspired and challenged me physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. They demanded what they wanted from us in limited rehearsal time, and an audience member told me that for each conductor/piece, the choir sounded completely different. I have been listening to Robert Shaw recordings daily ever since! Thank you, ACDA, for this incredible musical experience!"

—Patrice Madura Ward-Steinman

"I especially enjoyed observing and then hearing the Legacy Choir featuring world-renowned conductors. The music flowed from their fingertips. This event was particularly meaningful in the birthplace of our association."

—Karen Fulmer

"One of my highlights was hanging out with the Legacy Conductors, especially watching Albert McNeil, at ninety-nine years old, skillfully rehearse the choir... and laughing at himself nodding off during the rest of the rehearsals."

—Karyl Carlson

## Interview with the 2019 National Legacy Conductors

### National Legacy Director's Chorus



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

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

What an honor to be asked to be one of the conduc-

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

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

Two changes that have made a huge difference in au-



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

dience enjoyment: the incorporation of World Music in programming and the use of choreography and multimedia in concerts. The change that causes me the most discomfort: the tendency to only program the “latest fad composers.” This results in concerts lacking in variety, strength, and often emotional satisfaction. Not all that is new is great, and much that is new is derivative. I long for programs that are centered on great choral music of all historical periods, programs that are carefully thought out with a unifying thread but that are totally diversified in musical style, textual content, rhythmic variety, visual enhancement, and a true communion with the audience. I worry somewhat at the current trend of turning concerts into political and social events, music selected for its “agenda.”

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

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

### **What do you want your legacy to be?**

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

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

I was fortunate to have many fine musical mentors starting with my piano teachers as a child and my high school piano teacher, who taught me the great composers and harmony lessons in the summer; Rosemarie Grentzer at Oberlin who taught me to memorize the

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

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

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



**Eph Ehly** has conducted over eighty all-state choirs and more than 600 festival ensembles. As a conductor, author, lecturer, and clinician he has appeared in forty-eight states and around the world. Ehly retired from the Conservatory of Music, University of Missouri-Kansas City, after twenty-seven years of service. He has additionally served at the University of Oklahoma and University of New Mexico. Ehly is the recipient of numerous teaching and performance excellence awards and grants.

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

Being invited to conduct the Legacy Choir was exciting. Standing before these distinguished singers/conductors/educators was exhilarating. It gave me such genuine, warm, and loving feelings conducting so many smiling faces and ingratiating personalities, each sharing not just his/her musical talents but kind, friendly demeanors and an honest enthusiasm.

### **What do you think are the most striking changes**

## (positive or negative) in choral music today?

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

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

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

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

## What do you want your legacy to be?

When encountering questions about what one would like one's legacy to be, it reminds me of a Ben Franklin quote: "There is perhaps, no one of our natural passions so hard to subdue as pride...even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility."

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

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

Let your gentleness be evident to all. — Phil. 4:4

Be joyful always...give thanks in all circumstances.

— 1 Thes. 5:16-17

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

—George Lynn

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

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



**Rodney Eichenberger** is professor emeritus at the Florida State University. He joined ACDA in the early sixties and served as the local chair of the last ACDA convention in conjunction with MENC in 1968. He served as Northwest

Region president from 1969 to 1973. He led graduate conducting programs at the University of Washington, the University of Southern California, and the Florida State University. His conducting DVDs are widely used in university conducting classes.

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

I was greatly honored to be invited to be one of the conductors of the 2019 ACDA National Convention Legacy Choir. I found the singers to be totally involved and eager to respond positively, making it a highly satisfying experience for me. One of the most gratifying aspects of the event was it proved something I have long believed in that the same singers became a different choir with each of the eleven conductors. What they saw was what we got!

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

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

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

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

### **What do you want your legacy to be?**

I do hope I have had some influence in encouraging choral music teachers to talk less and to conduct with stance, facial affect, and gesture that matches musical intent. The great Elaine Brown said it best! "Look like the music!"

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

Eva Musil, choral music teacher at Sterling Colorado High School, introduced me to the joy of choral music, which dramatically changed my career goal from ranching to choral conducting. Singing under Olaf Christiansen in the Saint Olaf Choir gave me a totally fulfilling experience as a collegiate choral singer. Daniel Moe, University of Iowa Professor, opened my eyes to the world of choral literature crying out to be performed, and ACDA played a major role in assuring that I remain a student of the choral art!



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

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

It was a wonderful experience on many levels—to see and interface with the other conductors and the "volunteers" in the choir was inspiring. It seemed to me to reinforce the importance of what we do in the profession in providing a model of how the world should work: meet together and put our differences in life "on hold" so we can produce something inspiring together that we could not provide without each other!

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

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

### **What, if anything, would you change about your professional life? What "mountains" have you left unclimbed?**

There will always be "unclimbed" mountains left at the end. I believe it's really important to live "in the moment" and enjoy each and every one for its own specialness and unique-ness! Would I like to explore more music? Absolutely, but I also want to recognize and appreciate the opportunities I've been lucky enough to pursue!

## What do you want your legacy to be?

My singers and I made music together, and that which we shared made us better people.

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

My high school conductor, Cecil Green, helped me to lay a foundation of working with people to make something together that was special and inspiring. He was patient, kind, and inclusive of all who wanted to work hard for musical clarity, excellence, and exploration.

My PhD advisor, Gene Kenney, nurtured in me the curiosity to always be searching for the most aesthetically relevant music to perform and always beyond the “standard” repertoire. He insisted that I look beneath and beyond for repertoire and not be intimidated by musical difficulties but rather intrigued and challenged by the growth in myself and the choir necessary to bring those works into performance.

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

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

In the hundreds of performances I’ve attended in the past ten years, the number of pre-1900 works performed seems to me to be far fewer than in the past (this is an impression and certainly not the result of any “hard” research). So I guess that I’m encouraging our professional responsibility, in this new age of musical accessibility, to explore and promote ways of ensuring the continued ex-

ploration in performance that continues to celebrate this wonderful repertoire legacy. At the very least, we should be constantly mindful and careful in our programming decisions to encourage performances that are inclusive and representative of that legacy.



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

## Briefly describe the experience of participating in ACDA’s Legacy Conductors Choir

It was certainly an honor to be asked to conduct the Legacy Conductors Choir. I found that the choir included previous students and long-time friends and colleagues, which was especially a pleasure. And yes, it was also true that we conductors had to deal with those seemingly eternal challenges of tuning, unity of vowels, clarification of diction, and the need to watch the conductor! I also noticed that the choir’s performances reflected each conductor’s teaching and conducting techniques.

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

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

## What, if anything, would you change about your

## professional life?

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

## What do you want your legacy to be?

I just hope that the many students I taught over those many years trusted me in my endeavour to share this wonderful art form and to hone their skills.

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

I was fortunate at many different levels of my study and career to have had inspiring (and demanding) mentors. While in high school, my choral (and band) director was Glenn Trent. He loved great music of all kinds. My first conducting teacher at UNL was Dr. David Foltz. His

memory was phenomenal, his gestures elegant and precise (also being left handed), and he chose major works that were new and thrilling. My voice teacher and University Singers conductor was Earl (Pete) Jenkins. He raised the bar of performance standards and was a caring, inspirational teacher. Later I had the opportunity to study with Dr. Howard Swan. His humility before the music was true, but he was exacting: "If you are preparing a Monteverdi motet, Monteverdi is looking over your shoulder!" Finally, Dr. Swan was, as with Robert Shaw, a huge and positive influence as an evangelist for participation in quality choral music.

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

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



*Legacy Conductors (L to R): Eph Ehly, Sigrid Johnson, Ann Howard Jones, William Hatcher, Albert McNeil, Dale Warland, Charlene Archibeque, Rodney Eichenberger, Donald Neuen. Photo by Kevin Tison.*



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

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

It was an honor to be invited to share the podium with so distinguished a roster of great conductors and to work with a chorus with members of varied ages and experiences all of whom shared a desire to sing music beautifully with inspiring leaders. Since rehearsal time was ex-

tremely limited, a premium was placed on the selection of the literature by each conductor. With no consultation or knowledge of what the others were programming and no information about the singers, the concert program was balanced and represented some of the great literature we have available. It was fun to work with a chorus of musicians who sat on the edge of their seats and hung on our every word, but the most fun of all was to watch the “giants” of the profession work their magic.

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

When I stop to think about my professional life, there are so many things that have happened that I would neither have predicted nor planned for myself that I am less inclined to think about the things I would change than to feel overcome with gratitude for the chances I have had, for the confidence others have had in me, for the



*Albert McNeil conducts the Legacy Chorus. Photo by Lynne Gackle.*



great and inspiring students and colleagues with whom I have worked, and for the mentors who helped shape my musical life.

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

### **What do you want your legacy to be?**

- That I spent my time in a worthy cause and, quoting Theodore Roosevelt from the 1910 speech he gave at the Sorbonne in Paris, that I knew “the triumph of high achievement and...if (I) fell short, at least (I) was daring to take an occasional risk.”
- That I cared for my students and for the process of discovery in teaching and performing.
- That I maintained the highest possible standards in performance, rehearsal, and teaching, choosing at all times to focus on the most outstanding literature in the field.
- That I tried to the best of my ability to cultivate the trust and respect of colleagues and students; and that I hoped to be an example of an intelligent, caring, responsible, respectful, and trusting professional.

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

Without question the most important musical experience

I had was in the work I did with Robert Shaw and the various choruses in Atlanta, France, and Carnegie Hall. It is not easy to summarize precisely the ways in which my professional life was affected, but the fact that he gave me the opportunity not only to sing in the choirs he conducted but also to assist in whatever way I could was a special privilege. I learned never to be satisfied unless and until every attempt had been made to make something better, and to start with looking first at myself. I learned there was never enough studying and preparing. Perhaps most importantly, I learned the power of the intellectual in the leadership of a group. The concepts he explored, the way he expressed an idea, the ability he had to put into words the loftiest ideas and the most powerful thoughts was simply monumental in my life.

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

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

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

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

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

Being a part of this event was one of the more rewarding experiences of my career. Having the opportunity to watch my colleagues rehearse and lead the choir in performance was a hugely informative and gratifying experience. I have learned so much over the course of my career from the other conductors. To be on the same stage with them was very uplifting.

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

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

### **What, if anything, would you change about your professional life? What "mountains" have you left unclimbed?**

We all have mountains we didn't climb. There is no actual straight line to success. Our life's detours inform our music making on every level. I'm very happy with how my career has progressed. When I began college work back in 1982, I never dreamed I'd advance as far as I have, especially considering I was told by a music education professor that I should do something else with my life because I'd never make it as a conductor/teach-

er! The one thing I might want to change would be my initial response to that teacher's statement. Although I ultimately finished my BA degree in music and went on to earn my MM and DMA degrees as well as a graduate certificate in voice performance and a professional certificate in music education, that teacher's single comment drove me out of choral music making and study for eight years!

### **What do you want your legacy to be?**

I hope the young people I taught over my career will continue to feed and expand the technical, emotional, expressive, and depictive skill sets that were passed through me to them from my own teachers and mentors. I hope the core of my influence will be centered upon maintaining an intellectual and entertainment ideal for our art form. Singing is a fundamental way we learn from, and in turn, teach the next generation about our humanity, our history, our dreams, and our accomplishments and failures. I hope my legacy confirms such an ideal.

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

Mostly by spending my professional life around 18-35 year-olds. And, in the cases of my civic and professional choir work, being around people whose love for singing was contagious.

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

This is a hard one to answer. I've been fortunate to have had so many mountain-top experiences both as a singer and as a conductor. One that first comes to mind happened in New York City. As a new participant in the Robert Shaw Festival Singers, I was in my first rehearsal with Mr. Shaw in the NYC's Manhattan Center. Mr. Shaw was introduced, we did some vocal warm-ups, and launched into our first rehearsal of Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*—count-singing! Although I'd been in bands for many years as a student, I'd never been taught the techniques of count-singing. As I recall, we sang deeply

into the work in this manner. After no more than six to eight minutes of this activity, all my concepts of unity of ensemble, unity of rhythmic singing, unity of musical expression, unity of tuning, simultaneity of and dialogue between voice lines were upended. That week-long experience reformatted my concepts of what I taught and how I approached choral music. What I learned that week still lies at the core of my work as a conductor/teacher/coach.



**Donald Neuen** retired in 2014 as distinguished professor of music/conducting emeritus after serving twenty years on the UCLA faculty. He was previously director of choral activities for the Eastman School of Music for twelve years.

Beginning in 1963, Neuen held choral positions with the Universities of Wisconsin, Tennessee, Georgia State, and Ball State. He authored *Choral Concepts*, a choral conducting textbook. In 2017, Neuen retired as the conductor of the internationally televised Hour of Power Choir.

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

It was truly a delight to watch the other conductors in action. They all did extremely well and with a youthful spirit! Their commitment to excellence and each one's overall accomplishment was phenomenal. It was an accurate reminder of the great time in choral music in which we were all fortunate to have lived, learned, and worked—the day of Robert Shaw, Roger Wagner, Norman Luboff, Fred Waring, Julius Herford, Alfred Mann, and many others. Also, a sincere thank you to Gene Peterson for the most kind manner in which he took care of each of us during both the rehearsals and performance.

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

I'm sorry to see the gradual demise of quality traditional church music in many areas nationwide, and a lessening of the Palestrina-to-Britten legacy in the programming of many school, university, and community

choirs. Also, somewhat lacking, seems to be the consistent effort of teaching beautifully mature “soloistic vocal tone quality”—as established so perfectly by Robert Shaw and Roger Wagner.

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

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

### **What do you want your legacy to be?**

That mine was not a “career” but a mission to enhance the art of truly great choral singing, especially in the area of major choral works with orchestra.

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

Robert Shaw for the integrity to pursue absolute perfection, the commitment to serve composers, the opportunity to sing with his Robert Shaw Chorale, and being his assistant conductor with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

Julius Herford for teaching me to search for truth in interpreting the appropriate style of master composers, and in most cases, specifically what that was.

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

Again, from Robert Shaw: “90% will never be good enough.”



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

### What do you want your legacy to be?

A. That I was a conductor who was instrumental in encouraging choirs, no matter the level of skill or experience, to strive for excellence, both in programming (always seeking to include repertoire of the highest quality) and in performance (striving to sing at the highest possible artistic level), all the while emphasizing the need

and importance of bringing “beauty” to as many people around the world as possible.

B. That I encouraged a significant number of emerging and established composers to create fresh and exciting new choral works, all in an effort to keep the choral art vibrant and meaningful.

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

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

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



*Dale Warland conducts the Legacy Chorus. Photo by Lynne Gackle.*

# *In Memoriam*

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## Leo Cornelius Nestor 1948–2019



Leo Cornelius Nestor passed away on September 22, 2019, of cancer in Washington D.C. Leo received a bachelor's in music composition in Music Composition from California State University, East Bay, and a master's and doctorate in choral music from the USC Thornton School of Music. From 2001 to 2016 he was Justine Bayard Ward Professor of Music, Director of Choral Studies and the Institute of Sacred Music, and also a member of the conducting and composition faculties at The Catholic University of America in Washington D.C., following a tenure of seventeen years (1984-2001) at the nearby National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Leo's extensive choral compositions were published by many publishers—primarily E. C. Schirmer. Four times he was commissioned to write works for pastoral visits of popes to the United States—for John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis. Upon his retirement from C.U.A. in 2016 he received knighthood in the Equestrian Order of St. Gregory from Pope Francis for his service to the church.

He is survived by his elder sister, Connie, and her two children. He had asked that in lieu of flowers he wished donations to be made to the Little Sisters of the Poor, who cared for Leo and Connie's sister, Patricia, in her final months.

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# Research Report

Patrick K. Freer, Editor <pfreer@gsu.edu>

## Vocal Improvisation and the Development of Musical Self-Efficacy and Musical Self-Image in Adolescent Choral Musicians

by David N. Hirschorn

*I think improvisation is like a seed,  
like a tree that is growing and it is  
branching out to all different stuff.*

—Victor, 6th grader

### Introduction

Traditional beliefs among school ensemble directors suggest the quickest way to great performance is through teacher-centered instruction with little or no creative input from students. According to a survey of Indiana music teachers, secondary school performing groups, with community and collegial demands on high-quality performances, tend to neglect creative tasks.<sup>1</sup> Joseph Shively expressed the concern that some school ensemble directors may feel more responsibility to their school community, in the form of superior ratings and first-place competition trophies, than to the comprehensive musical development of the students they teach.<sup>2</sup>

These concerns go all the way back to the 1963 Yale Seminar on

Music Education in which panel members were critical of music education's emphasis on performance as entertainment and showmanship. The panel suggested more child-centered values, with a greater emphasis on creativity, listening, community partnerships, and a more expansive global repertoire. The 1967 Tanglewood Symposium: Music in American Society emphasized broad, philosophical educational goals such as the art of living, the building of personal identity, and the nurturing of creativity as a response to a "society in crisis."<sup>3</sup> At that historic conference, psychologist Abraham Maslow called for a re-orientation of music education goals. Maslow spoke in favor of a more child-centered view of music education where music educators should consider the students they teach and their potential for peak experience as a means of constructing identity within the art form of music.<sup>4</sup>

### *Constructing Musical Identity in Early Adolescence*

One of the key features in the construction of musical identity is ability self-perceptions or self-efficacy. Self-efficacy plays a key role in mastery, motivation, and long-term engagement within a given domain such as music.<sup>5</sup> Musical self-efficacy may constitute a characteristic of an even deeper sense of one's musical self-image.<sup>6</sup> Both self-efficacy and self-image develop through social comparisons with others and through comparisons with our idealized notions of ourselves.<sup>7</sup>

Early adolescence is a critical time for the development of musical self-efficacy and musical self-image. Young adolescents tend to compartmentalize self-attributes in specific activities or domains. Therefore, the quest for identity at this stage is often tied to perceptions of what they can do well. Young adolescents typically want to address these strengths and weaknesses in meaningful ways as they desire to move toward a meaningful self-concept.

The transition from primary to secondary school may present challenges to adolescent musical identity. Physiological changes and the impact these changes have on the adolescent singing voice may present a challenge to musical self-efficacy and musical self-image.<sup>8</sup>

## *Research in Musical Self-Efficacy and Musical Self-Image with Adolescents*

Several studies have noted that self-efficacy is a significant predictor of musical performance.<sup>9, 10</sup> A study with high-risk adolescent male choral singers found correlations between vocal self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation.<sup>11</sup> However, another study found no significant relationship between musical self-efficacy scores and sight-reading scores, or students stated intentions to continue in a band program, contradicting extant research in self-efficacy that show strong correlations between domain-specific efficacy beliefs and longevity within a given domain.<sup>12</sup> A study of musical self-image in four adolescent female vocalists revealed individuals tended to draw upon self-efficacy source material to form their musical self-image statements. When asked to describe “what does it mean to be a musician?” participants continuously drew upon the factors of mastery experience, social persuasion, and physiological arousal or the anxiety/serenity continuum.<sup>13</sup> A more recent study that assessed musical self-efficacy source factors found mastery experience to be the strongest predictor of self-efficacy development, supporting previous self-efficacy research in a

multitude of academic and physical domains.<sup>14</sup>

## *Musical Self-Efficacy and Musical Self-Image Studies in Creative Environments*

A small number of studies investigated the development of musical self-efficacy and musical self-image when creative tasks such as composition and improvisation were central to the curriculum. A study of motivational changes, including self-efficacy, in young adolescents engaged in music composition, revealed significant differences in the efficacy of boys and non-instrumentalists toward composition, with decreased efficacy beliefs amongst girls and instrumentalists.<sup>15</sup> Another study showed that musical improvisation tended to generate social and musical inclusiveness.<sup>16</sup> A study of young adolescents engaged in group musical composition found collective creative decision making strengthened group and individual identity, allowing for the emergence of a musical community that celebrates one another’s successes.<sup>17</sup>

## **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

Much of the musical self-efficacy research has treated the construct as a stable variable that predicts performance achievement or as a predictor of future musical engagement.<sup>14, 19</sup> Other researchers have examined the construct as malleable and changeable, as shaped by teacher interventions based on efficacy sources, or through creative autonomy through composition<sup>15,</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Musical self-efficacy and musical self-image studies within creative contexts have been conducted in school music creativity clubs, college-level courses, and general music classrooms. This study aimed to contribute to the existing literature by expanding the music learning contexts for such research through the inclusion of a performance-based school ensemble classroom. Additionally, this study aimed to stimulate further discussion regarding the creative needs of the adolescent musician and how awareness of these needs might influence the middle school choral curriculum.

This study aimed to address the question: How do adolescents in a middle school choral program that values and develops musical creativity through vocal improvisation, manifest and describe their musical self-efficacy? Additionally, this study attempted to address the following secondary question: How do adolescents in a middle school choral program that values and develops musical creativity through vocal improvisation, manifest and describe their musical self-image?

## **Method**

Study participants were thirty-five incoming sixth-grade choral students from a public middle school located twenty-one miles from a major urban city in the southeast United States. All participants were engaged in a sixteen-week vocal improvisation program taught by the researcher of this study. The quantitative data-gathering portion



of this study consisted of a Musical Self-Efficacy Survey (MSES) designed for this study. The MSES was administered five times throughout the semester. This study utilized a mixed methods design consisting of quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis, repeated five times throughout the study. Based on first administration survey results, a participant longitudinal focus group (N = 9) was interviewed three times to qualitatively explore the nature of musical self-efficacy and musical self-image.

The remaining survey administrations followed key transition points in the study including an in-school improvisation concert in week eight, and a community improvisation concert in week twelve. After each subsequent survey administration, a different focus group of four to seven participants was interviewed to further investigate specific aspects of musical self-efficacy and musical self-image development. Adult participant observers interacted, participated, and provided feedback to students during two vocal improvisation lessons. They also provided class observation data by speaking into a voice recorder and taking written notes during observations. This study utilized five efficacy source factors that treated verbal persuasion of peers and adults as separate sources of self-efficacy development.

#### *Methodology of Improvisation*

The intact choral class participated in a variety of daily vocal improvisation activities woven through-

out the curricula. Participants sang short major and minor pentatonic melodic patterns each day to establish auditory readiness for improvisation. In most cases, these patterns were sung by the teacher and

echoed by the choir. Auditory readiness activities utilized Echo Chain Singing Games (Copyright © 1973 by G.C. Nash), a flip chart of hundreds of four-note major, minor, modal, and pentatonic patterns.

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The teacher/researcher chose to focus on pentatonic patterns that could be the basis of improvisations within choral repertoire utilizing a major or minor pentatonic tonality. In a similar way, participants also echoed, altered, and improvised short rhythmic patterns. The echoing of melodic and rhythmic patterns allowed students to experience the musical content of future improvisations.

Improvisation was introduced by the teacher/researcher by asking participants to alter the sung melodic patterns or rhythmic patterns. The pedagogical intent of this activity was for participants to discover their improvisational voice through the development of their own melodic and rhythmic patterns. Other improvisation activities included:

- large group improvisations
- improvisation with partners
- small-group improvisations with three to five peers
- peer modeling improvisations in which students brought improvisational ideas to the full choir who would either echo or alter the student pattern as directed by the teacher or a student.

### Reliability and Validity

This study required several data types in order to address the complexity of the research questions including survey data, coded interviews, participant observer notes, and researcher journal notes. In a

pilot study, the MSES was shown to have high reliability in measuring musical self-efficacy. All study data was merged in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomena of musical self-efficacy development. Interviews were coded for emergent themes, which were analyzed alongside musical self-efficacy survey data. Interviews were read by participants to ensure the accuracy of transcriptions. The teacher/researcher of this study reported biases involving the value of creative engagement in choral class.

## Quantitative Results

### *Musical Self-Efficacy Development*

The MSES was analyzed for overall group and individual musical self-efficacy development, efficacy source factor interaction, and improvisational efficacy development. Data analysis was conducted for the full study group, focus interview groups, and three emergent improvisational groups related to the private to public journey of improvisatory development.<sup>22</sup>

A Repeated Measures ANOVA was used to analyze differences in the five administrations of the overall MSES for all participants. A significant increase in musical self-efficacy was found in the overall group.<sup>23</sup> MANOVA tests on the interactive effects of the five efficacy sources indicate mastery experience and peer vicarious experience were the strongest of five efficacy source factors.

Findings also indicated that musical self-efficacy development did

not occur in a linear fashion but consisted of ebb and flow. This was exemplified in a widespread drop in efficacy scores for most participants between weeks four and eight of the study. Although not statistically significant, the drop in musical self-efficacy occurred as participants struggled with the pedagogical and social challenges of vocal improvisation

### *Improvisational Efficacy Construct and Development*

The improvisation efficacy construct consisted of two MSES items that addressed improvisatory ability perceptions. The purpose of the construct was to determine possible correlations between improvisational efficacy and the other efficacy source factors, and to determine if student perceptions of their own ability to improvise changed throughout the study.

A Repeated Measures ANOVA was used to analyze the improvisational efficacy scores of all participants over five administrations. A significant effect was found.<sup>24</sup> This finding suggests improvisational efficacy of the full group significantly improved during the entire sixteen-week span of the study despite a fall in scores between weeks four and eight.

### *Musical Self-Efficacy Development in Three Emergent Improvisation Groups*

Participants in this study fell along a continuum of private-to-public improvisers characterized by the levels of risk they were willing to assume. Risk-taking levels were observed in two ways: by

the degree to which students openly shared or did not share their improvisations with others; and by the nature of the improvisations themselves, as characterized by volume level and improvisational freedom. These groups consisted of public improvisers (N=12) who consistently and freely shared their improvisation with others, private improvisers (N=20) who preferred to share their improvisations with a few trusted friends, and non-improvisers (N=3) who did not engage in the activity of improvisation.

Survey data from these three emergent groups was analyzed us-

ing a Repeated Measures ANOVA and found that the public improvisation group had significantly higher musical self-efficacy and improvisational efficacy. No significant differences between private improvisers and non-improvisers were found. These findings may suggest a correlational relationship between the ability to improvise publicly and higher levels of musical self-efficacy.

### Qualitative Results

#### *The Language of Self-Efficacy*

Interviews confirmed the im-

portance of the five self-efficacy sources as the theoretical bases for this study. A simple counting of the most frequently mentioned qualitative themes revealed peer vicarious experience, physiological arousal, and mastery experience to be the three most common descriptive codes found in the study.

#### *Improvisation as a Multifaceted Journey*

Participant observations, teacher and participant observer field notes, focus group interviews, and written participant reflections revealed the experience of improvisation to be a multifaceted journey that both en-



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riched and challenged participants. The experience of improvisation brought about a “clash of tensions,” consisting of the desire for creative freedom and performance anxieties associated with vocally improvising

for others.<sup>25</sup>

Many participants found improvisation to be a worthy vehicle for exercising their creativity in music, describing how improvisation allowed them to explore their creative

voices, express their emotions, and fulfill their creative needs. In some cases, students described the experience in flow-like language. Sally said, “I feel improvising gives me the chance to be free and express myself and my feelings.” Following the Improvisation Concert, Allison transmitted the power of the experience:

“The concert that we had, to me, was magical! When I improvised, I felt amazing. At first when I went to the mic, I was about to back down. Yet when I was directly in front of the mic and the music was playing, it just found me. Rhythm was everywhere and I felt free.”

Despite the creative values participants attributed to improvisation, many participants struggled with anxiety associated with vocal improvisation and were often hesitant to place themselves in vulnerable performance situations. However, participant observer Amelia found peer modeling to be a powerful efficacy source that helped hesitant improvisers:

“There seems to be naturally a stronger, more confident singer who sets a standard that others strive to reach/achieve. Some lead the way, and others follow similarly.”

### *The Challenges of Vocal Improvisation*

Participants described the unique musical challenges of vocal improvisation. These challeng-

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es included the innate qualities of *immediacy* and *uncertainty*. *Immediacy* refers to the real-time quality of improvisation. *Uncertainty* refers to the psychological condition of facing an unknown musical end.<sup>26</sup> Some participants were unwilling to share their improvisations publicly until certain they would be mistake-free. Findings from this study reveal this was particularly true of boys, confirming research on how boys tend to choose possible selves that reflect competence in comparison with others.<sup>27</sup> Group improvisation emerged as an important pedagogical tool to facilitate creative vocal exploration, awarding all participants the comfort to make mistakes in a safe, relatively anonymous environment.

#### *Importance of Peer Modeling*

Participants relied on the support and modeling of their peers to help them navigate the social and musical challenges of vocal improvisation. Peer vicarious experience was the most frequent code category in this study. Peer vicarious experience or peer modeling, when coupled with social persuasion in the form of perceived honest peer feedback, proved to be an important factor in musical self-efficacy and musical self-image development.

### **Discussion and Implications**

#### *Vocal Improvisation and Musical Self-Efficacy Development*

The purpose of the present study was to determine how young adolescents manifest and describe

their musical self-efficacy and musical self-image in a middle school choral program that values and develops musical creativity through vocal improvisation. Findings from this study indicated an overall increase in the musical self-efficacy of participants, yet also suggested that participants' self-efficacy journeys did not occur in a linear fashion but rather in ebbs and flows. Participants pointed to improvisation's musical and social challenges as sources of efficacy strain. Their difficulty addressing *immediacy* and *uncertainty* coincided with an increase in performance anxiety and lower musical self-efficacy in relation to peers.

Peer vicarious experience was a powerful efficacy source in this study. The significance of peer vicarious experience can be understood in light of previous research that suggests that modeling, particularly from individuals of perceived similar ability, plays a powerful role in shaping self-efficacy beliefs, especially when the domain involves new and challenging tasks.<sup>28</sup> Peer vicarious experience fostered a sense of musical community, generating multiple forms of creative interaction among choir members. This finding supports previous research which found that group improvisation tended to generate social and musical inclusiveness.<sup>29</sup>

All MANOVA tests point to physiological arousal or performance anxiety as the most challenging area of efficacy development in this study. Physiological arousal findings support previous research that found that individuals who ex-

perienced higher levels of anxiety during and after music performance often used withdrawal or avoidance as self-protective coping strategies.<sup>30</sup> Peer relationships and a sense of musical community seemed to have a positive influence on performance anxiety. Some participants reported that performance anxiety decreased when peer models were trusted. Group improvisation also helped some students address their anxiety issues by providing more anonymity and generating a sense of musical community.

#### *Vocal Improvisation and Musical Self-Image Development*

In this study, the experience of improvisation placed participants in tension between their dependence on the familiar and their need for free expression. This tension generated simultaneous feelings of vulnerability and freedom. Vocal improvisation induced this encounter in ways that were sometimes uncomfortable for participants and unique to the middle school choral experience.

As students gradually overcame the early challenges of improvisation, they were more likely to describe their improvisational experience as a source of support for their musical/creative needs and desires. In the words of some participants, the "freedom to choose which notes to sing" led to feelings of enjoyment and personal satisfaction. Opportunities for self-expression, expressing feelings, and sharing their creative voices were considered "fun" and led some participants to bring improvisation into their out-of-school

musical worlds. In a broad sense, participants felt opportunities for free expression allowed them to explore their unique, personal qualities or “musical personality.”

## *Improvisation and the Social Structure of the Choir*

According to influential psychologist Albert Bandura, the development of self-efficacy takes place within an extensive system of socio-structural influences.<sup>31</sup> In this study, the influencing social structure was the choir and its members, which participants viewed as both a source of support and a source of anxiety. Perceptions of musical growth were influenced by each person’s relationship to the social structure of the choir.

## *Recommendations for Future Research*

This study was exploratory in nature due to the small number of participants. Future researchers may wish to replicate it with a larger group of at least 120 participants, which would allow for a factor analysis of the MSES. A more recent study in musical self-efficacy assessed both learning and performance efficacy.<sup>32</sup> Future studies may want to similarly assess musical self-efficacy for learning and for performance in creative contexts.

## *Recommendations for Choral Music Education*

The results of this study indicate that vocal improvisation can provide choral students with a vehicle to exercise their agency as musicians and explore their creative selves. To this end, it is important

that teachers include improvisational works in performance so that students have opportunities to creatively interact with music in both the classroom and performance.

Choral directors who undertake the teaching of vocal improvisation will quickly confront feelings of vulnerability that arise from students as they face improvisation’s musical and social challenges. Students often demonstrate tentativeness in their first improvisatory attempts, which may take the form of nervous laughter and avoidance strategies. These reactions should be expected from students new to exercising their creative selves within the choral classroom. Teachers must be persistent in the daily implementation of vocal improvisation activities. Vocal improvisation, like all other skills in the choral classroom, requires time and consistency. ■

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## NOTES

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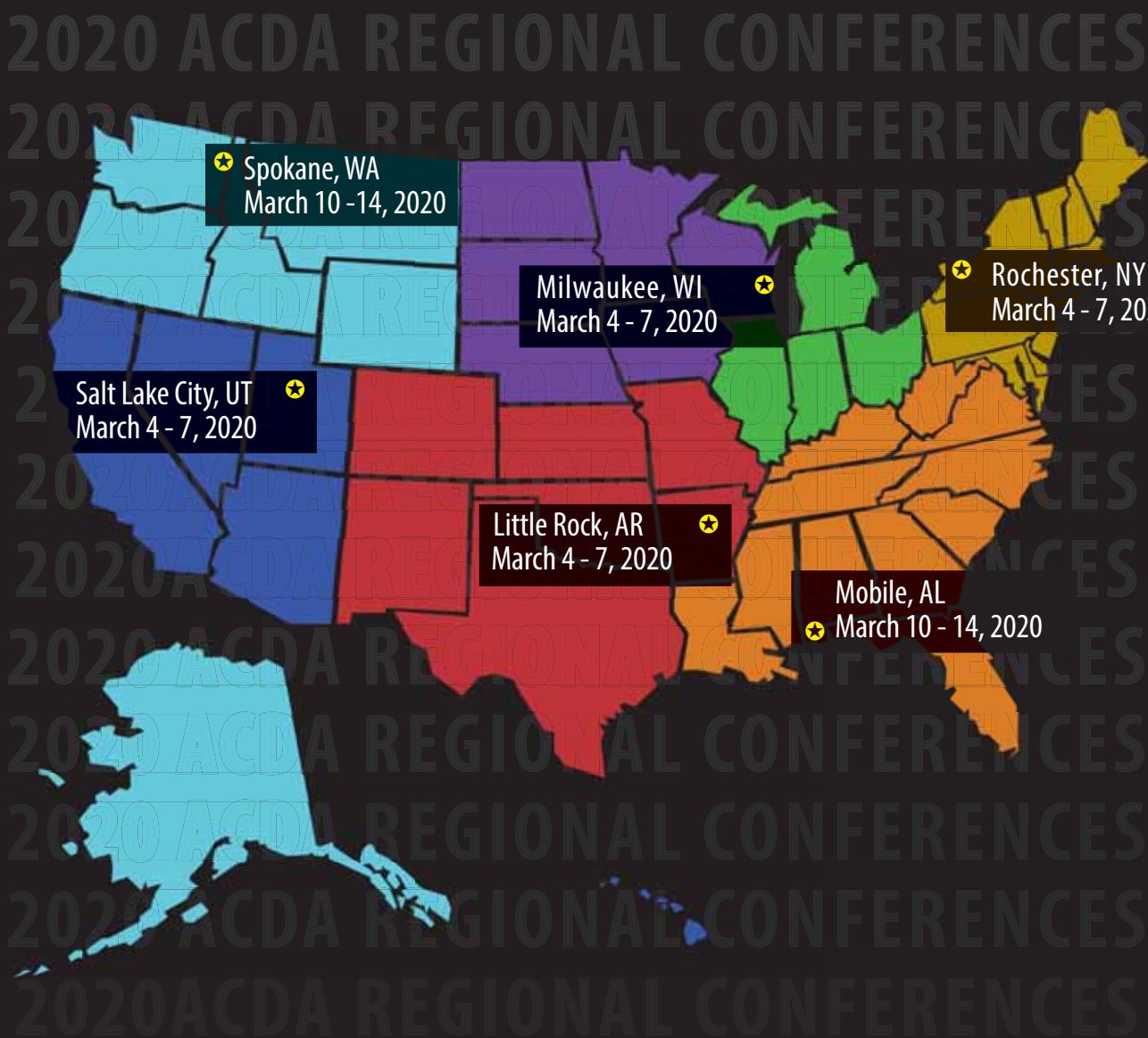
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## Contemporary/ Commercial Choirs



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### Practical and Creative Ideas for Optimizing the Show Choir Combo

by Michael J. Pendowski

Having a Show Choir and competing in competitions across the country can be an exciting and rewarding activity for many choral programs. These performances combine singing with dancing, costumes, sets, and themes to create mini musicals. The creativity and talent utilized in designing, teaching, and executing these shows can be masked by the neglect of the orchestra/combo accompanying these groups. Dedicating time to the rehearsal, adaptation of arrangements, addressing and adjusting sound variants, and actively incorporating the band into the show will heighten the impact of the production, make performing with the band easier for the singers, and produce a higher quality

of musicianship from the entire ensemble. The following suggestions are based on methods used in live shows, observations at competitions, and practical experience conducting and backing up singers and singing groups in and out of the studio.

The use of the strongest, most experienced players available is essential to the band, as the demands of the music require performers that possess experience in a variety of styles and a level of ability to successfully perform the selected music. Because there is often only one player per part, a stronger player is necessary in every chair. This is akin to the “wind ensemble” or “jazz band,” where each part has an essential role in the ensemble.

Every effort should be made to recruit the best player available for each chair. With this in mind, it is to the director’s advantage to enlist the help of the instrumental director in their school.<sup>1</sup> This is the person who usually knows the strongest, most motivated instrumental players can recommend those players that have the maturity and talent to play these advanced parts and can be asked to lend their skills as a director to assist with the combo. The advantage for the instrumental director is that the experience of performing “one

on a part” helps develop the instrumental players’ musical ability and confidence playing their instrument, which is rarely available in traditional instrumental programs, and thus improves the instrumental program. It also offers an opportunity to perform music not traditionally played by traditional concert instrumental programs.

### Defining Live vs Recorded Performance

Many show choirs spend considerable time rehearsing with professionally produced practice tracks. The high quality of this recording often contrasts with the realities of performances, often setting a standard that is unattainable by a high school combo. It is important to understand the difference between “live” performances and “recorded” performances and how the differences between the two genres affect the final performance. In the studio, virtually everything can be controlled in multiple ways depending on the recording techniques used and the abilities of the engineer and producer. Sounds are EQed, artificially balanced to like instruments and instruments from other musical families, and then to all other

# Repertoire & Resources - Contemporary/Commerical Choirs

recorded sounds for volume, panning, reverberation, and effects. Vocal and instrumental parts are often “mulated” (the doubling of a part on another track or tracks by the same instrument or voice) to enrich the timbre quality. Sounds are commonly passed through multiple devices to enhance specific aspects of the tone and even change the timbre and basic characteristics of the instruments and voices recorded. This control gives a studio recording the transparency that allows parts to be featured in the priority the recording artist or producer wishes.

Unfortunately, this kind of control

is not possible in live situations without an extreme budget and a large staff to operate and set up this kind of sound support. Live performances are more difficult to control and are much more reliant on the musicians to affect these parameters. For example, the volume at which most instruments record in the studio centers around a strong *forte* to *fortissimo*. A snare drum sound on a recording is seldom possible in a live situation because in the studio the drummer is performing at a consistently louder volume to get the optimum sound out of the drum. This is balanced, panned, and EQed to create the mix

the engineer, producer, and artist desire. However, the musicians backing a singer or singing group in a “live” situation need to be considerably more sensitive to volume. The musicians accompanying the live singers need to be responsive to the balance between the vocals and the band and react to produce the most esthetically pleasing result. As the director evaluates adjusting sound reinforcement, the difference between what is possible in the studio and what is possible in a live situation should always be considered.

## Band Position and Ensemble Playing

How and where the band is placed in the setup can make a significant difference in sound projection, balance, and the aural clarity of the group to the audience. Centering the band behind the choir makes a huge difference in the cohesiveness of the entire vocal/instrumental ensemble, allowing the singers to hear and “feel” the music directly behind them and centering the most important parts of the instrumental ensemble. This positioning also physically places the band the farthest distance away from the audience and often behind the risers, giving priority to the vocal ensemble.

In this setup the drum kit, piano, and bass should be placed center stage behind the vocal group. Placing the drums surrounded by the bass on one side and the piano on the other centers the “core” of the band directly behind the choir and allows for a centralized pulse equally perceived by the entire group, aiding



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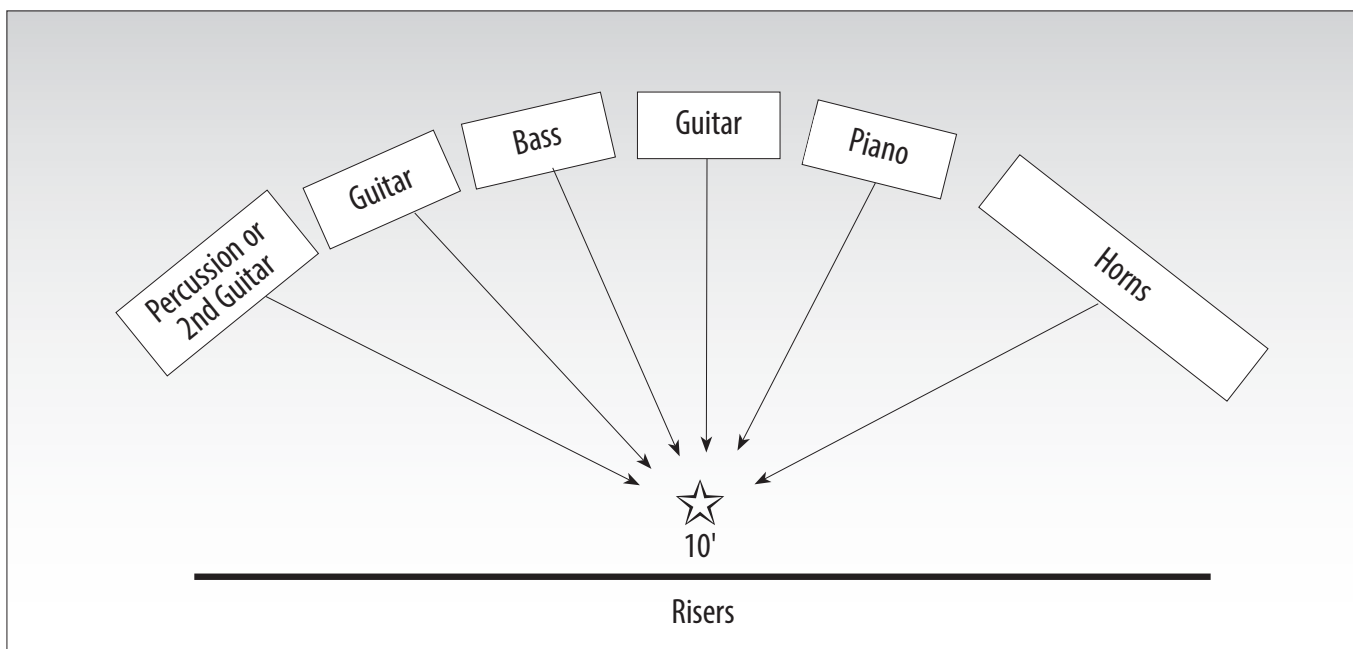
in the overall synchronicity of the performance. This also places the harmonic fundamental in a central location for better intonation. The guitar(s) should be placed as close to this “core” as possible to aid rhythm and communication between all the rhythm players. Their amps should be angled inward at a 45° angle, redirecting the sound to the middle of the ensemble and away from the audience. A fixed point about ten feet in front of the instrumental group is an excellent starting point for amp direction. This focuses the sound to a central point from which the balance and volume can most accurately be adjusted, and aids the overall blend and cohesiveness of the ensemble. The point can be adjusted according to space and the balance heard in the audience. Horns and percussion can then be placed at each end at the instructor’s discretion, and should also focus their sound to the same point

for similar reasons. A gentle arc is the optimal shape for this group, but if a straighter line is required because of space limitations, the amps and wind performers should still angle the amplifiers inward (Example 1).

Sound suppression and sound reflection should also be considered. The use of a plexiglass, plastic, or wood barrier in front of the drums and bass considerably lessens the projection of these instruments without impeding the players’ technique or making expensive investments into electronic drums. The barrier reflects the sound back to the performer and lessens the impact of the instruments. This same technique can be used for the horns to a lesser extent. Barriers of plexiglass can be placed on the stands behind the music, extending for two to three inches beyond the edge of the stand on each side. An additional advantage of using these sound reflectors

is that the players are often able to hear themselves more clearly.

Sound reinforcement is also a consideration for the proper balance of the ensemble. The reinforcement of the choir is the primary concern. A featured wind soloist would need a microphone, but unless the performance venue is a large arena space, reinforcement is not a major concern. This type of sound reinforcement can become very complex and involves a large amount of equipment and personnel to operate. More often, the problem is the entire band or parts of the instrumental group are too loud. The instrument that often does require reinforcement is the acoustic piano. Amplifying the piano will allow the singers to hear this essential part, which is often what they rehearse to.



*Example 1 Band Positioning*

## Individual Instrument Adjustments

The drum kit often presents one of the greatest challenges for adjustment since the sound and restrictions of performing the recorded instrument are very often very different than when performing in a live venue. Volume and projection are often the central problem with the kit, and several simple adjustments can be made to reduce this intrusiveness. First, change the beater on the kick drum. The punching rock sound heard on recordings is created by using a hard beater against the bass drum head. In recording

situations, this volume is controlled artificially through mixing and EQ, but these options are seldom possible and rarely effective in a live situation. Using a soft Felt-covered beater will greatly lessen the impact and projection of the kick drum without forcing the drummer to play in an unnatural manner. Another effective tool is to “muffle” the drum with a pillow inside the drum to absorb some of the ring.

Another effective kit change is to use a piccolo snare drum instead of a more traditional deep snare. This will reduce the volume without removing the desirable crispness and

“crack.” The player also needs less adjustment to achieve a more controlled volume.

Having the drummer use lighter sticks will also make a considerable difference in the volume of the kit. This will lessen the impact on all the toms and snare without drastically affecting the cymbal response and sound, and will reduce how much the player needs to compensate for volume. It also lessens the “ring” of the cymbals, reducing excessive high timbres.

A more expensive but effective solution is to use electronic drums, which trigger a desired drum or cymbal sound when an electronic pad is struck. These rigs can be purchased for as little as \$500 and offer extensive control over volume and sounds. The response on these kits takes some getting used to, and many drummers prefer the real thing, but it does address many of the volume issues. However, there are a number of things to consider: the cheapest rigs may not be suitable because of inferior action, limitation of variety and quality of sounds and controls, and electronic kits will require sound reinforcement through amplifiers or sound systems.

## The Bass and Guitars

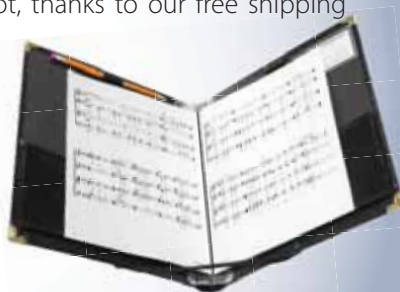
The player’s approach to the individual parts is the single most important factor in the performance of the bass and guitars. Although it is not within the scope of this article to discuss specific instruments and equipment, the gear should be easy to use and able to produce the most familiar sounds associated with

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these parts. The amplifiers should be capable of adjusting the high, mid, and low ranges. Creating an EQ sound shape that forms a smile, the midrange lower than the high and low, is a good place to start. The individual instrument sounds can then be adjusted to the optimum sound setting. This setting will need to be adjusted for each specific venue, but this “smile” EQ pattern is an excellent place to start.

As stated previously, the amps should point inward to a point approximately ten feet in front of the kit. This angle will particularly affect the treble tone quality of the amplified instruments, and the treble may need to be adjusted. Another consideration with the guitars is the use of various effects boxes to affect the guitar’s sound. Those used should be easy to operate and not create excess noises when engaged. If an acoustic guitar is used it should be capable of using an amp. In recorded music, the acoustic guitar is artificially enhanced to balance with the rest of the ensemble. In a live performance situation, any volume above *mezzo forte* will drown out any acoustic guitar, so amplification is necessary to effectively use this instrument. There are a wide variety of pickups that are capable of amplifying an acoustic guitar, as well as instruments fitted

with pickups for amplification. The acoustic guitar is an excellent second guitar, and the director is encouraged to add this instrument; it adds a fullness to the sound of the combo without being an overly dominant sound. This also allows the electric guitar to perform more idiomatic sounds and parts, freeing this player from a purely accompaniment role.

### The Horns

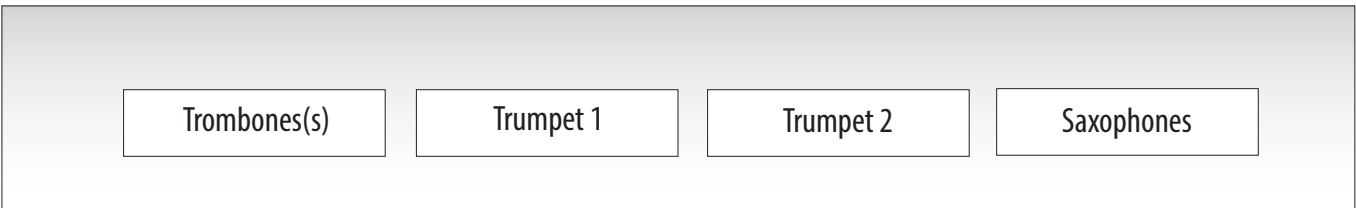
A strong horn section can add style and excitement to any rhythm accompaniment. Do not confuse an effective horn section with one that can play all the high notes or fastest passages. Even a young, inexperienced horn section can greatly enhance any performance with some adjustments to parts and proper instruction. When placing the horns, put the lead trumpet in the middle and the other instruments around in descending score order (Example 2).

This allows the entire section to hear the lead part so that dynamics, articulations, and style can be matched. The players stand, allowing them to better hear each other and the lead part (usually the first trumpet), while promoting good breath support and playing technique. If the group appears visually distracting in a standing position,

have them dress in muted or dark colors, or in costumes that complement the theme of the show. The horns should be angled similarly to the other rhythm players. This will diminish the brashness of loud sections, allows the choir to hear them within the sound of the entire band/rhythm section, and minimize the occasional loud, overbalanced sections that may interfere with the vocals. A common technique in the studio is to “mult” instruments—have the same instrument play the same part a number of times to thicken the sound and add richness and fullness, and natural reverb and EQ. A similar effect can be achieved by doubling parts, especially the interior parts, where intonation will not be as critical.

### Adapting Parts to the Ability of Players

One challenge that every director must contend with is the ability of the individual players in the band. In an effort to be creative or to establish a unique style, many arrangers do not follow the original grooves and backgrounds to popular songs. These adaptations can be refreshing and original, or be very distracting to the performers and make the selection cumbersome and unnatural.



Example 2 Horn Placement

This can also appear in the rhythm parts of these arrangements. Applying a new style or “hook” to an established song is an innovative idea, but when the innovation detracts from the performance, the work is no longer successful. Unless the concept of the song is completely different, for example a swing song rewritten in a latin groove, having the players listen to the original or most popular cover version is always a good idea, especially for the rhythm players. This gives players a solid example to imitate while teaching the form of the piece, and can then be adapted to the new version.

Rewriting parts should be also considered when using less experienced musicians. Many of the horn parts can be demanding, requiring a professional level of stamina and ability and creating significant balance problems when extreme tessitura is employed. Rewriting these parts in a more accessible range should always be considered in this situation. These parts would be as effective if played in a natural range of the instrument, and rewriting the extreme ranges into a more conventional range makes them playable by a greater number of younger instrumentalists. Anything above a written B<sup>1</sup> in trumpet parts is unnatural and requires a mature player to balance and play with correct intonation. In a great majority of these situations, playing the parts correctly in the staff will produce the same effect with a much more satisfactory result. When faced with thick, complicated voicings that create an unclear background, consider rewriting them as unisons or even taceting

sections that are behind the vocals. The background should enhance the presentation, not detract, and many arrangements attempt to fill in areas where nothing is needed.

Another idea is to re-score sections of the arrangement for different instruments. Adding everyone in the horn section to sustained lines allows a “thickness” of the sound, which in turn allows the players to perform in a more relaxed way and create a prettier, more natural sounding sustained background.

The band’s collective ability should also be considered when picking material. Don’t put less experienced players in situations that require a professional. Remember, professionals recorded the playback tracks in a controlled environment. Rewriting passages that require a technical ability beyond your instrumentalists while retaining the idea of what the arrangement suggests will produce a better product playable by your students’ level. Often merely changing thick harmony parts with unison octaves will produce the same result and sound stronger.

One other suggestion is to “thin out” the horn parts. These parts should sporadically play, not be consistent noise underneath the vocals. Excessive punches or pads add to the fatigue of the players, resulting in a poor performance. Also, this thinning often adds clarity to the arrangement, making it a more successful presentation for your show.

Related to the appropriateness of the parts is the decision of what parts need to be covered. Though it is a forgone conclusion that the combo’s personnel should reflect the

instrumental requirements of the arrangement, adding a player to fill out the orchestration just to complete a specific instrumentation should be weighed against the actual ability of the player. In many instances less is more, and having a higher level of talent in the group is always more desirable than adding players just to complete a score.

The addition of instrumentalists who will not be capable of performing the parts will detract from the entire production, especially in the horn section. The purpose of the combo is to provide a satisfactory accompaniment that enhances the overall performance. The difference between two or three and five or six horn players is not a critical factor, and weak players will pull down the level of performance. This also applies to additional rhythm players beyond the basic piano/bass/drum trio. Also realize that everyone does not need to play every selection. Judicial tacet of selected parts can solve this problem, or just opting for a smaller ensemble.

## Rehearsing the Band

Spending time with the band separate from the choir pays huge dividends that can enhance the overall show’s effectiveness and style and contribute to a more professional presentation.

Rehearsing the band without the singers is an essential part of improving the instrumentalists’ ability to effectively execute the music, aids in the integration of the band with the singers, and creates a superior finished product. Because of limit-

ed rehearsal time, it is common for directors to leave instrumental rehearsals to an assistant, or worse—to one or more of the students in the band. Though this may give the director some extra time to use in other areas that need attention, it can result in an insufficiently prepared band and a weaker final product. The band needs to know what you are expecting from them, what your interpretation of the music is, how you will conduct each piece, and the progression from selection to selection. This can only be achieved by working with you the director. Using a subordinate or student conductor is a great tool, but the conductor is the final interpreter of the music. Often these assistants are unfamiliar with the music, unclear about the direction and importance of various aspects of the show, and can become embroiled in personal tensions with other members of the band. If you are using a student assistant to rehearse the band, be clear in your instructions and spend time in the rehearsals yourself. *There is no substitute for the director.*

### Integrating the Band into the Show

Integrating the band in an active way in show is a great tool to increase the cohesiveness of the ensemble, add variation, uniqueness, and surprise to your general effect, and get the band members involved. Something as simple as a soloist being featured in front of the group, or as complex as costume changes and lighting, can add significant drama to your show. Don't be afraid to cre-

ate these moments, as it always gives the presentation a significant boost. Horn flashes and motion in general often help. One thing I like to do is have a band feature created by the players. This frees them from the constraints of constantly playing a

backup role and allows time for set and costume changes. In our organization this piece is usually only three or four minutes long, but it gives the singers a chance to catch their breath and prepare for the second half of the show. The players in the



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band feel more integrated into the show and perform at a higher level throughout the entire show.

## Conclusion

The suggestions offered here are possible ways to balance the vocals and the combo in your Show Choir. The majority of these problems will be volume or timbre related. Be open to suggestions from a variety of sources. Murray Allen, the owner of Universal Recording in Chicago, told me early in my career that there was always more than one answer for any problem.<sup>2</sup> Always keep in mind, any problem may have several solutions. Listen to recordings of your group and identify the most obvious volume and sound problems and attempt changes in these areas first. As the larger problems are addressed and satisfactorily corrected, other smaller problems may start to fix themselves. Remember, there are no absolutes in sound reinforcement.



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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Alan L. Alder and Thalia M. Mulvihill, *The Show Choir Handbook* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 115-117.

<sup>2</sup> Murray Allen (owner, Universal Recording, Chicago) in a discussion with the author, April 1986.

## Children's/ Community Youth Choirs



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## Equity in the Children and Community Youth Choral Classroom

By Joy Hirokawa

The children's choral world took flight in the 1980s and 1990s with an explosion of interest, immeasurably raising the bar for artistic musical performance by young people. How fortunate we are for those who were initial leaders in the field. Their vision would forever change our understanding and expectation of the artistry with which young singers might perform.

As we look to 2020, we may notice that the purposes and missions of many adult choirs are evolving to address equity and questions of social justice. With this impetus, we now have a new opportunity to again be on the cutting edge of change. Some have noticed the lack of diversity represented in the singers in their choirs or in the honor choirs in which they participate. Some have questioned if, in our efforts to be "elite," we have become "exclusive." Many choirs are discovering an increased interest and desire to reach beyond excellence in performance toward meaningful engagement in the world and with others. Some see

choral music as a means to guide our choristers to be better members of humanity.

Research demonstrates that we are already moving in this direction. The *2019 Chorus America Chorus Impact Study: Singing for a Lifetime* found that:

Choral singing plays an important role in singers' lives, contributing to positive personal qualities like optimism, resilience, and mindfulness, and to their feelings of connection to others. This is especially true of choristers with more exposure—those who belong to multiple groups, rehearse more frequently, and have more years of experience—and, interestingly, those whose primary choruses are more racially and ethnically diverse.<sup>1</sup>

Of particular note, the report stated that:

Choral singers themselves believe that their tolerance and respect for diversity is due to singing, with 63% of singers reporting that choral participation has made them more open to and accepting of people who are different from them or hold different views. This is particularly true of younger choristers, lower- to mid-income choristers, choristers with lower levels of education, choristers with more choral exposure, and choristers who belong to groups with a reported "balanced mix" of ethnicities



in their membership.<sup>2</sup>

How might we apply these findings within the context of our already full rehearsal and planning agendas? Building on an established tradition of performance excellence, quality repertoire, and appropriate vocal technique, consider the following big picture questions:

- What are we doing to bring broader equity to our choirs?
- How might we cultivate the membership of our choirs to be more reflective and representative of the population of our communities?
- If our community is not very diverse, what opportunities might we provide to our singers to increase diversity within the ensemble?
- What can we do to make participation in choral music more accessible to children and youth who currently may not have access?
- How can we better support directors working in socio-economically distressed areas?
- How might we work more cohesively toward a common goal of quality choral music education for all children and youth?

These questions require long-range planning and consistent follow-up to bring change. What might you do in the short term to ensure that the diverse students you do have feel they hold an equitable and valued place in your ensemble? Here are some ideas and questions to consider for both short and long term.

### Repertoire

One of the most visible statements you can make to demonstrate equity is through your choice of repertoire. Does your programming include a wide variety of musics? This

## ACDA Children's Choir Conductors' Retreat January 18 – 19, 2020 Atlanta, GA

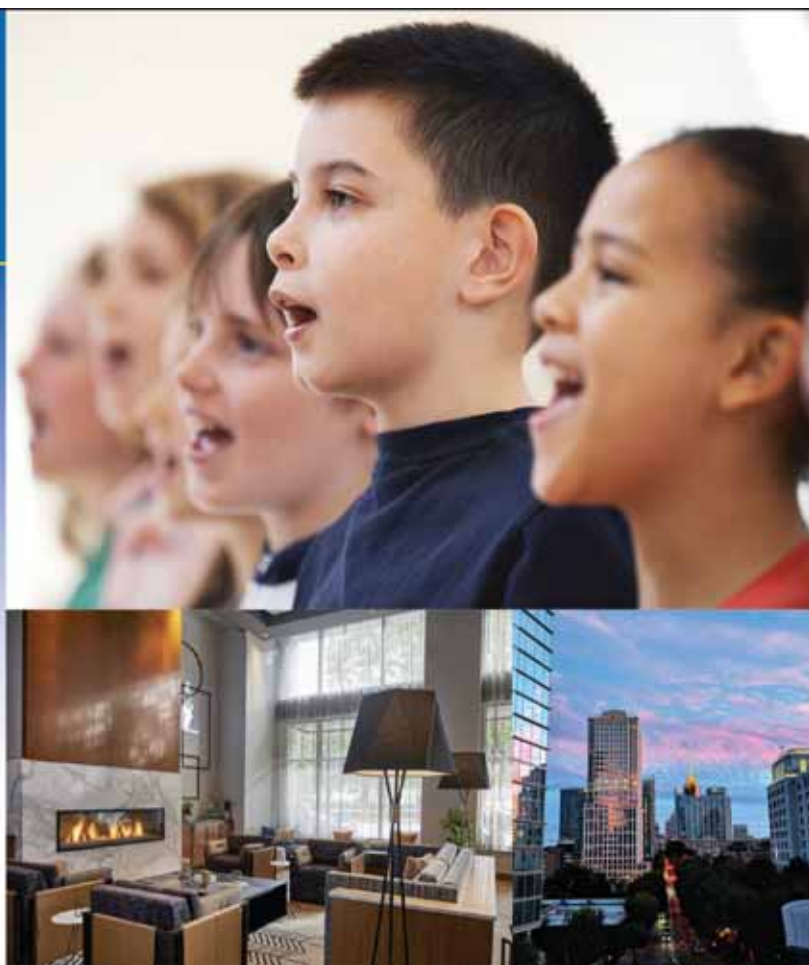
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For information contact:**

Joy Hirokawa, National Chair for Children & Community Youth:  
[joyhirokawa@comcast.net](mailto:joyhirokawa@comcast.net)

Emmy Burch, Local Chair at  
[emilywilliamsburch@gmail.com](mailto:emilywilliamsburch@gmail.com)



# Repertoire & Resources - Children's/Community Youth Choirs

does not mean that every program has to be a smorgasbord! Take a look at your programming over the several seasons a chorister might typically be singing with you to see what patterns you find. Take a moment to reflect on how you define diverse repertoire. What may be “diverse” in one community or context might be the standard in another. For example, classical western art music sung using a Bel Canto singing style might be diverse for a population that primarily sings in a folk style tradition, and vice versa. Consider your perspective. Strive to remove assumptions about “value”—it depends on your point of view.

Consider incorporating music from your singers’ family or cultural backgrounds if you have not already done so. Not only will that child feel special and valued, but their fellow choristers will also gain understanding of that child’s life experience.

Nervous to explore vocal techniques or languages that are outside of your comfort zone but essential to honoring a particular musical style, genre, or tradition? Find a culture bearer who would be willing to share their expertise with you and your singers. Houses of worship that are language or ethnicity focused can be good resources.

Make a list of the composers you have programmed. What is the percentage of women composers represented? Composers of color? The Institute for Composer Diversity (<https://www.composerdiversity.com>) maintains an extensive, searchable database of music created by historically under-represented groups.<sup>3</sup>

## Gender

Think about how you address your singers. Rather than using gender-based pronouns (boys/girls), use

neutral groups (sopranos/altos). Ask *all* choristers which pronoun they prefer to use so that no one is singled out, or invite any chorister to share their preferred pronouns with you privately. This communicates to the entire ensemble that you are thinking about and value every singer’s preferences.

If the preferred pronoun is singular they/their, practice! If you make an error, apologize and correct yourself. Choristers will appreciate that you are making the effort. N.b. Usage of singular they/their is becoming more common. According to Grammarly.com, “As of 2019, most big style guides—including the Associated Press, the Chicago Manual of Style, the MLA style manual and the APA style manual—accept the usage of the singular they.”<sup>4</sup> Think about your response when other adults make an error in pronoun or an incorrect assumption of a chorister’s gender.

Think ahead and anticipate restroom needs and rooming when you travel. It is important to establish a good relationship with your choristers and their families so that these questions in particular can be sorted out with them to the best of your ability prior to traveling. It can be surprisingly difficult at times to find gender neutral restrooms! Become familiar with the chorister’s preferences for these situations. Provide options for gender-neutral uniforms, or allow the chorister to wear the uniform in which they feel the most comfortable. This can also support a child who may have body image issues or may have a history of sexual abuse causing them to feel

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uncomfortable in form-fitting attire. These small gestures may help your chorister to feel they are safe, secure, and a valued member of your ensemble.

### Examining Your Own Biases

Recognize that we all have biases—no one is completely free of them—and forgive yourself for having them. The bigger question is, how do we identify what they are and to what degree they exist? Readers are referred to Harvard University's Project Implicit <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html> to explore a wide variety of biases privately at your own computer using these simple tests. Once identified, what do we do with that knowledge? Awareness is a huge first step, but just a beginning!

Become familiar with current pedagogical practices such as culturally responsive teaching.<sup>5</sup> Our biases and lack of cultural understanding can significantly impede the ease with which we interact with our choristers.

### Next Steps

The Chorus America study concluded with a number of recommendations, among them:

Consider how your chorus can contribute to furthering diversity, equity, and inclusion in your community. Because choral singers as a group are unusually tolerant and highly value diversity, and because choruses are places where singers of different races and ethnicities interact with each other, choruses have a lot of potential for doing effective diversity, equity, and inclusion work.<sup>6</sup>

Even a small step can make a big difference in a child's life. What step might you take to bring greater equity to your choir? 🗣️

**Joy Hirokawa** is the founder and artistic director of The Bel Canto Youth Chorus of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Grunwald Associates LLC and Chorus America, *The Chorus Impact Study: Singing for a Lifetime*. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License. (2019), 5. [https://www.chorusamerica.org/sites/default/files/resources/ChorusImpactStudy\\_SingingforaLifetime.pdf](https://www.chorusamerica.org/sites/default/files/resources/ChorusImpactStudy_SingingforaLifetime.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Composer Diversity. <https://www.composerdiversity.com>

<sup>4</sup> Grammarly Blog, *What is the Singular They, and Why Should I Use it?* <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/use-the-singular-they/>

<sup>5</sup> See: Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice, Third Edition* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> Chorus America, *The Chorus Impact Study: Singing for a Lifetime*, 21.



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## On the Future of Our Craft: NextDirection for the Next Generation

by Derek Machan and Ted Gibson

*Editor's Note: The following is reprinted with edits from Ted Gibson's Arizona ACDA newsletter article. The historical information in this article was graciously provided by Sharon Hansen, Kevin Meidl, and Rebecca Winnie.*

As choral conductors, we serve many roles. We are pedagogues, technicians, fundraisers, marketing gurus, and uniform sizing specialists. We push our ensembles to succeed, but we often neglect the greater purpose of our craft. Consider, for a moment, the future of choral music. Are we doing everything we can to encourage our best and brightest young leaders to pursue a career in choral conducting? If our work is really important, we should think very seriously about how to ensure a strong future for our craft. Consider the fields of science, technology, engineering and math. STEM education is the #1 corporate investment initiative, yielding \$350 billion annually. Clearly, the STEM fields have invested in their future, but our field is different. The

choral art form is best learned as an apprentice, yet our classrooms and our honor ensembles (i.e., all-region and all-state choirs) are not set up for conductor apprenticeship. Future conductors, currently in high school or college, need to get a glimpse of what it is like to plan and implement a rehearsal themselves. They need a choral experience that is process-oriented, reflective, and adaptive. They need NextDirection.

In 2000, the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association began a music symposium specifically designed to encourage eleventh- and twelfth-grade student leaders to pursue a career in choral music. The conference was aptly named "NextDirection." Kevin Meidl was the first to propose the idea of a music symposium for future conductors, and the WCDA Vision Committee (including himself, Rick Bjella, Carl Chapman, and Greg Carpenter) brainstormed and collaborated for two years before the initial launch of NextDirection. The committee received a generous donation from a local donor and hired Eph Ehly as the inaugural master

teacher-conductor. Students were invigorated after the three-day symposium and returned to their programs with a new passion and understanding of choral conducting.

NextDirection continued to build enthusiasm among participants and directors who realized its potential in combating the ever-mounting pressure to steer talented high school students away from collegiate majors in the liberal arts. NextDirection provided the real-life experience that students needed in order to make an informed decision about their collegiate career paths. The symposium gave students the opportunity to work collaboratively with some of the greatest master teacher-conductors in our field. Guest conductors have included: Doreen Rao, Henry Leck, André Thomas, Simon Carrington, Mary Goetze, Craig Hella Johnson, Joe Miller, Jerry Blackstone, JoAnn Miller, Tim Stalter, Mary Hopper, Andrew Last, Beth Holmes, Edith Copley, Rhonda Fugelberth, and Jo-Michael Scheibe. In 2018 the format changed from a locally produced event (WCDA) to a

# On the Future of Our Craft: NextDirection for the Next Generation

nationally produced event (ACDA). The symposium was also expanded to include collegiate students. Dr. Stephen Sieck, past-president of WCDA, provided this description of NextDirection:

“NextDirection is a conference for students considering a path in choral leadership. The collegiate part of the conference connects college students with a master teacher-conductor and supporting adjunct faculty for three days of workshops, rehearsals, and discussions on what it means to be a choral leader.

“The high school part of the conference seeks to inspire high school students to consider the path of choral leadership. A master teacher-conductor, supporting adjunct faculty, and collegiate chaperones work with these students for three days in workshops, rehearsals, and discussions centered on choir and teaching.

“NextDirection’s curriculum is process-oriented, reflective, and adaptive. By *process-oriented*, we mean that NextDirection is not a festival choral experience that focuses students’ work on preparation of a performance. Students in Next-

Direction do sing and rehearse choral music. The focus of their work, however, is in learning to understand how teacher-conductors teach and conduct. To achieve this understanding, NextDirection employs frequent moments of *reflection*. NextDirection’s curriculum is centered on talk-back opportunities, in which an experienced educator guides the students in unpacking the rehearsal they just completed. The educator asks questions that prompt the students to reflect on teaching strategies, outcomes, and assessments. The teacher-conductor shares their approach to particular aspects of the



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teaching craft, such as score analysis and rehearsal planning. Supporting adjunct faculty work with the students to develop techniques of score study, conducting gesture, and to explore salient topics such as repertoire selection, career guidance, and other topics as they emerge. Hence, NextDirection is *adaptive*, responding to the particular interests and focus of the teacher-conductor or students in the room.”

Clearly, the ACDA national office realized WCDA has something special. This could be a valuable experience for students across the country. NextDirection Choral Leadership Conference now has a relationship with ACDA through a memorandum of understanding. ACDA offered grants through Fund for Tomorrow in 2018 and 2019 to help support the expansion of the project, and they help promote NextDirection and encourage state chapters to offer scholarships for students to attend.

The National NextDirection conference in Wisconsin offers two simultaneous experiences. 1) Students who have completed tenth, eleventh, twelfth grade and exhibit the characteristics of leadership and a passion for choral music are encouraged to attend the high school experience. 2) College music majors attend seminars and workshops specifically geared toward collegiate students and choral leadership. Collegiate attendees then stay for the high school experience and serve as mentors and guides, directly applying some of the techniques and topics from their seminars.

NextDirection will be held July 6-10, 2020, at UW-Eau Claire in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. More information can be found at <https://www.wischoral.org/nextdirection>.

Please encourage your outstanding choral leaders to attend, and ask your state leadership about scholarships! 



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## 2020 SYMPOSIUM ON RESEARCH IN CHORAL SINGING

### Call for Proposals

The American Choral Directors Association is pleased to announce the second Symposium on Research in Choral Singing, a new forum for the dissemination of research. Following the packed first Symposium in 2018, the second Symposium will be held on Friday and Saturday, May 1-2, 2020 on the campus of Georgia State University in Atlanta. The Symposium will combine diverse presentational formats with opportunities for in-depth conversation, inquiry, and consideration of future research directions.

The intent of the Symposium is aligned with the purpose of the International Journal of Research in Choral Singing: to advance knowledge and practice with respect to choral singing, choir sound, choral pedagogy, and related areas such as equity and inclusion in choral singing, school community partnerships, adolescent development, vocal development, and singing and well-being. Like the IJRCS, the Symposium program committee welcomes proposals that reflect well-executed research employing quantitative, qualitative, historical, or philosophical methodologies. Proposals for both research presentations and research posters are welcomed.

Proposals must comply with the following guidelines:

- Written accounts of the research to be presented may have been submitted for publication at the time of application to the 2020 Symposium, but the research may not be in print or in press at that time.
- Research presented at the 2018 Symposium will not be considered. Research presented at other conferences will be considered only if the audience was substantially different. A statement specifying the particulars of any previous presentation(s) must be included with the submission.
- In-progress research is permissible for submission to the Symposium so long as preliminary data and findings can be discussed and the author plans to have completed the project by the symposium. Prospective research projects are not suitable for this particular Symposium.
- Proposal submission implies intent to register for and present at the Symposium if accepted.
- Two Word documents (.doc, .docx) are required for submission:
  1. Word Document #1: Cover page with author's name, institutional affiliation, contact information (including email address), and ACDA membership number.
  2. Word Document #2: A) The title of the presentation, B) Desired format: paper presentation, poster presentation, or either; C) Abstract of 400 words or less (plus citations, if applicable) summarizing the research to be presented. Please format the document with left-justified paragraphs.
- The IJRCS Editorial Board will serve as the Program Committee and will rate each proposal according to relevance, originality, clarity, validity, and interestingness. The Program Committee reserves the right to designate accepted proposals for either paper or poster presentation.
- Proposal Deadline: Saturday, November 30, 2019 at 11:59 PM Eastern Time.
- Send proposals via email to Bryan E. Nichols, [bnichols@psu.edu](mailto:bnichols@psu.edu) with the subject: SRCS 2020
- All submissions will be blinded before review by the Symposium program committee.
- Applicants will be notified of the status of their submission via email on or before January 6, 2020.



# *In Memoriam*

## Steven M. Demorest 1959–2019



Steven McGregor Demorest was one of choral music's foremost scholars and teachers. His influence equaled the breadth of his interests and talents. Steven was diagnosed with a rare form of lung cancer in early 2018. He passed away on September 22, 2019, at home in Evanston, Illinois, with his family at his side.

Steven's contributions to the American Choral Directors Association were numerous and varied. He contributed articles to *Choral Journal* and served on the ACDA National Standing Committee for Research and Publications until his passing. In 2016, under the auspices of ACDA, he rejuvenated the *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing* and established it as a preeminent resource for choral conductors and scholars across the globe. He initiated the biennial ACDA Symposium on Research in Choral Singing in 2018. In May 2019, ACDA established the Steven M. Demorest Award for Choral Research.

Steven was Professor of Music Education at Northwestern University, a position he accepted in 2014 after a twenty-one-year tenure at the University of Washington. He earned degrees from Luther College, Westminster Choir College, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Steven was the longtime music director of

the Northwest Chamber Chorus (Seattle, WA).

Professor Demorest's scholarly interests were multifaceted, including middle school choral music, the singing of children and adolescent boys, the development of sight-singing skills, and the intersections of neuroscience and music. Steven served the National Association for Music Education as national coordinator of the organization's Special Research Interest Groups and chaired the group focused on research concerning musical perception and cognition. He presented hundreds of conference sessions, served on numerous editorial boards and committees, and was a prolific author of articles in the field's most important journals.

The breadth of Steven's influence was epitomized at the close of a recent IJRCS Editorial Board meeting. Three individuals waited outside: a college faculty member seeking his guidance on tenure and promotion, a PhD student with a question about data analysis, and a middle-school choir teacher wanting Steven's signature on her copy of his book *Building Choral Excellence: Teaching Sight-Singing in the Choral Rehearsal*. Steven's legacy will continually resound through his students, his colleagues, and the choral singers they lead every day.

—Patrick K. Freer, IJRCS editor



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- 5'30". Deeply impassioned setting, plumbing the full meaning of "forsaken." Both male and female soloists speak as the Forsaken One. Although the text is dark, the progression to the end is one of increasing light, with increasing understanding. [ProjectEncore.org/jessica-french](http://ProjectEncore.org/jessica-french)



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# Book Reviews

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

## *Leipzig After Bach: Church & Concert Life in a German City*

Jeffrey S. Sposato  
New York: Oxford University Press, 2018  
336 pages  
Hardcover, \$74.00

This insightful book covers Leipzig's rich history of sacred and secular music between the time of J. S. Bach to Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. Jeffrey Sposato successfully tackles this largely under-researched time in Leipzig's musical development, framing it with social and political context. Sposato's additional book, *The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and the Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition* (2006), along with journal articles and presentations on the topic, establish his knowledge for the climate of Leipzig during Mendelssohn's rise to prowess. Sposato is an associate professor of musicology at University of Houston.

*Leipzig After Bach* is divided into four sections chronologically, detailing the significant music directors, religious and political reforms, and social attitudes that impacted each

shift in Leipzig's history. Part One details Leipzig's rise as a musical city, including its place in the Lutheran Reformation and political disputes that influenced the structure of Lutheran service from the Renaissance into Bach's Thomascantorate.

Overlapping from the time of Bach into the late eighteenth century, Part Two discusses the rise of secular music ensembles, and the undeniable, and sometimes undesirable, relationship between Leipzig's church and concert directors. In a quote from Kapellmeister Johann Hiller, "Should it not bring glory to a society when it not only seeks sensual delight from the music—as permissible and decent as this is—but also permits it to use all of the powers it possesses to lift and move the heart?" (p. 3)

Part Three examines the decline of church attendance in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and its effect on the musical programming and leadership in the Thomaskirche and Gewandhaus. Readers will be particularly interested in the reverse influence of secular musical institutions on

Leipzig's churches. It was during this time sacred music becomes a consumption for the societal elite, and an indicator of good taste rather than piety. Lastly, Part Four describes the controversial climate in Leipzig that led to the hiring of Felix Mendelssohn, the sweeping changes made to the city's musical structure, and the establishment of today's musical canon. Sposato praises Leipzig's influence on today's classical music:

"One need only look to modern-day Leipzig to see the completion of the concertizing movement that Schicht and Hauptmann began in the city churches... Likewise, today's classical concert format—in which shorter and/or lesser-known works are programmed before intermission and a canonical (or canonically sounding) symphony appears alone after—was institutionalized during Mendelssohn's tenure." (pg. 278)

Though richly packed with his-

toric context and primary source material, *Leipzig After Bach* is an accessible read for all who wish to know more about this forgotten period in Leipzig's musical history. Sposato's thorough chronology

weaves a timeline that clearly threads the connection between civil and international war, changing attitudes of religion, trade innovation, and musical taste. For fans and researchers of Bach, Mendels-

sohn, and the establishment of the community choral ensemble, this book is a must-read.

Angelica Dunsavage  
Tucson, AZ

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## *Emotion in Choral Singing: Reading Between the Notes*

Jameson Marvin,  
Forward by Simon Carrington  
Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc.,  
(2018)  
290 pages  
\$24.95 (paperback)

“The heart of this book, therefore, is concerned with emotions. Understanding the emotional content of notation and the symbolic representation of pitch and duration is the Leitmotif that permeates this book. Developing the insight and ability to lead choruses in rehearsals to experience this sublime state, the collective ecstasy of ‘euphoria,’ has been my goal.” (p. 23)

—Jameson Marvin,  
preface

So summarizes the author to conclude the Preface of his new book, *Emotion in Choral Singing: Reading Between the Notes*. Prof. Marvin is Director of Choral Activities, Senior Lecturer on Music, Emeritus at Harvard University where, from 1978-2010 he led the choral pro-

gram and garnered a distinguished national reputation for his work with the Harvard Collegium Musicum, Glee Club, and Choral Society. His impeccable musicianship, brilliant mind, and amiable personality are everywhere present in this book that provides insight into how he thinks, studies, prepares, and engages with the music he is conducting.

*"Notation is not the music!"* Conductors intellectually understand this concept, but Marvin explains in detailed and practical ways that not only is notation not the music but it generally gets in the way of the music. Music happens between the notes and, in artistic hands, appears to be organic and intuitive. According to Marvin, "The challenge is to lift the music off the page and bring it to life by creatively employing expressive elements: tempo, dynamics, phrasing, articulation, energized, linear direction, and rubato, with clarity of tuning, balance, matched vowels, and meaningful dissonances." (p. 58) The list alone is daunting but exceptionally helpful. As is so often the case in the book, Prof. Marvin mixes theoretical and aspirational comments with practical suggestions for improvement. The music-making problem may be a "reproduction" approach, but the author presents eleven elements to pay particular attention to in every rehearsal to help improve the choir's performance.

The case for choirs experiencing the wonders of polyphony, from early music until now, is present throughout his writing. The singing of polyphony has the power to transform choral singing, both tech-

nically and emotionally. The roots of modern choral singing exist in early polyphony, and choral tuning, musical expression, and music literacy are improved by rehearsing and performing polyphonic music.

Marvin mourns the demise of polyphonic works in the everyday repertoire of most choirs and expresses disdain for the ubiquitous homophony that pervades today's choral compositions. His case for performing polyphonic music, and Renaissance music in particular, with large choirs is liberating. Jameson Marvin is a master of polyphonic performances, which are marked by impeccable intonation (his ability to hear overtones and to instill that skill in the singers is legendary), beautiful phrasing, magnificent balance, and naturally expressive lines. His joy in living with polyphonic works is evident, and challenges the reader to look into this repertoire with in-

creased fervor and expectation.

Marvin's writing demonstrates a brilliant balance of technique and inspiration; his performances are the same—technically brilliant and emotionally connected. Speaking of practical advice, please note the following:

- Sit in mixed position, STAB, BATS, and horseshoe C to aid in intonation and independence...
- Insist on long-line, energy-filled, supported singing with upright posture...
- Pay attention throughout the learning stage to the accuracy of ear/voice coordination...
- Find the right key for this choir in this piece in this acoustical environment... (His case for singing a cappella pieces in keys that work for



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## Book Reviews

each choir in each setting is excellent.) (pp. 98-99)

- Honor the composer by finding the reason behind the dynamic markings... (This may be one of the most profound statements of the book.) (p. 105)

- And, one of this reviewer's favorites: "Get it in tune, get it in balance, match the vowels, get it together." (p. 183) What could be more clear?

The author's discussions of score study procedures are compelling and practical. He encourages the reader to dig into the composer's "dots and

squiggles" to find the "truth" of the composition which, to use Marvin's words, is "the ultimate goal of score study." The in-depth and practical analyses of several short works (Palestrina, *Sicut cervus desiderat*; Schütz, *Selig sind die Toten*; Bach, *Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden*; Mozart, *Ave verum Corpus*; Brahms, *Warum ist das Licht gegeben?*; and Britten, *The Evening Primrose*) brilliantly encapsulate how the author thinks and prepares for rehearsal and performance. They are followed by comprehensive repertoire lists from the Harvard Glee Club and the Radcliffe Choral Society. These expansive repertoire lists may be a compelling enough

reason to purchase this terrific book!

"Conductors' insights are the catalyst which draws singers closer to experiencing meaningful music making. The resulting inspiration is the catalyst by which we experience the transcendent power of music." (p. 184) Jameson Marvin's themes of transcendence, euphoria, and emotional connectedness are everywhere in the book, and are goals for all who are engaged in the magnificent art of music making.

Jerry Blackstone  
Ann Arbor, MI

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## *Rehearsing the Choir*

Stephen Sieck

Delray Beach, Florida:

Meredith Music (2019)

104 pages

\$19.95 (paperback)

For the majority of readers of this review, time and responsibilities make the possibility of attending the rehearsals of our colleagues exceedingly rare. In his book *Rehearsing the Choir*, Stephen Sieck has observed and gathered information from seven outstanding collegiate choral programs. To determine the programs to be included in this study, the author used the following formula:

Recognizing that there were countless choral directors doing great and important work, I looked for outliers in choral music who have enjoyed a statistically improbable level of success similar to the [New York] Yankees...I examined the ACDA National Conference performing choir database from 1995-2015 to see what data might emerge and found seven institutions that were statistical outliers. These choral programs had been accepted to perform at four or more national conferences during that twenty-year window: Iowa State University [James Rodde], University of Kentucky [Lori Hetzel and Jefferson Johnson], University

of Louisville [Kent Hatterberg], University of Michigan [Jerry Blackstone and Eugene Rogers], Michigan State University [David Rayl, Sandra Snow, and Jonathan Reed], Penn State University [Anthony Leach], and St. Olaf College [Anton Armstrong]. Additionally, Jo-Michael Scheibe's name appeared four times at two different schools. This was a clear data set: choral programs and directors who produce unusually consistent and outstanding work. In the following chapters we will hear from these directors about their beliefs and strategies for teaching choirs. (p. vii)

The author, who serves as co-director of choral studies and chair of the voice department at Lawrence University Conservatory of Music, organizes his observations and conversations into fifteen categories, in addition to brief biographies of each conductor:

Program History and Structure  
Recruitment  
Audition Process  
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Leadership Structure  
Curriculum and Repertoire  
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The size of this book (104 pages) belies the depth and quality of information contained within its pages. *Rehearsing the Choir* is most highly recommended to all conductors, for the exceedingly practical and most useful content shared by these master conductors.

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The column editor should have experience in or knowledge of repertoire, have familiarity with writing and the *Choral Journal* style guide, have the ability to communicate well, and be responsive to deadlines. The Recorded Sound Reviews column editor will be recommended for a four-year term and may be reappointed once, for a maximum of eight years.

Application Deadline December 1, 2019

# Recorded Sound Reviews

David Puderbaugh, editor david-puderbaugh@uiowa.edu

**Paul Moravec:**

## ***The Blizzard Voices***

New England Conservatory Concert Choir and Chamber Singers  
Boston Modern Orchestra Project  
Gil Rose, conductor  
BMOP/sound 1054 (2017; 61:21)

*The Blizzard Voices* is third in a series of American historical oratorios by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Paul Moravec. A prolific composer of orchestral, chamber, choral, operatic, and lyric music, Moravec acknowledges that *The Blizzard Voices* is reflective of his renewed compositional interest in the choral medium. “More than any other genre,” he writes, “choral music makes audible our spirit of common humanity, especially when enhanced by solo and ensemble vocal numbers.”

Shared humanity is the central theme of *Blizzard Voices*, which explores multiple perspectives on the catastrophic 1888 “Schoolhouse Blizzard” (or “Children’s Blizzard”) in the Great Plains. The libretto is based on Ted Kooser’s collection of poems by the same name, published in 1986 and incorporating first-person accounts of the incident. Moravec unfolds his narrative over

sixteen movements, harnessing the full resources of choir, soloists, and orchestra to meet the emotional and dramatic demands of the libretto.

This premiere recording of the work offers a masterful performance by the New England Conservatory Concert Choir and Chamber Singers and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. A forboding mood is ushered in immediately in the Prologue of *Blizzard Voices*, in a haunting dance between untexted chorus and an agitated orchestra. The intensity grows in the second movement, “There Was a Day.” Here, Moravec uses soloists to unexpectedly introduce passages from the biblical book of Job; the words “have you considered my servant Job...” add to the uneasiness growing in the music. Later in the movement, a women’s chorus plays the part of children singing joyfully about being released from school. The role of the choir continues to shift throughout the work, reaching a climax in the final movement (“Epilogue”) and seemingly playing the role of a Greek chorus: “So go the old stories, Like wind in the grass...

All that was long ago... That wind remembers their names.”

Several movements focus on specific individuals and their experiences in the blizzard, such as “Billy,” “Lois Mae Royce,” and “Minnie Freeman.” The performances by soloists in these movements—and elsewhere throughout the oratorio—are powerful and compelling. The solo and choral singing is moving throughout this recording, which must in part be ascribed to the singers’ tremendous English diction. Moravec’s remarkable ability to dramatize the many scenes of *The Blizzard Voices* through orchestration and musical gesture is matched by the level of this performance. The choir, soloists, and orchestra create a sense of immediacy in *The Blizzard Voices*, resulting in a performance that is both musically satisfying and historically enlightening.

Laura Wiebe  
Columbia, Missouri



### *Love is come again: Music for the Springhead Easter Play*

Monteverdi Choir

English Baroque Soloists

John Eliot Gardiner, Conductor  
Soli Deo Gloria SDG731 (2019;  
66:52)

A recording can be viewed as a glimpse into a musician's musical personality. When comparing recordings of the same musician over an extended period of time, listeners can track a musical evolution throughout her/his career. In the case of *Love is come again: Music for the Springhead Easter Play*, John Eliot Gar-

diner's most recent recording, audiences receive more than the cursory window into Gardiner's musical prowess but a view into his personal life. *Love is come again* is more a musical memoir than a typical choral recording.

In 1963, while John Eliot Gardiner was in the midst of studies at Cambridge, his mother, Marabel Gardiner, enlisted her son in the creation of what would be a family and community tradition in Dorset. Much like a medieval passion play, Marabel—herself an accomplished stage director, art historian, and singer—crafted a series of tableaux

recreating the Easter journey from Calvary through Easter morning, along the road to Emmaus, and concluding with Simon Peter's encounter with Jesus at the Sea of Galilee. Each tableau was accompanied by hand-selected musical works that either narrate or comment on the respective action. To accomplish this, John Eliot Gardiner compiled an array of choral works from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries.

The play was appropriately titled *Springhead Easter Play*, named after the Gardiner's family home. To produce this work, the Gardiners recruited family members to perform assigned



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roles and incorporated local families and parishioners, as well as singers from Cambridge and Oxford. So beloved was this work that John Eliot Gardiner returned to Springhead for the next twenty years to revive this family and community tradition. This recording is a recreation of the first performance of the *Springhead Easter Play* along with a few additions to augment the narrative.

The first tableau begins with the traditional Herefordshire ballad *The Seven Virgins* (aka *The Leaves of Life*), and is followed by the dramatic text painting of Carol Gesualdo's *O vos omnes* and William Cornysh's lamenting *Woefully array'd*. Here we encounter the full-voiced, textually nuanced perfection of the Monteverdi Choir.

The third tableau describes Mary Magdalene weeping by the tomb and, subsequently, illustrates John Eliot Gardiner's expansive knowledge of music history. Much like the late Renaissance and early Baroque passion plays that preceded it, the *Springhead Easter Play* utilizes several sung "roles" to further the narrative through monody. For this, Marabel and John Eliot Gardiner translated and adapted various sections of Heinrich Schütz's *Historia der Auferstehung Jesu Christi* (1623).



The final tableau—"The Lake Side"—begins with texts from John 21: 3-12 set to the traditional hymn *O filii et filiae*. It is followed by *Ego sum panis vivus*, a stunning five-part work attributed to Leonora d'Este. The trebles of the Monteverdi choir demonstrate a superb control

of tone and texture as they weave in and out of the musical foreground. Of special note are the almost imperceptible, yet ever present, continuo instruments that blend perfectly with the upper voices.

The emotional climax of the final tableau comes with the pairing of two British musical titans: Benjamin Britten and Thomas Tallis. John Eliot Gardiner could not continue his adaptation of Schütz's passion, as it does not venture past the story of the disciples' encounter at Emmaus. For this narrative, John Eliot Gardiner turned to Britten's haunting *Canticle II, Abraham and Isaac*. The fatherly love between Abraham and Isaac would not have been lost on the audience when sung between Jesus and Simon Peter; Britten's own use of this in his *War Requiem* demonstrates the familial trope associated with this canticle. The concept of Christ's love is further heightened with the concluding motet, *If ye love me* by Thomas Tallis. This work, so familiar to choral enthusiasts, sounds fresh and novel following Britten's canticle, and the Monteverdi Choir performs with the warmth, control, and integrity called for by Tallis.

If this recording is viewed as a musical memoir into the life of Marabel and John Eliot Gardiner, it is also a portrait of Springhead and its surrounding community. *The Springhead Easter Play* was a collaborative effort between family, community, and friends; and its communal spirit is best demonstrated in the final track, *Non nobis, Domine*.

While a recording serves as a performer's musical testament that endures throughout history, rarely does

it invite the listener into her/his personal world as succinctly as does this recording.

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# Recorded Sound Reviews

## *Saint Louis Classics*

Saint Louis Chamber Chorus  
Philip Barnes, conductor  
Regent REGCD505 (2018; 72:12)

The *a cappella* choir Saint Louis Chamber Chorus has existed since 1956 and sings six concert programs annually. This is the fourteenth recording of the ensemble under its current conductor, Philip Barnes, a native of Great Britain, who has conducted the choir since 1989. The ensemble currently performs with about forty-five singers.

*Saint Louis Classics* focuses on a wide range of traditional Western

Classical choral literature with one commissioned composition. The dates of the compositions range from Renaissance to contemporary, focusing most heavily on works from the Romantic and modern eras.

There are four selections that should be of greatest interest to readers. The first is *O Praise the Lord of Heaven* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, a work that was surprisingly never recorded on CD until 2018. This antiphonal anthem is written for double choir and semi-chorus, opening with great fanfare and a rising melodic line. With fourteen-part divisi at times, it features a thick ho-

mophonic sonority throughout its ABA' construction.

Another premiere is Bob Chilcott's *Silver swan*, an elegy using the texts from Orlando Gibbons's well-known motet and a poem by the ancient Roman poet Catullus to the "mute ashes" that are now his brother's body. Both texts are laid over chord progressions similar to Gibbons's motet, ending with a repeating "farewell" that slowly diminishes into nothingness. The work was commissioned by the Saint Louis



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A fascinating inclusion is *Rakastava* by Jean Sibelius. It is an arrangement of three verses from the *Kanteletar*, a collection of Finnish folk poetry that tells the story of two lovebirds. It presents a simple folk-like melody that recurs, gradually building in excitement. The work ends with the choir accompanying soprano and bass soloists.

The final recording is Schönberg's *Friede auf Erden*. Though better recordings exist, this extensive plea for peace is one of Schönberg's last tonal works and an a cappella tour de force and powerfully presented in this recording.

While there is much positive to say about *Saint Louis Classics*, including the ambitious program it presents, there are, at times, intonation issues, uneven onsets and phrase entrances, and some vocal disunity, most audibly in the soprano section. The soloists are adequate, not stunning. Also, some of the phrasing in the Schumann *Romanzen und Balladen* is stagnant, and the diction could be stronger.

Despite the recording's flaws, the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus should be commended for their programming. While holding to the Western canon, nearly all the works are under performed or seldom heard. Granville Bantock's *Invocation to Pan* is a dramatic selection, and Kodály's *Jézus és a Kufárok* is also novel and serves as a vibrant contrast, especially with its polyphony. Also included are Roy Harris's *Three Songs of Democracy*, settings of Walt Whitman's text from 1941 as World War II loomed for America.

This is an album replete with challenging choral works and a number of difficult languages, useful for readers wishing to delve more deeply into the traditional Western

choral literature.

Tobin Sparfeld  
Los Angeles, California

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## Recorded Sound Reviews

### *Winter's Night*

Skylark Vocal Ensemble  
Mathew Guard, artistic director  
(2017: 49:20)

*Winter's Night*, the Boston- and Atlanta-based professional choral ensemble Skylark's third album, represents an unusually effective blend of concert-like experience and well-polished recording. None of the tracks were drawn from live performances, but the thoughtful programming and unusual program ordering lend the disc the feel of a well-thought-out and beautifully rendered concert, rather than simply a

collection of distinct numbers. Most notably, Hugo Distler's seven variations on "Es ist ein Ros entsprungen," from his Christmas cantata *Die Weihnachtsgeschicht*, do not appear consecutively. Rather, they form the lattice on which the program is built, each variation separated by one or two independent but resonant selections. It may seem strange, at first, to have the "major work" of the recording broken up, but artistic director Mathew Guard has done so with care, finding connections—some clear,



some more subtle—among grouped pieces. He also creates a compelling sense of flow from the beginning of the album—a brief, never-recorded Gregorio Allegri motet, *Salvatorem expectamus*, that manages to be much more than just "Miserere-lite"—to the end: an elegant, yet deeply affecting recording of Elizabeth Poston's *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree*.

Skylark has a roster of around twenty singers from which it draws for its varied live performances and recording projects; this disc features an ensemble of eight singers, and they demonstrate a striking degree of flexibility in their sound produc-

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tion. They sing *Nesciens mater*, a *tour-de-force* of canonic counterpoint by Jean Mouton with the cleanest, purest of vocal tone; while for Herbert Howells's *A Spotless Rose*, they allow their sound to be more lush and romantic, particularly the fine solo by baritone Dana Whiteside. The recording features plenty of chestnuts, and several world-premiere recordings of recently discovered works. Of particular note, alongside the Allegri, is a newly resurfaced *Salve Regina* by the late sixteenth-/early seventeenth-century Roman composer Giovanni Bernardino Nanino, a triple-choir motet that moves with surprising ease between more staid Palestrina polyphony and flashes of Venetian polychoral style. One might wish that the informative CD notes were accompanied by texts and translations, but that is a small quibble with what is a fine addition to the vast repertory of choral Christmas albums.

David Rentz  
Claremont, California

### ***A Black Birch In Winter—American and Estonian Choral Music***

Voces Musicales  
David Puderbaugh, conductor  
MSR Classics MS 1675 (2019;  
57:15)

Choral enthusiasts generally fall into one of two camps: those pursuing a fresh “take” on an established classic, and those who are eager to explore the unfamiliar and unknown. This recording unashamedly appeals to the latter: the Estonian

ensemble Voces Musicales declares that its mission is to present “works that are seldom performed due to their difficulty.” This anthology exemplifies this through a fascinating program of music by contemporary American and Estonian composers.

First, to address technical concerns, we should acknowledge that this is a beautifully engineered disc, capturing the balanced sound of twenty-four expert voices in the supportive acoustic of St. Jacob's Church, Viimsi, just north of the capital Tallinn. This is the first Lutheran church built in Estonia since World War Two, and its clean lines allow the choral sound to bloom without compromising enunciation. The ensemble comprises excellent voices that have been trained to blend seamlessly, whether the text be in Estonian, English, or Italian. Leading them is David Puderbaugh, an Iowa-based academic, who first sang with the group when on a Fulbright scholarship, and subsequently has worked with them as both singer and conductor. This recording was made during a visit he made to Estonia in early 2018.

Second, though this anthology largely devotes itself to younger, contemporary composers, it is sufficiently varied to keep the listener's attention. By definition, this is an eclectic selection, and one bound to fascinate devotees of choral music. Five composers are represented on the disc: two are American, and three Estonian. From the former, Kile Smith is the older, offering a three-movement cycle, *Where Flames*



*A Word*, written in 2009 for the Philadelphia-based choir, The Crossing. Smith's harmonic language is approachable and complements the lyrics well. Gregory W. Brown (b. 1975) provides settings of Richard Wilbur and John Muir; his musical palette is reminiscent of Elliott Carter, with counterpoint that is both sure-footed and well paced.

If Brown gives the disc its title (one of his Richard Wilbur settings), it is the Estonian repertoire that offers the listener the most arresting music. Three composers, born in the mid 1980s, are a testimony to guidance of two teachers, Toivo Tulev and Helena Tulse, at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre; for each one has clearly been expertly trained in harmony and counterpoint, yet they have developed their own, distinctive “voice.” Pärt Uusberg offers the most approachable (yet often viscerally powerful) music, while Evelin Seppar and Maria Kõrvits are more experimental in their use of voices. But they are all engrossing in their own way, never trite and often viscerally powerful: here is proof that the famed Estonian choral tradition remains vibrant and flourishing. Adventurous choral directors will find repertoire that they may wish to perform themselves.

Philip Barnes  
St. Louis, Missouri

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