

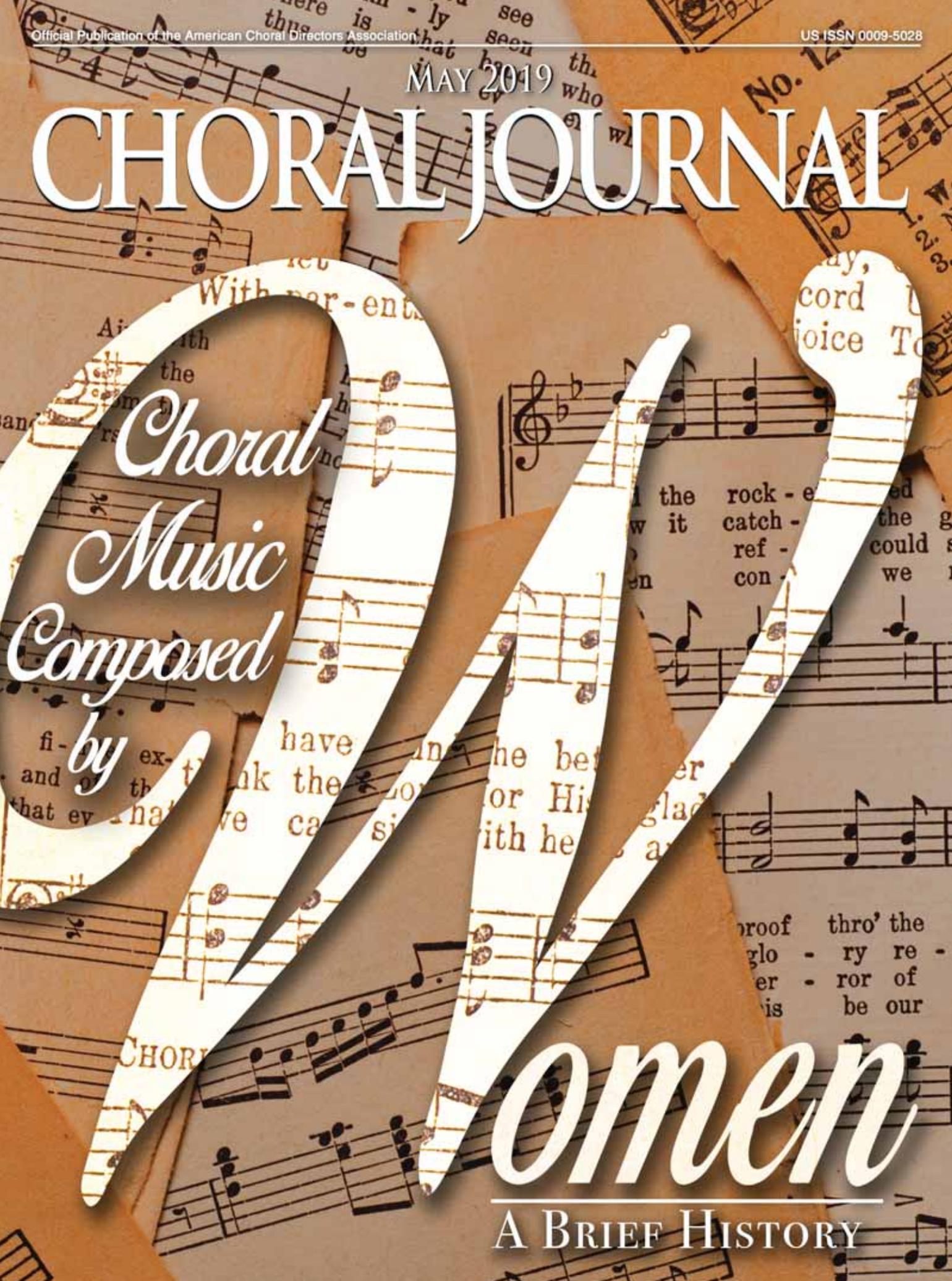
MAY 2019

CHORAL JOURNAL

*Choral
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Women

A BRIEF HISTORY



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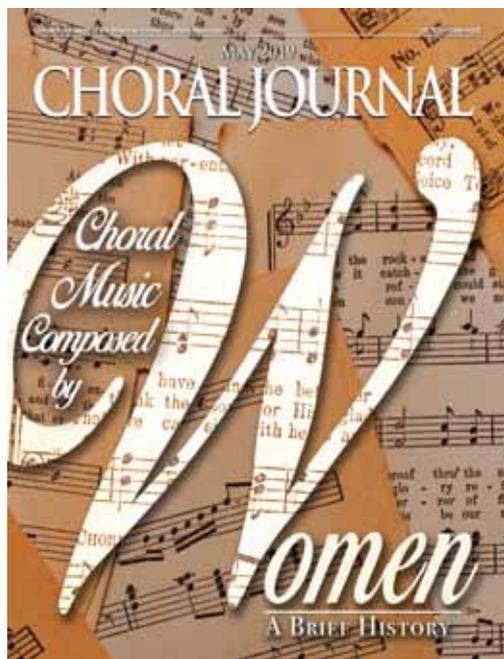


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On the Cover This month's cover article highlights a brief history of choral music composed by women.

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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

This month's *Choral Journal* continues the quarterly practice of highlighting music in worship, one of ACDA's significant areas of Repertoire and Resources, in our "Hallelujah, Amen!" feature.

Vocal and choral music have been central to worship since the earliest record of activity by faith communities. By all accounts, the faithful have used vocal music to freight their prayers, praises, celebrations,

lamentations, affirmations, and beliefs as they model their images of the Creator, aspirations and beliefs of life and afterlife within God's creation, and life in communion as believers. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Zephaniah 3:17 records that God even models the act of singing over creation:

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;
God will rejoice over you with gladness; God will quiet with love;
God will exult over you with loud singing.

Similarly, humankind has exulted over creation with singing. Further, singing within the faith community is significant enough to merit instruction. In 1 Chronicles 15:22, tasks are assessed and assigned as a part of temple worship: "Kenaniah, the head Levite, was chosen as the choir leader because of his skill." (New Living Translation)

Faith communities have gathered to celebrate and ceremonialize all of the activities that are important to them in their gatherings. These celebrations include even the ordering of time itself throughout the year. The literature accompanying acts of prayer, praise, and belief has accordingly been categorized by church and synagogue within Holy Scriptures. In the Greek scriptures' account of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the faithful are given a lexicon of ways to offer belief: "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:19)

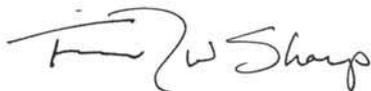
Models, instructions, admonitions, and methods of singing are mentioned regularly and throughout Scripture and ecclesiastical documents, and because vocal music possesses an emotional connection to textual meaning, the motivation to sing has never been in question within sacred settings. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church related to liturgical music, St. Augustine is quoted as saying, "well sung is twice prayed." In the spirit of St. Augustine's quote, a clue as to why vocal music may be so important in the gathering of the faithful within sacred communities is offered in Isaiah 55:8-9:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (King James Version)

Singing may be humankind's response to that understanding of "higher thoughts." It is one thing to pray or recite Psalm 100:

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

But could it be a higher act to sing these words by intoning them with plainsong, or in Reformation form of *The Old Hundredth Psalm*, or through Ralph Vaughan Williams's setting of *Old Hundredth*, or in the spiritual *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*, or through Hillsong Church's music leader Darlene Zschech's chorus *Shout to the Lord*? Further, singing has a unique cohesion due to the continuation and organization of sound that keeps participants solidly in the moment. When we sing, not only are the journey and the destination in consideration, but also—and significantly for worship—every instance along the journey, requiring constant engagement and presence. Music forces us to be "in the moment" as we connect pitch to succeeding pitch, in time.



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?



May 11-12 Shallowford Presbyterian Church
Atlanta, GA

May 17-18 Tulsa Oratorio Chorus
Tulsa, OK

What's on Tim's Ipad?



The Dangerous Act of Worship
Mark Labberton

Musicianship Composing in Choir
Jody Kerchner and
Katherine Strand

What's Tim's Latest App?



Robokiller

What's Tim Listening to?



Nelly Bly
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A Hymn to the Mother of God
John Tavener
The Sixteen

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From the PRESIDENT



Tom Shelton

I'm still on an emotional high from attending the 2019 National ACDA Conference in Kansas City. This conference was exceptional! wCongratulations to Lynne Gackle and the entire conference committee for bringing their vision to life! It truly was life changing.

I love the quote from Walt Disney: "If you can dream it, you can do it." Congratulations to all the choirs, conductors, interest session presenters, and anyone who had a leadership role in this conference. You showed us your dreams in full color, and it was a beautiful experience.

We had 20+ ACDA student chapter members who attended from Westminster Choir College. I met with them after the conference to "de-brief" their experience and discuss what concerts and sessions had a profound impact on them. As I listened, I noticed a "theme" of what they found influential: making a difference in our ever-changing society. The subjects dealt with homelessness, hopefulness, transgender singers, diversity, and the realities of dealing with Alzheimer's Disease.

Using music as our vessel, we have the opportunity to make an impact on the community in various ways. These interest sessions and concerts plant seeds with the attendees that are sown across the nation and internationally. It's amazing what inspires each of us and what we can bring home that will make a direct impact on our own communities.

I taught middle school for eighteen years and have worked with Children's Choirs for almost thirty years. I'm always looking at how these genres are represented at our conferences. I'm thrilled to say that I've never seen more representation for these areas than at this conference! Bravo to the conference committee for representing these important age groups. The inclusion of Children and Youth at our conference is an important message to send to the world.

The conference schedule was jam packed! There's no way anyone could go to everything, so I don't want any of the participating choirs or interest sessions to feel unappreciated. You were all AMAZING and your efforts to bring your artistry to the national stage are recognized and appreciated.

ACDA will never be "all things to all people," but we are sincerely trying to represent all of our constituents. Bravo, Lynne Gackle, on a job well done!

From the EDITOR



Amanda Bumgarner

Our cover article this month shines a spotlight on choral music composed by women. Authors Matthew Hoch and Linda Lister share an overview of female composers, starting with sixteenth-century madrigalist Maddalena Casulana and moving through Baroque, Romantic, and Modern Eras, grouping composers by location where appropriate. As the authors write in the article's conclusion: "The rich catalog of works produced by the women composers introduced

in this article deserve to be explored, programmed, sung, and celebrated on a regular basis. If we do not actively engage in this effort, think of the magnificent choral repertoire that we, and future generations, will never have the privilege of hearing or singing." This feature article pairs well with the subject of the Choral Conversations column: an interview with composer Emma Lou Diemer.

The second feature article highlights another composer: William Levi Dawson (1899-1990) in the 120th anniversary year of his birth. Dawson's arrangements of spirituals elevated the genre as thousands attended performances of Dawson's Tuskegee Institute Choir. This article compares four of Dawson's arrangements to earlier settings of the same tunes. For readers interested in learning more about Dawson, see the following *Choral Journal* articles: "William Dawson and the Copyright Act," by John B. Haberlen (March 1983); "William Dawson and the Tuskegee Choir," by Mark Hugh Malone (March 1990); "In Memoriam: William Dawson (1899-1990)" (August 1990); "William Levi Dawson's Life in Speeches, Letters, and Writings," by Vernon Huff (August 2014).

Our quarterly Hallelujah, Amen section is back with an article from Tim Sharp titled "Sacred Music Publication in the Second Half of the 20th Century." This article was anonymously vetted through the submission process and attempts to, as the author states in the introduction, "describe the conditions that led to this era of professionalization and commercialization, and to survey the composers who contributed to this period of intense church music attention and activity." Sacred music choral reviews are also included in this section.

A number of other articles are featured in this May issue, including an R&R Jazz column, an article on "mind-set theory," an On the Voice submission, and Recorded Sound Reviews. As we consider how best to support the work you do throughout the year, please take a moment to head to acda.org and select your "activity type" on your personal profile. If you have any questions about how to do this, contact the national office. And as always, if you have a reaction to anything you see in *Choral Journal*, please feel free to write in with a "Letter to the Editor."

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International Calendar of CHORAL EVENTS

9th World Choir Festival on Musicals, Thessaloniki, Greece, May 10-12, 2019. Non-competitive choral event for all types of choirs and vocal ensembles all over the world with audience prize awarded to the best choir at each concert. Contact: Choir Korais-
Email: choirkorais94@gmail.com
Website: www.xorodiakorais.com

Festival de la Voix, Châteauroux, France, May 16-19, 2019. Concerts, workshops, open stages. Contact: CEPRAVOI
Email: contact@cepravoi.fr
Website: www.festivaldelavoix-chateauroux.fr

9th International Choral Festival Chernomorski zvutsi, Balchik, Bulgaria, June 5-9, 2019. Festival and competition for all kind of choirs. Workshops with with composer-conductor and well-known choral experts. Contact: Association Musical World-Balchik
Email: festival@chenomorskizvutsi.com
Website: www.chernomorskizvutsi.com/

16th International Chamber Choir Competition Marktoberdorf 2019, Germany, June 7-12, 2019. Two categories: mixed choirs and popular choir music (number of singers from 16 to 32). Two competitions rounds: 20 minutes including compulsory work and 10 minutes programme of the choirs own choice.

Contact: Modfestivals, International Chamber Choir Competition,
Email: office@modfestivals.org
Website: www.modfestivals.org

Harold Rosenbaum's Choir Concert Tour of Ireland, Ireland, June 23-July 1 2019. For singers as well as non-singers. Repertoire: Faure's *Requiem*. Contact: The Harold Rosenbaum Institute
Email: HaroldRosenbaum@gmail.com -
Website: haroldrosenbaum.com/institute.shtml

Irish International A Cappella Festival 2019, Dublin, Ireland, June 28-30, 2019. Competition aiming at both small ensembles and large choruses performing contemporary a cappella repertoire. Also open to barbershop. Contact: Ardú Vocal Ensemble
Email: ardumusic@gmail.com
Website: www.irishacappella.com/

Chanakkale International Choir Festival and Competition, Chanakkale, Turkey, July 2-7, 2019. Non-competitive festival or competition for female, male, mixed adults, mixed youth, mixed children, and folk choirs from all over the world. Contact: Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi
Email: info@canakkalekorofestivali.com
Website: www.canakkalekorofestivali.com/

10th Salerno Festival, International Choral Festival, Salerno, Neaples and Amalfi Coast, Italy, July 3-7, 2019. Five days of music, art, culture and sun! Contact: Federazione Nazionale Italiana Associazioni Regionali Corali (FENIARCO)
Email: info@feniarco.it
Website: www.feniarco.it

13th Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival, Vienna, Austria, July 5-10, 2019. Cross-cultural and musical exchange event including workshops, lectures, seminars, concerts in and around Vienna, competition with an international, and highly renowned jury. Contact: CONCERTS-AUSTRIA
Email: office@scfestival.org
Website: www.scfestival.org

6th International Choir Festival Coralua, Trondheim, Norway, July 13-19, 2019. For children, middle school and adult choirs. Choral workshops with Javier Busto (Spain) and Sanna Valvanne (Finland). Singing Tour in Norway, discover the beautiful village of Røros. Concerts in the best venues of Trondheim and Røros. Contact: Coralua
Email: trondheim@coralua.com
Website: www.coralua.com

Gondwana World Choral Festival, Sydney, Australia, July 15-21, 2019. Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Sydney Children's Choir during a week of concerts, recitals, workshops, masterclasses and panel discussions. Venues: The con-

cert hall of the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Contact: Gondwana Choirs,

Email:

Sam.Allchurch@gondwana.org.au

Website: gondwana-wcf.org.au/

12th Grand Prix Pattaya, Pattaya, Bangkok, Thailand, July 17-24, 2019. Festival and Grand Prix competition including 15 categories for all kind of choirs from around the world.

Contact: Festa Musicale,

Email: info@festamusicale.com

Website: <https://festamusicale.com/en/festivals/grand-prix-thailand/>

July 27, 2019. Bali Cantat, Choir clinics and workshops, evaluation performances, friendship concerts, choir competition, choir championship, Grand Prix championship, 'Meet the Jury' consultation.

Contact: Bandung Choral Society,

Tommyanto Kandisaputra,

Email: mailbcsevents@gmail.com

Website: www.bandungchoral.com

12th Orientale Concentus International Choral Festival, Singapore, July 29 - Aug 1, 2019.

Competition for mixed, equal voices, children's, folklore and chamber choirs. Opportunity for all choirs to step into a holistic and memorable international choral learning journey, all in one place.

Contact: ACE 99 Cultural Pte Ltd.

Email: event@ace99.com.sg

Website:

www.orientaleconcentus.com/

WORLD CHORAL EXPO LISBON, PORTUGAL July 27 – August 1 2019

“Voices Meeting for a Better World”

The IFCM World Choral EXPO aims to provide an opportunity for choral singers, choral professionals, conductors, composers and music educators to interact with and learn from world-renowned choirs and their conductors. The 2019 theme – Voices Meeting for a Better World – encourages global friendship, cultural understanding, and world peace. With a common love for choral music, performers, participants, exhibitors and sponsors will gather to make lifelong friendships and to inspire musicians, regardless of technical level. The EXPO will take place in Lisbon, Portugal, July 27-August 1, 2019. The EXPO will feature numerous concerts throughout Lisbon and its surrounding cities, presented by participant choirs and leading choral ensembles of the highest quality from different continents. One of the gala concerts, the Colorful Voices Program, will be dedicated to the music of children and youth choirs with an extraordinary variety of artistic proposals, presenting young artists performing at the highest level. Participating choirs and individuals may choose to work with and/or observe international choral experts. See World Choral EXPO 2019 for more information with participating conditions and registration details. Follow the World Choral EXPO Facebook page for details.

IFCM 4TH INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR CHORAL COMPOSITION

The International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) announces the Fourth International Competition for Choral Composition, the chief aim of which is to promote the creation and wide distribution of new and innovative choral repertoire. Participation is open to composers of any nationality or age. The Competition is dedicated to choral compositions a cappella (SATB or divided into as many as eight parts, SSAATTBB) with a maximum duration of 5 minutes, specifically for medium to advanced choirs. The text of the composition, sacred or secular, in any language, written for the occasion or pre-existing should be in the public domain. If not, permission in writing must be obtained from the author or copyright holder of the text and must be enclosed with the entry form. The entry fee is only \$25.00! Apply April 1 to September 30, 2019!

CHORAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY WOMEN

A Brief History

Matthew Hoch and Linda Lister



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An alternative version of this article appears as a chapter in the book So You Want to Sing Music by Women (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019).¹

Although women composers are now a formidable force in the choral world, this has largely been a twentieth-century development. Ever since biblical times—and perhaps before that—men and women have sung together as a part of sacred worship. Beginning with the development of Gregorian chant during the eighth century, this music began to be notated in preserved manuscripts. This means that vocal works are the oldest form of Western music, comprising most of the repertoire of the Medieval and Renaissance eras. But because women assumed such a marginal role in the Catholic church, forbidden from entering the priesthood or leading any kind of liturgy (except within the all-female convents), virtually all of the polyphonic vocal repertoire composed before 1600 was written by men. The story of female composers of choral music begins just before the dawn of the Baroque era, when a lone madrigalist and a handful of ambitious nuns began creating the first

polyphonic secular and sacred music written by women.

Women Composers of Choral Music before 1800

Although there is evidence of compositional activity by women in the genres of plainchant and monophonic secular song during the Medieval era, the earliest known female composer of polyphonic choral music was the sixteenth-century madrigalist **Maddalena Casulana** (ca. 1544–ca. 1590). Casulana, an Italian, was a lutenist and singer in addition to being a composer. She is best known for her three books of madrigals, all of which were published during her lifetime—in 1568, 1570, and 1583. This publication record was an extraordinary feat for a Renaissance woman composer. “Morir non può il mio core”—a four-voice madrigal from *Il primo libro di magrigali* (the first collection)—is a work firmly rooted in the Italian madrigal style of the sixteenth century, and its counterpoint and text painting are representative of Casulana’s mature compositional style.



CHORAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY WOMEN A Brief History

In the early Baroque era, there was also a flurry of sacred music composition by women that emanated out of Italian convents. The earliest known works were penned by the Aleotti sisters: **Rafaella Aleotti** (ca. 1570–1646) and her younger sister, **Vittoria Aleotti** (ca. 1573–1620). Rafaella took her vows at the San Vito convent in Ferrara in 1590 and soon became the musical director of an ensemble of twenty-three singers and instrumentalists. As a result of this position, she had the opportunity to write not only for voices but also “harpsichord, lutes, viols, flutes, cornetts, and trombones”—foreshadowing the emerging Baroque ensembles of the turn of the century.² In 1593, she published a book of motets for five, seven, eight, and nine voices with instrumental accompaniment. Her motets “show a thorough mastery of contrapuntal technique, rhythmic vitality, and sensitivity to the meaning of the texts.”³ Although the younger Aleotti, Vittoria, was also a nun in the same convent as her sister, she focused more on secular works, publishing several madrigals during her lifetime.

The two most significant women composers of the Italian Baroque era were **Chiara Margarita Cozzolani** (1602–1678) and **Isabella Leonarda** (1620–1704). Margarita Cozzolani was born into a wealthy family in Milan. She took her vows in 1620 at the age of eighteen, at which time she took “Chiara” as her religious name. All of her works were published between 1640 and 1650, although many have been lost. Today, Cozzolani is best known for her *Concerti sacri* (1642) and *Salmi à otto voci concertati* (1650). Her two settings of the Magnificat canticle are from this latter collection. Like Cozzolani, Isabella Leonarda was also a nun. Leonarda lived in Novara, a city in the Piedmont region in the far north of Italy. She published an astonishing twenty volumes of music during her lifetime, including three mass settings and various motets, litanies, Magnificats, Marian antiphons, and psalm settings. Most of her works are settings for one to four voices with continuo. Leonarda’s entire oeuvre is sacred.

The Long Romantic Era: 1800–1930

The Viennese Classical era afforded few opportunities for women to compose, and those who did seemed to avoid the choral genre. The lone exception seems to be

Marianna von Martines (1744–1812), whose masterpiece is her 1774 motet *Dixit Dominus*. This major work is scored for chorus, soloists, and full orchestra. But Martines was a composer of great privilege; she was born into a wealthy family, and her father was maestro di cappella to the papal embassy in Vienna. Most choral music was written for the church, and church music was a man’s profession. As a result, very few women composed choral works during the eighteenth century.

As the Romantic era dawned, more names of women composers began to emerge, but the works they produced were overwhelmingly songs and piano music. There were, however, some women who tackled the choral genre, and they did so in a major way, producing a collection of major choral-orchestral works. Between 1800 and 1925, four names stand out as the most important women composers of choral music. These individuals also—perhaps not surprisingly—occupied positions of privilege not afforded to most women from this time period: they all came from prominent musical families or enormous wealth, which opened doors that were closed to most nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century women. Their names are familiar to anyone who studies the history of women in music: **Fanny Hensel** (1805–1847) of Germany, **Ethel Smyth** (1858–1944) of England, **Amy Beach** (1867–1944) of the United States, and **Lili Boulanger** (1893–1918) of France.

Fanny Hensel, the older sister of Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847), is well known for her songs and piano music, but many people do not realize that she also composed twenty-eight choral works. Three of these are major choral-orchestral works—an oratorio titled *Oratorium nach den Bildern der Bibel* and two cantatas, *Hiob (Job)* and *Lobgesang*—the only such pieces by a woman composer during the first half of the nineteenth century. All three of these compositions were written in 1831. Other choral works include pieces for SATB chorus and piano, two vocal quartets (one for SATB and one for TTBB), and several a cappella works.⁴ Her most popular and often-performed choral works are her six partsongs for SATB voices a cappella, which were published together as a collection titled *Gartenlieder*, Op. 3, in 1846. In nineteenth-century Germany and Austria, partsongs were usually four-part lieder that set German Romantic



Partsong Performance at a Nineteenth-Century Liedersabend

poetry. The *Gartenlieder* set three poems by Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff (1788–1857) and one poem each by Ludwig Uhland (1787–1862), Emanuel von Geibel (1815–1884), and her husband, Wilhelm Hensel (1794–1861).⁵

In England, Ethel Smyth is remembered by the choral world for her colossal one-hour choral-orchestral work the *Mass in D*. Smyth composed the work during the summer of 1891 while she was a guest of the Empress Eugénie (1826–1920) at Cape Martin.⁶ The mass was orchestrated over the next eighteen months, and the premiere took place at Royal Albert Hall in London on January 18, 1893, in a performance by the Royal Choral Society conducted by Joseph Barnby (1838–1896). The *Mass in D* is unique because of its unconventional six-movement structure and reordering of the five texts of the mass ordinary; Smyth splits the Sanctus-Benedictus into two separate movements, and—more significantly—stations the Gloria last instead of second. Smyth wrote that her rationale for reordering the movements was because she wanted the piece to end triumphantly, which is more difficult with an *Angus Dei* text.⁷ Although the *Mass in D* is by far Smyth's most famous choral work, she also composed *Five Sacred Part-Songs Based on Chorale Tunes* (1884), *Wedding Anthem* (1900), and a cantata titled *The Song of Love* (1888). She also composed several secular works for choir and orchestra, including a cantata titled *The Prison* (1930), which was one of her final works.⁸

American composer Amy Beach was a prolific com-

poser of choral music. Her dozens of works include “one mass, one Anglican service, approximately ten canticle and related service settings, twenty-four anthems and motets, and thirty-four secular works (twenty for female chorus, four for children, four for male chorus, and six for mixed voices).”⁹ Her four most important sacred works are the *Mass in E-flat*, Op. 5 (1890), *Festival Jubilate*, Op. 17 (1893), *Service in A*, Op. 63 (1905), and the *Canticle of the Sun*, Op. 123 (1924). Some of the most prominent ensembles in the Northeast premiered these works: the *Mass in E-flat* was performed by the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston on February 2, 1892, and the *Service in A* was performed by Emmanuel Church in Boston and St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in New York City in 1906. *Festival Jubilate* is believed to be the first work commissioned of an American woman composer; it was performed at the dedication ceremonies of the Women's Building at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. *Canticle of the Sun*, which also premiered at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, sets an English translation by Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) of the *Canticum Solis* of St. Francis of Assisi (1181/82–1226). Beach's most well-known secular works include *Three Shakespeare Choruses*, Op. 39 (1897), *The Sea-Fairies*, Op. 59 (1904), and *The Chambered Nautilus*, Op. 66 (1907).

Although she died at the young age of twenty-four, Lili Boulanger nevertheless produced an extensive catalog of works, and her oeuvre includes fifteen choral pieces: eight for chorus and orchestra, three for chorus and orchestra or piano, and four for chorus and piano.¹⁰ Her best-known and most often-performed choral works are her three psalm settings for chorus, soloists, and orchestra: *Psalm CXXX* (“Du fond l'abîme”), *Psalm XXIV* (“La terre appartient à l'Éternel”), and *Psalm CXXIX* (“Ils m'ont assez opprimé”).¹¹ Other notable choral pieces include four works for a single soloist with chorus: *Les sirènes* and *Hymne au soleil*, both for an alto (or mezzo-soprano) soloist; *Pour les funérailles d'un soldat* for bass; and *Vielle prière bouddhique*, a Buddhist prayer with a text from the *Visuddhimagga*. *Psalm CXXX* is Boulanger's most adventurous work, featuring complex rhythms and impressionistic harmonies that mark a turning point away from Romanticism and toward the new era of Modernism.

The Modern Era: 1930–Present

The United Kingdom

Ethel Smyth may have been the matriarch of women composers in Great Britain, but for most of her career she was very much a lone woman in a man's profession, having few female colleagues throughout most of her long career. The generations that followed Smyth introduced a surge of women who began contributing hundreds of new works to the repertory. In the choral world, **Elizabeth Poston** (1905–1987) emerged as the first important composer of the post-Smyth generation. Poston studied at the Royal Academy of Music, where she met Peter Warlock (1894–1930) and Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958), who both encouraged her work.¹² Over the next several decades, she wrote several dozen choral works, including *Laudate Dominum* (1955)—a setting of Psalm 117 for mixed voices and organ—and a Magnificat for treble voices and organ (1961). Her most frequently performed piece is the a cappella “Jesus Christ the Apple Tree,” often presented as a carol during the Christmas season. An advocate for women composers, Poston served as president of the Society of Women Musicians from 1955 to 1961.

But Poston's conservative compositional style—very much in the post-Victorian mold of Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst (1874–1934), and Herbert Howells (1892–1983)—was not to last for long. An emerging generation of English modernists also began to compose works during this time, with three women in particular contributing to the choral genre. Musicologist and conductor Catherine Roma (b. 1948) writes:

The importance of the English Musical Renaissance and the revitalization of the British choral tradition cannot be overestimated. Musicologists have looked back, sometimes with disdain, on the provincialism and resistant shores of England's green and pleasant land. In addition, the various British institutions and individuals dedicated to the performance and promotion of new music of native composers laid the groundwork for the development of a recognizably national school. The increased compositional activity, coupled with quality and confidence, generated

strength and at the same time established something against which to rebel. It is in this context that the successful compositional careers of Elisabeth Lutyens, Elizabeth Maconchy, and Thea Musgrave were allowed to flourish.¹³

Elisabeth Lutyens (1906–1983) studied at the École Normale in Paris and at the Royal College of Music in London, where she excelled as a violist. Her earliest works were twelve-tone and serial, but she soon adopted a free chromaticism that characterizes her mature compositions. One of Lutyens's earliest choral works was a full-length secular oratorio titled *Requiem for the Living*, Op. 16 (1948), a piece she later withdrew from her canon. Her most famous choral works include the motet *Excerpta tractatus logicophilosophici*, Op. 27 (1953) for mixed chorus; the cantata *De amore*, Op. 39 (1957), for soprano and tenor soloists, mixed chorus, and orchestra; and *The Essence of Our Happiness*, Op. 69 (1968), for tenor soloist, mixed chorus, and orchestra. **Elizabeth Maconchy** (1907–1994) was an astonishingly prolific composer across all genres. At the age of sixteen, she enrolled at Royal College of Music, where she studied with Vaughan Williams and Charles Wood (1866–1926). Although Maconchy is primarily known for her symphonic works and string quartets, she also composed dozens of choral works. These pieces—both a cappella and orchestrated—are mostly secular, setting texts written by prominent British poets. **Thea Musgrave** (b. 1928) is a Scottish composer who studied at the University of Edinburgh and with Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979) in France. She moved to London in 1954 and ultimately settled in the United States in 1970. Mostly known for her operas, Musgrave also composed twenty choral works, most of which are scored for a cappella chorus. *Rorate coeli* is one of her most interesting choral pieces, combining two texts: the sacred Latin text “Rorate coeli desuper” and the Medieval poem “Done Is a Battle on the Dragon Black” by the Scottish poet William Dunbar (1459–1520).

The next generation of British women choral composers were all born in the 1940s. **Rhian Samuel** (b. 1944) was born in Aberdare, Wales, into a Welsh-speaking family. Although she studied at the University of Reading in England and at Washington University in St.



Louis, she has kept strong ties to her native Wales. Samuel's vocal and choral compositions sometimes set Welsh texts, and her 120 published pieces include twenty-one choral works.

Nicola LeFanu (b. 1947), the daughter of Elizabeth Maconchy, studied at Oxford University, the Royal College of Music, and Harvard University. She later taught composition at Kings College, London, and the University of York, retiring in 2008. She has published over one hundred compositions, including eighteen choral works. Her most well-known choral pieces are three cantatas published by Novello: *The Valleys Shall Sing* (1973), *Like a Wave of the Sea* (1981), and *Stranded on My Heart* (1984). **Hilary Tann** (b. 1947), another Welsh composer, holds degrees from the University of Wales, Cardiff, and Princeton University. Although primarily an instrumental composer, she has composed approximately one dozen choral works, including several psalm settings.

Three additional seasoned women composers of choral music, all of whom are English, must also be mentioned. **Cecilia McDowall** (b. 1951) studied at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance before proceeding to a marvelous career as a prolific and prize-winning composer. Although she has composed across all genres, she is best known for her many choral works and was the recipient of the British Composer Award for Choral Music in 2014. McDowall's commissions include works for the BBC Singers, Westminster Cathedral Choir, and the Choir of King's College, Cambridge. **Judith Bingham** (b. 1952) studied voice and composition at the Royal Academy of Music, winning the BBC Young Composer Award in 1977. After her schooling, Bingham sang full time with the BBC Singers for thirteen years (1983–1996); this experience as a performer of choral music was essential to the formation of her mature compositional style. Many of her works have been recorded by professional choral ensembles. *Water Lilies* (1999) is a seven-minute work that is typical of Bingham's compositional approach to choral music. She writes:

The idea was to create a tapestry of sound, multi-dividing the choir and having lots of tiny solos which would further thin out the texture. This was something akin to dots of impression-

istic paint. The work opens in a dream-like way where the word “nymphs” rises from the texture like sirens calling. The sound is warm and dreamy but gradually becomes more worrying. In the middle section all is ice with tiny staccato chords and long high melodic lines. Finally the summer returns, ecstatically, and the water lilies flower.¹⁴

Roxana Panufnik (b. 1968) is an English composer of Polish heritage. The daughter of Polish conductor Andrzej Panufnik (1914–1991), she studied at the Royal Academy of Music before embarking on her compositional career. Her most famous choral works include *Westminster Mass*, commissioned in 1997 by the Westminster Cathedral Choir to celebrate the seventy-fifth birthday of Cardinal Basil Hume (1923–1999); *Dance of Life*, an oratorio commissioned in 2011 by the Tallinn Philharmonic Society in Tallinn, Estonia; and *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*, canticle settings written in 2012 for the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music.

Canada

Several Canadian women have also made important contributions to the choral repertory. **Ruth Watson Henderson** (b. 1932) is a composer and pianist who accompanied the Festival Singers of Canada and the Toronto Children's Chorus until her retirement in 2007. Over the course of her long career, Henderson wrote over two hundred choral works. In 1992, *Voices of Earth*—scored for double SATB choir and children's choir—won the Canadian National Choral Award for Outstanding Choral Composition. A book about her illustrious career—*I Didn't Want It to Be Boring: Conversations about the Life and Music of Ruth Watson Henderson*—was published in 2017.¹⁵ **Eleanor Daley** (b. 1955) was educated at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Since 1982 she has served as director of music at Fairlawn Avenue United Church of Christ in Toronto. Daley has written over one hundred choral works, including commissions from the Toronto Children's Chorus, Vancouver Men's Chorus, and the American Choral Directors Association. She has won the Canadian National Choral Award for Outstanding Choral Composition twice: for *Requiem*

CHORAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY WOMEN A Brief History

in 1994 and *Rose Trilogy* in 2004. Her requiem setting is Daley's most frequently heard work and almost perhaps the most famous requiem written by a woman composer.

Nancy Telfer (b. 1950) is a choral conductor and composer who has written more than 350 works, many of which are for choral ensembles. In her compositions, she has the reputation for "creative experimentation," which "is linked with the belief that all music should delight the ears, capture the imagination of the mind, and feed the soul."¹⁶ **Larysa Kuzmenko** (b. 1956) is a Toronto-based composer who has written many choral works, including a thirty-minute oratorio titled *Golden Harvest* (2016) for SATB chorus, orchestra, and soprano and baritone soloists. She was commissioned to write a choral-orchestral work—*Behold the Night* (2011)—for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Toronto Children's Chorus. **Stephanie Martin** (b. 1962) has written dozens of choral works for various combinations of voices. A choral conductor and church musician herself, many of her compositions set sacred texts, including *Requiem for All Souls* (2017) and *Missa Chicagoensis* (2016). **Ramona Luengen** (b. 1960) and **Veronika Krausas** (b. 1963) are two other Canadian women composers who have made important contributions to the choral repertoire; and **Kathleen Allan** (b. 1989) is a young, award-winning composer who is already making a big impact on Canada and the world with her folk-influenced compositions.

The United States

As the twentieth century proceeded, choral music by American women composers began to flourish. **Louise Talma** (1906–1996) studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris before settling into a long career teaching at Hunter College in New York, a position she held from 1928 to 1979. Her seventeen choral works are mostly composed in what can be described as an "advanced tonal idiom."¹⁷ *Let's Touch the Sky* (1952)—a setting of three poems by E. E. Cummings (1894–1962)—is her most recognized choral composition.¹⁸ **Alice Parker** (b. 1925) was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and educated at Smith College and Juilliard, where she studied conducting with Robert Shaw (1916–1999). During this time she began making choral arrangements of folk songs, hymns, and spirituals that were performed and recorded by the Rob-

ert Shaw Chorale. It is these arrangements for which Parker is most famous; they have become staples of the repertoire and have cemented her legacy in the choral world. Many people do not realize, however, that Parker also composed over 250 original choral works. "You Can Tell the World" is an excellent example of Parker's contribution to the choral canon.¹⁹

Although often overlooked in the music history books, the contribution of women to church music should be mentioned. Three women in particular—**Jane Marshall** (b. 1924), **Emma Lou Diemer** (b. 1927), and **Natalie Sleeth** (1930–1992)—have had enormous impact on the music programs of small parishes across the United States, writing accessible anthems that can be sung successfully by volunteers in amateur church choirs. Marshall, who spent her long career as a member of the sacred music faculty at Southern Methodist University, has written many choral octavos, perhaps none more famous than "My Eternal King" (1954). Emma Lou Diemer was born in Kansas City, studied at Yale University and the Eastman School of Music, and eventually settled into a career as a composition professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Although she composed across all genres, Diemer is particularly recognized for contributions to church music in the form of organ and choral works. Natalie Sleeth majored in music at Wellesley College before moving to Dallas, where she became the director of children's choirs at Highland Park Methodist Church. At the time of her death, she had published over 180 choral pieces. She is especially known for her children's choir anthems, many of which were written for her very own children's choir at Highland Park.

Needless to say, the avant-garde music scene of the mid-century—which found its home in major metropolitan areas such as New York, Boston, San Francisco, and San Diego—turned out a very different kind of choral music. **Pauline Oliveros** (1932–2016), one of the most important forces in new music of the twentieth century, employs extended techniques in her most famous choral work, *Sound Patterns*, written in 1961. **Pozzi Escot** (b. 1933) was born in New York City, educated at Juilliard, and joined the faculty of the New England Conservatory in Boston in 1964. Her most notable choral work, the *Missa Triste* of 1981, is a setting of four parts of the



mass ordinary in an atypical order—Agnus Dei, Credo, Kyrie, and Gloria—“as a representation of peace, belief, mercy, and glory.”²⁰ Escot’s other choral works include the a cappella works *Ainu I* (1970) and *Visione 97* (1997). **Judith Lang Zaimont** (b. 1945) studied at Queens College and Columbia University, eventually becoming a professor of composition at the University of Minnesota. Her many choral works include *Sacred Service for the Sabbath Evening* (1976), *Serenade: To Music* (1981), and *Parable: A Tale of Abraham and Isaac* (1985).

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)—educated at Brown University and the Hartt School—enjoys a full-time career as a composer. She has written dozens of choral works, including *Harlem Songs* (2000), *An Hour to Dance* (1998), *Appalachian Carols* (1998), and *The Great Trees* (2009). Walker also has one of the most extensive discographies of all the composers discussed in this article. *Now Let Us Sing!* (2007), recorded by the Bella Voce Women’s Chorus of Vermont, is an entire CD devoted to Walker’s choral works for women’s voices. **Carol Barnett** (b. 1949) studied with Dominick Argento (1927–2019) at the University of Minnesota. A Minneapolis-based composer, she was composer-in-residence for the Dale Warland Singers from 1992 until the ensemble’s disbanding in 2004. Barnett’s most important works include *Cinco poemas de Bécquer* (1979), *Requiem* (1981), *Epitaphs* (1986), and *The Last Invocation* (1992).

Two foreign-born women composers of this generation have made a significant impact on American choral music. **Tania León** (b. 1943) was born in Havana, Cuba, where she studied music at the Carlos Alfredo Peyrellade Conservatory and the National Conservatory. In 1967 she moved to New York City to attend New York University and has based her career there ever since. A professor at Brooklyn College, her works across all genres have been performed by prominent ensembles globally. León’s choral works are often written for unique combinations of voices and instruments. *Inura* is scored for SATB voices, strings, and percussion; the work sets texts from the Yoruban Candomblé religion. **Chen Yi** (b. 1953) was born and raised in Guangzhou, China, and was the first Chinese woman to receive a master’s degree in composition from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. She later moved to New York City, where she studied composition with Chou Wen-chung

(b. 1923) and Mario Davidovsky (b. 1934) and Columbia University, earning her DMA in 1993. She has composed dozens of choral works, many of which set Chinese texts.²¹ Theodore Presser notes that Chen Yi is a “cultural ambassador” and a “strong advocate of new music, Asian composers, and women in music.”²²

Over the course of the second half of the twentieth century and into the new millennium, numerous women composers have contributed to the American choral canon. **Libby Larsen** (b. 1950)—who earned all of her degrees (BM, MM, and DMA) under the tutelage of Dominick Argento at the University of Minnesota—has composed over one hundred choral works. Several of her best large-scale works include *Dance Set* (1980), *Ringeltanze* (1983), *A Creeley Collection* (1984), and *The Settling Years* (1988). **Janika Vandervelde** (b. 1955), another Minneapolis-based Argento protégée, is primarily known for her choral music, with commissions and performances from ensembles such as Chanticleer and the Dale Warland Singers. The Chicago-born composer **Joan Szymko** (b. 1957) composes almost exclusively for choral ensembles. Eventually settling in the Pacific Northwest, Szymko is conductor of the Aurora Chorus—a one hundred-voice women’s chorus—in Portland, where she also founded a smaller select women’s ensemble called the Viriditas Vocal Ensemble. Perhaps not surprisingly, many of her works are written for treble voices. In 2015, **Julia Wolfe** (b. 1958) won the Pulitzer Prize for *Anthracite Fields*, a modern secular oratorio about Pennsylvania coal miners. **Edie Hill** (b. 1962) attended Bennington College and the University of Minnesota. Her principal composition teachers were Vivian Fine (1913–2013), Lloyd Ultan (1929–1988), and Libby Larsen. Hill’s style is more conservative than her Minnesota colleagues Larsen and Vandervelde, as can be heard in the five-minute *Alma beata et bella* (1999), a setting of a fifteenth-century Italian text commissioned by the Rose Ensemble.

African American Voices

African American women composers have made an important impact on the choral world, bringing their heritage, traditions, and stories to an important body of works. **Undine Smith Moore** (1904–1989) was one of the most important African American women compos-

ers of the twentieth century. Although she wrote over one hundred compositions, only twenty-six of these works were published during her lifetime. Many of these pieces were choral works, including the oratorio *Scenes from the Life of a Martyr* (1982) and two cantatas: *Sir Olaf and the Erl King's Daughter* (1925) and *Glory to God* (1976). She is also known for her many arrangements of spirituals. Moore spent most of her career as a professor at Virginia State University, where she taught for forty-five years (1927–1972). **Bernice Johnson Reagon** (b. 1942) enjoys a multifaceted career as a song leader, composer, scholar, and social activist. “Perhaps no individual today better illustrates the transformative power and instruction of traditional African American music and cultural history... [Reagon] has excelled equally in the realms of scholarship, composition, and performance.”²³ Her choral works include a series of octavos and the *Liberty or Death Suite* (2004), which was commissioned by the MUSE-Cincinnati Women’s Choir conducted by Catherine Roma (b. 1948).²⁴

In recent decades, **Rosephanye Powell** (b. 1962) has emerged as an extraordinary force in the choral world. Powell was born in Lanett, Alabama, and studied music throughout her childhood, eventually earning degrees from Alabama State University, Westminster Choir College, and the Florida State University. An accomplished singer, Powell has conducted extensive research on the African American spiritual, and her compositional style “utilizes techniques that reflect her African American heritage, including layering songs with multiple lines, syncopation, and strong rhythmic emphasis.”²⁵ She has received commissions from organizations such as the American Guild of Organists and American Choral Directors Association as well as numerous ensembles, including Chanticleer, Cantus, and the St. Olaf Choir. One of the best-selling choral composers in the United States, her works are published by Hal Leonard, Oxford University Press, Alliance Music Publications, and Shawnee Press. Since 2001 she has served on the music faculty of Auburn University, where she is a Charles Barkley Endowed Professor and Professor of Voice. Her dozens of choral works include “The Word Was God” (1996), “Still I Rise” (2005), *Gospel Trilogy* (2015), and *The Cry of Jeremiah* (2012), a four-movement work for chorus, organ, and orchestra with narration.

The Next Generation: Women in the New Millennium

A vibrant generation of female choral composers who were born after 1975 have emerged over the past several decades, ushering in the next millennium with a burgeoning oeuvre of evocative choral works. **Anna Thorvaldsdottir** (b. 1977), an Icelandic composer, has had enormous international success as a writer of choral pieces.²⁶ According to the composer’s website, Thorvaldsdottir “works with large sonic structures that tend to reveal the presence of a vast variety of sustained sound materials, reflecting her sense of imaginative listening to landscapes and nature. Her music tends to portray a flowing world of sounds with an enigmatic lyrical atmosphere.”²⁷ Thorvaldsdottir’s success has transcended the new music community to many of the world’s major orchestras; the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and London Philharmonia Orchestra are three major orchestras that have performed and premiered her works.²⁸ **Santa Ratneice** (b. 1977), a Latvian composer, is another example of an adventurous young woman who is transforming the choral landscape with works that challenge singers to explore nontraditional sounds and embrace post-bel canto vocal technique. According to Ratneice’s blog: “words are not enough to describe her music and illuminate the process of creation... It is the abundant, plentiful imagination that charms and even bewitches listeners.”²⁹ “Horo horo hata hata” is an example of a choral work that is representative of Ratneice’s idiosyncratic sonic palette.

The United States continues to be a fruitful haven for aspiring choral composers, and perhaps no city is more supportive of the genre than Minneapolis, Minnesota.³⁰ **Abbie Betinis** (b. 1980) and **Jocelyn Hagen** (b. 1980), both graduates of the University of Minnesota, are two of the nation’s most accomplished young choral composers. Betinis’s works have achieved positive reviews in the *New York Times* and *Boston Globe*, and she has received commissions from many prominent choral groups, including the Dale Warland Singers and the Rose Ensemble. Hagen likewise enjoys a regular stream of commissions and awards from organizations like the American Composers Forum and prominent ensembles such as VocalEssence, Conspirare, and the Minnesota Choral Artists. In 2018, Hagen premiered a major work



for choir, orchestra, and multimedia video projections titled *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, which has since received performances on both sides of the Atlantic.³¹

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982) is another American composer who needs little introduction after bursting into fame on April 15, 2013—the day she became the youngest composer in history to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music at the age of thirty-one. The prize-winning work was *Partita for 8 Voices*, which was written for Roomful of Teeth, a new music ensemble with which Shaw performs. Another prominent choral work of hers is *Ad manus* (“To the Hands”), a “response cantata” that was commissioned by the Crossing for their 2016 major work, *Seven Responses*—a twenty-first-century reimagining of *Membra Jesu Nostri* (1680) by Dietrich Buxtehude (1737/39–1797).³² One of the youngest choral composers who has emerged nationally is **Dale Trumbore** (b. 1987), who has been praised by the *New York Times* for her “soring melodies and beguiling harmonies.”³³ Her impressively extensive catalog of choral works has been performed by the American Contemporary Music Ensemble (ACME), Minnesota Choral Artists, and the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Trumbore is a graduate of the University of Southern California’s composition program, where she studied with Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943). “Threads of Joy” (2007) is one of her best-known choral compositions. In 2019 she won ACDA’s Raymond W. Brock Professional Composers Award.

Final Thoughts

Music composed by women continues to be underrepresented on concert programs, and people are starting to notice. Recently, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra completed a survey of twenty-one American orchestras, which revealed that works by women composers comprised only 1.8 percent of the 2014–2015 concert season.³⁴ Prominent female conductor and Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Music Director Marin Alsop (b. 1956) commented: “I thought it was changing, and then it didn’t change.”³⁵ In June 2018, NPR reported that the Philadelphia Orchestra had no works by women programmed for its 2018–2019 season; but by August, public outcry led the orchestra to announce it was adding compositions by two women: Stacey Brown

(b. 1976) and Anna Clyne (b. 1980).³⁶

The future of women in music shows promise in the emergence of new opportunities, the increasing acceptance of gender diversity, and in the budding talent of young female composers. Although the environment is improving, it is still necessary to take a proactive approach. In the words of Pauline Oliveros: “if a performer is playing a program, they need to play music by women as well as by men. And if an audience goes to a concert and there’s no music by women, they have to confront the management about it. If that doesn’t happen, the change is not going to take place.”³⁷

Perhaps most important, men need to be proactive about programming and singing music composed by women. Women don’t only write for women’s voices—there is a wealth of repertoire out there for tenors, baritones, basses, and even countertenors. Male conductors of choral ensembles also need to be mindful about including women composers on their programs. If everyone—female and male—got on board with this mission, the musical landscape of America and the world could change overnight.

Over the past several decades, professional organizations like the American Choral Directors Association and International Federation of Choral Music have had significant impact on promoting choral music in universities, colleges, and public schools. The explosion of professional choral ensembles and extensive discography of recordings that these elite groups produce has exponentially raised the bar of choral excellence. As a result, choral culture—in both the United States and abroad—is thriving in the twenty-first century. The rich catalog of works produced by the women composers introduced in this article deserve to be explored, programmed, sung, and celebrated on a regular basis. If we do not actively engage in this effort, think of the magnificent choral repertoire that we, and future generations, will never have the privilege of hearing or singing. ■

NOTES

¹ This article is appearing in the *Choral Journal* with permission of the publisher and the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS).

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- ² Adriano Cavicchi and Suzanne G. Cusick, “Rafaella Aleotti,” *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, ed. Julie Anne Sadie and Rhian Samuel (New York: Macmillan, 1995): 7.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ The works for SATB chorus and piano include *Zum Fest der heiligen Cäcilia* (1833) and *Enleitung zu lebenden Bildern* (1841). A cappella choral works include *Nachtreigen* (1829) and *Schweigend sinkt die Nacht* (1846), both scored for SATB/SATB double choir; Fanny’s husband, Wilhelm Hensel (1794–1861), wrote the text for the *Nachtreigen*. The two vocal quartets include the SATB *Dämmernd liegt der Sommerabend* and the TTBB *Lass fahren hin*, both composed in 1840. The SAB part songs include *Wer will mir wehren zu singen, O Herbst*, and *Schweig der Menschen laute Lust*, all composed in 1846.
- ⁵ The specific poems set in *Gartenlieder* are as follows: “Hörst du nicht die Bäume rauschen,” “Schöne Fremde,” and “Abendlich schon rauscht der Wald” (Eichendorff); “Morgengruss” (Hensel); “Im Herbst” (Uhland); and “Im Wald” (Geibel).
- ⁶ Cape Martin is a Mediterranean headland in the south of France between Monaco and Menton.
- ⁷ Christopher St. John, *Ethel Smyth: A Biography* (London: Longmans, Green & Co.), 187. Donald Francis Tovey also writes about the deliberate joyous and triumphant nature of the Gloria in *Essays in Musical Analysis, Volume V: Vocal Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 241–242.
- ⁸ Smyth’s secular choral-orchestral works include *We Watched Her Breathing through the Night* (1876), *A Spring Canticle* (1903), *Hey Nonny No* (1910), *Sleepless Dreams* (1910), and *Songs of Sunrise* (1910).
- ⁹ Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 556.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 577.
- ¹¹ *Psalm XXIV* (Psalm 24) and *Psalm CXXIX* (Psalm 129) were both composed in 1916. *Psalm CXXX* (Psalm 130) was written in 1917.
- ¹² Poston’s *Two Carols in Memory of Peter Warlock* were written in 1956.
- ¹³ Catherine Roma, *The Choral Music of Twentieth-Century Women Composers: Elisabeth Luytens, Elizabeth Maconchy, and Thea Musgrave* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 7.
- ¹⁴ Judith Bingham, *Remoter Worlds: The Choral Music of Judith Bingham* (London: Hyperion, 2008): CD liner notes.
- ¹⁵ Hilary Apfelstadt, *I Didn’t Want It to Be Boring: Conversations about the Life and Music of Ruth Watson Henderson* (Toronto: Prism Publishers, 2017).
- ¹⁶ <https://www.musiccentre.ca/node/37343/biography>; A recent doctoral dissertation by Tracy Wei Wen Wong also offers an in-depth study of Telfer’s oeuvre: “From Page to Performance through Pedagogy: The Choral Legacy of Nancy Telfer” (University of Michigan, 2018).
- ¹⁷ Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 723.
- ¹⁸ The three Cummings poems are “anyone lived in a pretty how town,” “love is more thicker than forget,” and “if up’s the word.”
- ¹⁹ At the time of this writing (2019), Alice Parker is ninety-three years old and still keeping an extremely active schedule traveling the country, headlining conferences, and leading community hymn sings. In 1984, Parker founded the organization Melodious Accord with the mission of presenting concerts, making recordings, and providing opportunities for advanced study under her tutelage. In the summer of 2007, I (Matthew) was fortunate enough to be selected as a Melodious Accord Fellow, which gave me the opportunity to study with Alice as part of a small group at her home in Hawley, Massachusetts. Living in the same quarters and cooking meals together over the course of three days fostered a unique and unforgettable seminar experience and revealed the endearing personal touch that Parker brings to all of her endeavors.
- ²⁰ Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 747.
- ²¹ I (Matthew) had the privilege of working with Chen Yi when the Ithaca College Choir premiered her choral work *Spring Dreams* in 1998. Her excitement, elation, and kindness endeared her to the entire choir. I earned my BM in vocal performance, music education, and music theory from Ithaca College in 1999.
- ²² <https://www.presser.com/composer/chen-yi/>, accessed August 25, 2018.
- ²³ <https://www.bernicejohnsonreagon.com/about/>, accessed August 24, 2018.
- ²⁴ Some of Reagon’s most well-known octavos include *Ella’s Song* (1991); *Seven Principles* (1994); *Greed* (1995); *We Are the Ones We Been Waiting For* (1995); *I Remember, I Believe* (1995); and *Come Unto Me* (1999).
- ²⁵ <http://blogs.jwpepper.com/index.php/19-groundbreaking-women-composers-part-2/>, accessed August 25, 2018.



²⁶ Thorvaldsdottir's last name is technically spelled "Þorvaldsdóttir," but most American publications transcribe the first character—which exists in Icelandic but not English—as *Th*.

²⁷ <http://www.annathorvalds.com/bio/>, accessed August 24, 2018.

²⁸ In April of 2018, Esa-Pekka Salonen (b. 1958) led the New York Philharmonic in the premiere of Thorvaldsdottir's *Metacosmos*, which was commissioned by the orchestra. The work received its European premiere with the Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by Alan Gilbert (b. 1967), in January of 2019.

²⁹ <http://santaratniece.blogspot.com>, accessed August 24, 2018.

³⁰ The Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area is nestled in the heart of "Luther Land"—a regional sobriquet reflecting the deeply rooted choral culture of the upper Midwest. Lutheran liberal arts colleges such as St. Olaf, Luther, Concordia, and Gustavus Adolphus all boast rich and storied choral programs and are home to some of the United States's best choral ensembles.

³¹ *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* will receive its European premiere on July 9, 2019, as part of the Leonard da Vinci International Choral Festival. The festival honors the five hundredth anniversary of the death of Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519).

³² Anna Thorvaldsdottir also contributed a movement to *Seven Responses* titled *Ad genua* ("To the Knees").

³³ <https://www.daletrumbore.com/about>, accessed August 24, 2018.

³⁴ <https://www.bsomusic.org/stories/by-the-numbers-female-composers/>, accessed August 15, 2018.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Tom Huizenga, "After Criticism, Philadelphia Orchestra Adds Female Composers to Its New Season," NPR, <https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2018/08/02/634864751/after-criticism-philadelphia-orchestra-adds-female-composers-to-its-new-season>, accessed August 13, 2018.

³⁷ Pauline Oliveros, interview with Tara Rodgers, *Pink Noises: Women on Electronic Music and Sound* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010): 31.

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William Levi Dawson

(1899 – 1990)

Reexamination of a Legacy

Vernon Huff

The year 2019 marks the 120th anniversary of the birth of composer William Levi Dawson (1899-1990). Dawson's arrangements of spirituals were groundbreaking in the way they elevated the genre. Thousands of people were introduced to spirituals by performances of the Tuskegee Institute Choir, as well as thousands more in the many years since his arrangements were first published. This article will compare four of Dawson's notable arrangements to earlier settings of the same tunes.

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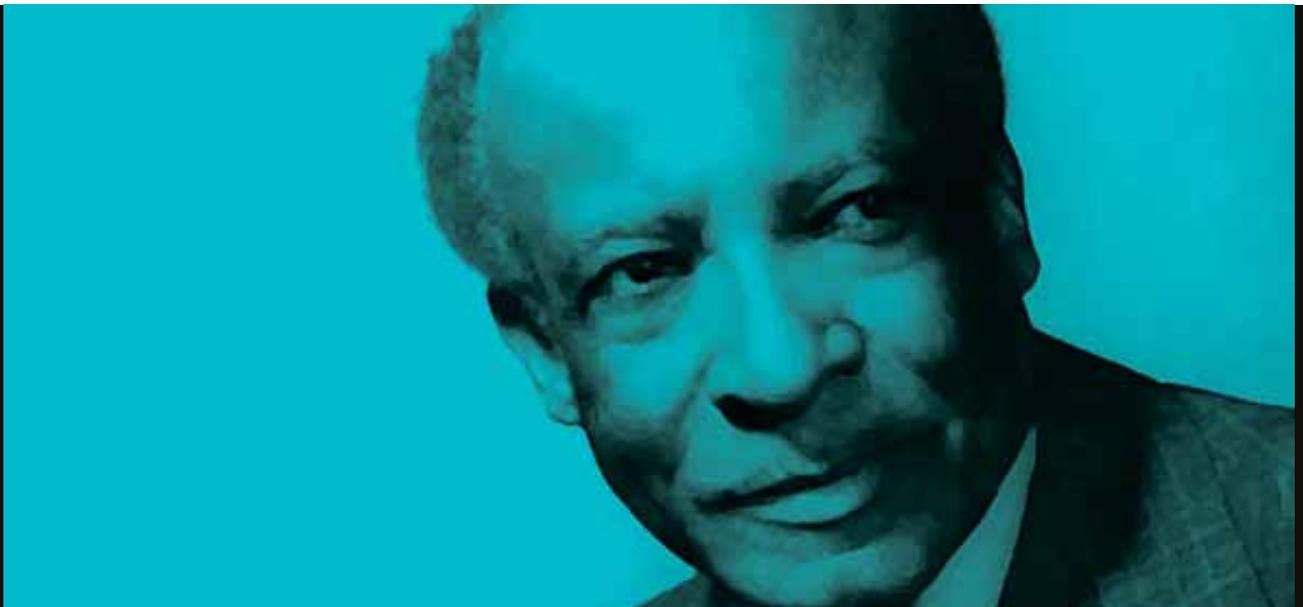
Biography

William Levi Dawson was born in the town of Anniston, Alabama, in 1899. He grew up surrounded by music; Dawson's parents, who were likely former slaves themselves, sang the old spirituals to him. In his article "William Dawson and the Copyright Act," John Haberlen wrote:

"Dawson knew the deep emotional content and mood of the folk songs intimately since he grew up with them. The songs were a part of his consciousness through his childhood experiences. As he recalled the melodies and words from the oral tradition, Dawson wrote the melodies down from memory, freely improvising as naturally as any good singer would have interpreted the songs."¹

As a child, Dawson knew about the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama—a school first led by the famous Booker T. Washington—and yearned to go there. Young Dawson saved his money and, with the support of his mother, bought a train ticket and left Anniston for Tuskegee at the age of thirteen.²

After graduating from Tuskegee, Dawson continued his education at Washburn College, the Horner Institute of Fine Arts, and at the American Conservatory of Music. He was a high school choral director, first trombonist in the Chicago Civic Orchestra, and in 1929 and 1930 he won several notable composition prizes. Although he led a full life in Chicago, Dawson felt the pull of Tuskegee when President Robert Moton asked him in 1931 to return to his alma mater as director of the new School of Music and conductor of the Institute choir. After



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performing at the opening of Radio City Music Hall and in Carnegie Hall in 1933, the choir achieved national success. Regular radio spots and annual national tours contributed to the acclaim of the choir and Dawson throughout the country. Dawson retired from teaching in 1955 but continued to travel around the world, lecturing and conducting festival choirs.

When choosing repertoire for the Tuskegee Institute Choir, Dawson, a composer by trade, set about arranging some of the old “plantation songs” from his youth.³ Beginning in the 1930s, Dawson published many arrangements of spirituals and several original compositions under the Tuskegee Institute Press label (which was later acquired by Neil A. Kjos Music Co.). As the acclaim of the Tuskegee Institute Choir grew, so did the appetite for Dawson’s arrangements. Although Dawson’s arrangements have been sung by choirs all over the world, it is important to note that originally he wrote these pieces for his own ensemble. The Tuskegee Institute Choir was his laboratory, and his arrangements would not have exceeded their abilities. With the specificity of the markings that he put in his arrangements, one can imagine that Dawson was very demanding of his choristers. Dawson and the Tuskegee Choir released the album “Spirituals” in 1956,⁴ just after his retirement from the university, so conductors can get a sense of the sound Dawson was trying to achieve.

Ground-Breaking Arrangements

Dawson’s arrangements are extraordinary in their own right, and when compared to earlier and contemporary settings, they are ground-breaking. Most published choral settings of spirituals from this era were set as four-part hymns, but Dawson used his extensive classical training to arrange songs in new, more technically challenging ways. In every piece, however, the main tune is always easily discernible. In an era when composers were moving toward more and more complex musical settings, Dawson could use complex musical language, but never to the detriment or obfuscation of the original tune. His arrangements are celebrations of songs from his youth, not merely academic exercises. They are crowd pleasers to be sure, but each piece re-

tains its original nature. In the following sections, early published settings of four spirituals “Ain’t That Good News,” “Ev’ry Time I Feel the Spirit,” “Soon I Will Be Done,” and “Balm in Gilead”—will be compared to William Dawson’s settings.

The first significant publication of spirituals was *Slave Songs of the United States* in 1867. William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison gathered 136 tunes from all over the Southern states into one single volume. Although most songs may not be familiar to modern audiences, the collection is a treasure trove of valuable songs and a glimpse into the past. Only the melody line is notated, and no editing or musical harmony was added. The book is still available from Dover Publications.⁵

In the early part of the twentieth century, many Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) published anthologies of spirituals arranged in four-part, hymn-like settings. In many instances, university choir directors, many of whom were also published arrangers of spirituals, edited these collections. Contained in these volumes are many tunes that would be familiar to modern audiences.

To truly understand the transformative nature of William Dawson’s arrangements, it is helpful to examine many of the musical precursors that are available to us today. Of course, this music is rooted in oral traditions and was passed on simply by singing the songs. Early twentieth-century devotees to the traditions and importance of spirituals recognized that if the songs were to be passed on to later generations, they must be written down. The story of the earliest codified versions of spirituals is the effort to preserve an integral part of African American culture and history.

One of the earliest books about the spiritual as a genre is *Folk Songs of the American Negro* written by John Wesley Work Jr. (1871-1925) and published by Fisk University in 1915. Work was the choir director at Fisk in the early part of the twentieth century, and he, along with other members of his family, were important arrangers and conductors of spirituals. The book tells the story of the history of the spiritual as a genre of music.⁶ It examines many of the art form’s musical characteristics, tells stories associated with many of the tunes, and chronicles efforts to collect and preserve the music. The

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story of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers, whose early tours were instrumental in the popularization of spirituals, is told in great detail.

“There is a Balm in Gilead”

One setting preserved in the book’s pages is “Balm in Gilead,” which was based on text from the Old Testament book of Jeremiah 8:22—“Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wounds of my people?” (Figure 1).

“Balm in Gilead,” as found in *Folk Songs*, is set in the key of B Major in a time signature of 2/4, with a two-line, standard hymn-like SATB chorus and three solo

verses. In this piece, as in most settings from this era, there are no directions for singers and director, or dynamics or articulation marks. This setting was strictly notes and text. It was Dawson and his contemporaries who took these tunes to the next level with their imaginative arrangements.

William Dawson’s 1939 setting of the tune is titled “There is a Balm in Gilead” and is set for SATB chorus and soprano soloist (although a tenor soloist would also be appropriate). Dawson uses an ABABA form, where the A is the chorus and the B is the verse. He only uses the first and third verses of the original tune and has the soloist sing the second verse text and the melody in the final chorus while the choir hums underneath.

There is a Balm in Gil-e-ad, To make the wound-ed whole, There is a Balm in Gil-e-ad, To heal the sin-sick soul. There is a soul.

1. Some-times I feel dis-cour-aged, And think my work's in vain. But
2. Don't ev-er feel dis-cour-aged, For Je-sus is your friend, And
3. If you can-not preach like Pe-ter, If you can-not pray like Paul, You can

then the Ho-ly Spir-it Re-vives my soul a-gain. There is a
if you lack for know-ledge, He'll ne'er re-fuse to lend.
tell the love of Je-sus, And say, "He died for all."

Figure 1. John Wesley Work II, *Folk Song of The American Negro*, 1915, “Balm in Gilead.”

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The opening melody is given to the tenor voice, with the alto part paired in thirds and sixths, and the sopranos humming an “A” pitch almost the entire time. Although the piece is set in a 4/4 time signature, at “makes the wounded *whole*, *There is a Balm...*” Dawson extends the measure to 6/4 in every instance so that the singers can linger on “whole” (Figure 2). This has a subtle effect of stretching out the line, which adds emphasis to that particular word of text. Dawson adds <> markings on the word “wounded” and tenuto markings on the word “sin-sick” to give special emphasis to those words.

For choirs able to sing a cappella music well, this is an accessible and dramatic piece. The staggered entrances of the choir sections tenor, alto, soprano hum,

and bass are effective at pulling the audience in. The solo is haunting, supported by the underlying humming of the choir.

“Ev’ry Time I Feel the Spirit”

The second piece is “Ev’ry Time I Feel the Spirit” (Figure 3 on page 25). The earlier setting is found in *Religious Folk-Songs of the American Negro As Sung at the Hampton Institute*. Originally published in 1874 under the title *Cabin and Plantation Songs As Sung by the Hampton Students*, the 1929 fourth edition was edited by R. Nathaniel Dett (1882–1943). Dett spent nineteen years on the faculty at the Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) as choir director, and modern audiences will know many

9

S *f* — There is a Balm in Gil - e - ad, to make the wound - ed

A *pp* *f* soul. There is a Balm in Gil - e - ad, to make the wound - ed

T *f* soul. There is a Balm in Gil - e - ad, to make the wound - ed

B *f* There is a Balm — in — Gil - e - ad, to make the wound - ed

13

S whole, — There is a Balm in Gil - e - ad, to heal the sin - sick

A whole, — There is a Balm in Gil - e - ad, to heal the sin - sick

T whole, There is a Balm in Gil - e - ad, to heal the sin - sick.

B whole, There is a Balm in Gil - e - ad, to heal the sin - sick.

Figure 2. William Dawson, *There is a Balm in Gilead*, mm. 9–16.

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of his arrangements and compositions, including “Listen to the Lambs.” His oratorio *The Ordering of Moses* was published in 1937 and has received renewed attention in the last few years with notable performances by major choirs and orchestras. The setting examined here is straightforward. In the key of E flat, the piece comprises a short chorus, which repeats once, followed by three verses, each sung by a soloist. The tempo is marked at 68–72 beats per minute. The solo line is rhythmically difficult, but the familiar chorus is very singable.

William Dawson’s arrangement, first published in 1946, has been a staple of church, community, and school choral programs for generations. Comparing the two settings, Dawson’s excellent craftsmanship is apparent. Dawson sets his arrangement at a much quicker tempo, *allegro moderato*, at quarter note equals 120 beats per minute. The first two chords of the piece have fermatas over them—a sure way to grab the attention of the audience, before launching into the opening chorus (Figure 4). Dawson sets only two verses of the original text, and those are reserved for a baritone soloist. The choir hums underneath the solo,

which is reminiscent of a church choir or congregation singing behind a preacher during a worship service. When the chorus returns after the first solo line, the dynamic level is reduced to an unexpected *piano*, and

Andante molto espressivo ♩ = 68 - 72

Fine

Tutti *f* *dim. poco a poco* *mp*

Ev-'ry - time I feel the Spir - it mov - ing in my heart I will pray.

Tutti *f* *dim. poco a poco* *mp*

Ev-'ry - time I feel the Spir - it mov - ing in my heart I will pray.

Solo *mp*

1. Up - on the moun - tain my Lord spoke, Out His mouth came fire and smoke.
2. All a - round me is looks so shine, Ask my Lord if all was mine.
3. Jor - dan riv - er is chil - ly and cold, Chills the bod - y not the soul.

Figure 3. Nathaniel Dett, *Religious Folk Songs of the Negro as Sung at the Hampton Institute*, 1927, “Ev’ry Time I Feel the Spirit.”

Allegro moderato ♩ = ca. 120

S
A

Ev - 'ry time I ___ feel the spir - it, ___ Mov - ing in my heart, ___ I will

T
B

Ev - 'ry time I ___ feel the spir - it, ___ Mov - ing in my heart, ___ I will

S
A

pray; ___ Yes, Ev-'ry time I ___ feel the spir - it, ___ Mov - ing in my heart, ___ I will

T
B

pray; ___ Yes, Ev-'ry time I ___ feel the spir - it, ___ Mov - ing in my heart, ___ I will

Figure 4. William Dawson, *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit*, mm. 1–7.

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Dawson subtly changes the harmony. The half- and whole-step motion in the bass line should be pointed out to choirs who attempt this work.

As the piece builds toward the finale, it is important to note the bass line again, as it rolls from measure 41 to the end (Figure 5). As the upper three parts repeat material found earlier in the piece, the basses sing a rapid eighth-note counter melody that draws the listener's attention all the way until the *rit.* and *allargando* before the fermata in the penultimate measure. At the final cadence, the basses enter first on the dominant, and with the sopranos, sustain the E^b while the inner parts sing, "Yes, I will pray" one more time to end the piece.

"Soon Ah Will Be Done"

"Soon I Will Be Done" is from the Hampton Institute text and is another well-known tune (Figure 6 on page 27). The words "Fisk Jubilee Collection, by permission" appear in the margin of the page. This means that the piece was borrowed from Fisk University and may have been performed by the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

"Soon Ah Will Be Done" is set in B minor, in 4/4 time, for SATB choir and soprano soloist (or perhaps the soprano section sings the solo line). The opening melody is notable in that it ascends and descends along a harmonic minor scale from b1 to b2, while the bass line simply starts by serving as a pedal point at the tonic and subdominant in the opening chorus before the authentic cadence at the end. In each of the three verses, the soloist sings one line, and the entire choir then

41

S time I feel the spir - it, Mov - ing

A *ff* I will pray When the spir - it moves me

T time I feel the spir - it, Mov - ing

B *ff* Ev - 'ry time I feel the spir - it, Mov - ing in my heart,

43

S in my heart, I will pray; Yes, Ev - 'ry

A in my heart, I'll pray; Yes, Ev - 'ry

T in my heart, I'll pray; Yes, Ev - 'ry

B Oh, the spir - it, mov - ing in my heart, Oh, yes

Figure 5. William Dawson, "Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit," mm. 41–44.

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repeats the text twice before cadencing in a similar way at the end of the chorus section earlier in the piece. This setting would have been for an SATB choir. Unlike a congregational hymn, the piece is full of crescendos and decrescendos and markings from *mezzo piano* to *forte*. These dynamic markings are a departure from the

other early arrangements examined.

William Dawson's arrangement of "Soon Ah Will Be Done" is one of his earliest published pieces. The originally copyright is in 1934, three years after he began his tenure as the conductor of the Tuskegee Institute Choir. As with the Fisk version, Dawson's setting

Refrain
Tutti *mf*

Soon I will be done a - with the troub - les of the world,

cresc.
3 Trou - les of the world, The troub - les of the world,

mp *f* *mf* *Fine*
5 Soon I will be done a - with the troub - les of the word, Goin' home to live with God.

mp *mf*
9 1. No more weep - ing an a - wail - ing, No more weep - ing and a - wail - ing,
2. I want t' meet my moth - er, I want t' meet my moth - er,
3. I want t' meet my Je - sus, I want t' meet my Je - sus,

mf *f* *D.C.*
13 No more weep - ing and a - wail - ing, I'm goin' to live with God.
I want t' meet my moth - er, I'm goin' to live with God.
I want t' meet my Je - sus I'm goin' to live with God.

Figure 6. Nathaniel Dett, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro as Sung at the Hampton Institute*, 1927, "Soon I Will Be Done."

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is also in B minor, but his tempo marking is much faster than the earlier version: half note equals 104 (Figure 7). This is an exceptional difference from the earlier version. The form is ABACAD, with the A section being the chorus, and the other letters representing each of the verses. Each verse is treated in a different way, with the melody at first being set in the bass voice, then the soprano voice, and then the bass voice again. In each verse, Dawson writes a more and more complex treatment. The first verse is a call-and-response format between the bass line and the rest of the chorus. With the second verse, after a call-and-response, which echoes the first verse, Dawson has the choir repeat the

phrase “weepin’ and an’ a wailin’,” with *portamentos* on the word “wailin’” (Figure 8). This has the effect of drawing attention to the despondent text in an effective way. At the end of every verse, Dawson treats the text “Goin’ home t’ live wid God” a bit differently. The third verse contains the text, “I wan’ t’ meet my Jesus... In de mornin’ Lord,” which ends with the final, joyful acclamation, “I’m goin’ t’ live wid God” on a B Major chord.

Choirs that begin working on this piece may be deceived at the ease with which they learn the chorus section. The verses are rather difficult and can require much focused attention. In “Soon Ah Will Be Done” as

Allegro (♩ = 104)
pp lightly
 S
 *Soon ah will be done **a - wid de troub-les ob de worl', troub-les ob de worl', ___ de troub-les ob de worl'.
pp lightly
 T
 *Soon ah will be done **a - wid de troub-les ob de worl', troub-les ob de worl', ___ de troub-les ob de worl'.
 * Soon I
 ** a-with

Figure 7. William Dawson, *Soon-Ah Will Be Done*, mm. 1–4.
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32 *fz*
 S
 weep-in' an' a - wail - in'; No more
fz
 A
 weep-in' an' a - wail - in'; I'm goin' t' live wid God. No more
fz
 T
 weep-in' an' a - wail - in'; I'm goin' t' live wid God. No more
fz
 B
 weep-in' an' a - wail - in'; I'm goin' t' live wid God. No more

Figure 8. William Dawson, *Soon-Ah Will Be Done*, mm. 32–35.
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in Dawson's other arrangements, he takes great care in giving the choir and director an abundance of dynamic and articulation markings.

"Ain'-A That Good News"

John Wesley Work III (1901-1967) of Fisk University compiled the anthology *American Negro Songs and Spiritu-*

als: A Comprehensive Collection of 230 Folk Songs, Religious and Secular, published in 1940. Like the Hampton Institute text, which was a narrative history of the spiritual, this book is a collection of "Spirituals, Blues, Work Songs, Hollers, Jubilees, [and] Social Songs." Included in the collection is the well-known song, "Ain't That Good News?" (Figure 9). Like many other spirituals of this era, this is set in a call-and-response format, with

S
A
1. I've a crown up in the King-dom, Ain't that good news! I've a
2. I've a harp up in the King-dom, Ain't that good news! I've a
3. I've a robe up in the King-dom, Ain't that good news! I've a
4. I've slip-pers in the King-dom, Ain't that good news! I've a
5. I've a Sav-iour in the King-dom, Ain't that good news! I've a

T
B

5

S
A
crown up in the King-dom, Ain't that good news! I'm go-in' to
harp up in the King-dom, Ain't that good news!
robe up in the King-dom, Ain't that good news!
slip-pers in the King-dom, Ain't that good news!
sav-iour in the King-dom, Ain't that good news!

T
B

9

S
A
lay down this world, Goin' to shoul-der up my cross, Goin' to

T
B

13

S
A
take it home to Je-sus, Ain't that good news! Fine

T
B

Figure 9. John Wesley Work III, ed., *American Negro Songs and Spirituals: A Comprehensive Collection of 230 Folks Songs, Religious and Secular*, 1940, "Ain't That Good News?"

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the solo in the soprano line, and the choir responding. The choir then sings, “I’m goin’ to lay down this world, Goin’ to shoulder up my cross, Goin’ to take it home to Jesus, Ain’t that good news!” It is important to note that the harmonies here are rather simple, especially in the second line, in which the basses simply sustain an “f” pitch. There are no dynamic or articulation markings written.

Dawson first released his setting, titled “Ain’-a That Good News,” in 1937, and published an expanded version in 1965. In the later edition, Dawson adds a two-page middle section. It is not uncommon to still find both versions in church and community choir libraries.

Dawson’s lively, up-tempo setting (quarter note equals 104) begins with a syncopated opening motive, which is repeated in whole or in part for the rest of the piece. Compositionally, Dawson uses the technique of fragmenting the melody and repeating short segments of it multiple times (Figure 10). The soprano line regains the melody, which is no longer fragmented, and Dawson builds the piece toward a *fortissimo* fermata on “my Lawd!” (Figure 11 on page 31), before rushing to the finale. The arrangement, like his others, is full of articulation markings, and it seems that each note of the piece is treated with care.

Lively (♩ = 104)

The image shows a musical score for four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The score is in 2/4 time and begins with a tempo marking of 'Lively (♩ = 104)'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The Soprano part starts with a dynamic marking of *f* and has the lyrics 'I got a crown up in - a the King-dom, Ain'-a that good news!'. The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts enter later with a dynamic marking of *mf* and have the lyrics 'Ain'-a that'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1-4, and the second system covers measures 5-7. The Soprano part has a fermata over the final note of the first system. The lyrics 'good news!' are written below the Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts in the second system.

Figure 10. William Dawson, *Ain'-a That Good News!*, mm. 1-7.

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Reexamination of a Legacy

64 *cresc.* *ff* *lunga* *quickly*

S good news, good news, good news, good news, my Lawd! A-ain'-a that

A good news, good news, good news, good news, my Lawd!

T good news, good news, good news, good news, my Lawd! A-ain'-a that

B good, good news, good news, good news, good news, my Lawd!

69 *a tempo* *fz* *lunga* *p*

S good news, Lawd! _____

A good news, good news, My Lawd! A-ain'-a that good news! _____

T good news, good news, My Lawd! A-ain'-a that good news! _____

B good news, good news, My Lawd! A-ain'-a that good news! _____

Figure 11. William Dawson, *Ain-a That Good News!*, mm. 64–73.

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William Levi Dawson (1899 – 1990)

Conclusion

With his arrangements for the Tuskegee Institute Choir, William Dawson transformed the concerted, choral spiritual.⁷ His music set a new artistic standard in the genre—a high bar for all who followed him. In fact, a clear line can be drawn between arrangements that were crafted before and after Dawson published his works. Dawson grew up hearing spirituals at church and home, and he continued singing them during his years studying at the Tuskegee Institute. They were a part of him. When Dawson assumed direction of the Tuskegee Choir, his arrangements of spirituals soon became the core of the group's repertoire. Through the group's extensive touring and national radio broadcasts, his music became known throughout the country. And luckily for millions of choral singers and audience members, Dawson published his arrangements for all to enjoy.

Dawson's music was born from his knowledge and love of spirituals coupled with his prodigious classical musical training. When studying his music, his craftsmanship and artistry are apparent. Instead of presenting pieces in hymn-like fashion, as was the prevailing tradition, Dawson brought his considerable musical skills to elevating the form even further. For hundreds of years, spirituals were the music of slaves. Born out of tragedy, spirituals have been called the first American folk music. During the 1930s and 40s, African American choirs who sang spirituals were becoming popular with audiences of all colors. Collegiate choirs such as the Hampton Institute Choir, the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the Tuskegee Institute Choir, and professional choirs such as the Hall Johnson Choir and the Wings Over Jordan Choir were popularizing spirituals like never before.

Since 1867 when *Slave Songs of the United States* was published, there has been a steady publication of solo and choral arrangements of spirituals. It was Dawson's arrangements, however, that completely transformed the genre. With his musical intellect, attention to detail, and love of the music, his works have been a part of the standard canon of choral repertoire for decades. His arrangements have withstood the test of time, and hopefully choirs and audiences will continue to benefit

from his remarkable craftsmanship for generations to come. ■

NOTES

- ¹ John Black Haberlen, "William Dawson and the Copyright Act," *Choral Journal* 23, no. 7 (1983): 5–8.
- ² By far the most comprehensive look at the life and music of William Dawson is Mark Malone's PhD dissertation at Florida State University, "William Levi Dawson: American Music Educator," 1981. All biographical information in this article is taken from that work. Malone discusses the major periods of Dawson's life, examines his arrangements, and Dawson's philosophy of teaching.
- ³ Dawson's most popular arrangements and compositions can be found in Neil A. Kjos Music Co. anthologies, *Dawson Spirituals, Volume One and Two*, 2008, including all of the arrangements discussed in this article.
- ⁴ *Spirituals: Tuskegee Institute Choir*, directed by William L. Dawson, MCA MSD-35340, 1956, re-released in 1992.
- ⁵ For the backstory to the creation of this volume, read Samuel Charter's *Songs of Sorrow: Lucy McKim Garrison and "Slave Songs of the United States,"* University Press of Mississippi, 2015.
- ⁶ One such notable recording is *The Ordering of Moses: Live From Carnegie Hall*, May Festival Chorus, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra & James Conlon, Bridge 9462, 2016.
- ⁷ For further study about William Dawson and his work, the author suggests these studies: Huff, Vernon Edward, "William Levi Dawson: An Examination of Selected Letters, Speeches, and Writings." DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2013; Johnson, David Lee, "The Contributions of William L. Dawson to the School of Music at Tuskegee Institute and to Choral Music," EdD, University of Illinois and Urbana-Champaign, 1987.

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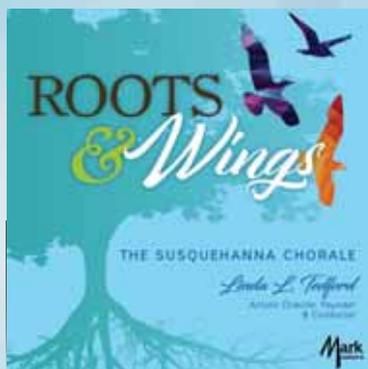
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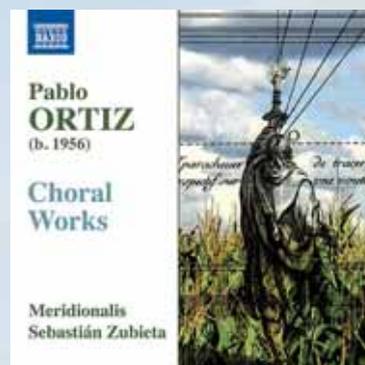


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A Focus on
Music in Worship

SACRED MUSIC PUBLICATION IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

T I M S H A R P

The confluence of the professionalization of sacred music choral leadership with the commercialization of sacred music publication in the second half of the twentieth century resulted in a renaissance of publication and performance throughout mainline churches in the United States. The purpose of this article is to describe the conditions that led to this era of professionalization and commercialization, and to survey the composers who contributed to this period of intense church music attention and activity.

The period of common practice embracing established musical eras including the Renaissance, Baroque, Classic, Romantic, and twentieth century provides convenient labels when looking at broad sweeps of time and style related to sacred music of the past. Eras of reform and surges of activity are apparent from a distance. As a result, a musical movement as clear as the Reformation can be identified within the Renaissance, and a distinctive repertoire of music that developed for use in sacred settings can be defined within this broader period that endured the test of time.

The closer we get to our present moment in history, however, the more blurry stylistic lines become, and the harder it is to label periods of homogenous activity called “periods” or “eras,” and it is challenging to project the music that will survive the test of time. This is the problem in any attempt to categorize sacred music in the second half of the twentieth century.

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SACRED MUSIC PUBLICATION IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

A New Era

With the death in 1956 of Ralph Vaughan Williams, followed by the death of Benjamin Britten twenty years later in 1976, an era of sacred music composition can be seen coming to a close. This was the end of an era where the towering figures in composition were equally active setting sacred music texts, hymns, and other liturgical and service material, as they were known for composing opera, symphonies, and chamber music for the secular concert stage. Simultaneously, a new era was beginning.

In the emerging period that took hold between the death of Vaughan Williams and Britten, church music historian Donald P. Hustad describes a new idea that was taking hold throughout the church that would change the nature of compositions used in worship and liturgy. As he describes it, the idea that was emerging in services of worship could be characterized by the word *celebration*, ushered in through the Anglican Church around 1960 with Geoffrey Beaumont's *20th Century Folk Mass*.¹ The essence of this wave was that worship should use contemporary music language that was the vernacular of the people, combined with the historic forms and music that made up its historic musical tradition. This movement paralleled the teaching of the *Constitution of the Sa-*

cred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) for the Roman Catholic Church, which permitted the liturgy to be offered in the vernacular.² We can broaden the word vernacular to mean all forms of communication used by the church, including its musical language.

Of the many factors that resulted in a shift in style for the music of the church during these years, the list includes this focus on celebration and the encouragement of the vernacular in all its forms in the language and expressions of the church; a spring awakening of youth music specifically for the church; a population boom coinciding with the growth in mainline church attendance and choir growth; the influence of popular music on sacred music composition; an awareness and desirability of music and liturgies from non-Western cultures; the professionalization of choral music leadership and educational programs and degrees in the academy and the church; the growth in amateur participation in choirs; the rapid development of commercial publication and distribution for sacred music; the birth of self-publishing, music licensing, and Internet marketing, sales, and distribution of choral music; a growing awareness and recognition of issues related to civil rights and social justice; and other social, psychological and economic cul-



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tural shifts.

Among these developments, the two seismic changes that would influence and embrace all other factors were the rise in the professionalization of sacred choral music leadership and training, and the growth in the commercialization of sacred music composition and publication. These two factors grew hand-in-hand and encompassed all developments that resulted in the excellent in sacred music that will likely endure, the good in sacred music that served a temporal purpose, and the ephemeral in sacred music that will unlikely remain in use.

In 1992, theologian Robert Webber looked back from that moment on what had developed since the 1960s in worship and projected, “Christian worship will be characterized by the blending of the traditional and the contemporary into a vital experience of worship and praise.”³ The combination of the words “worship and praise” are another way of describing the celebration character that had taken hold in the church overall, and particularly with the music of the church.

In his final chapter of *A Short History of English Church Music*, British church music historian Erik Routley called this period in church history the age of “Anxiety and Opportunity,” offering both his concern and his optimism.⁴ In summary, Routley says, “But one does see quite a new style of choral music appearing in the field of church music, which has been generated by a new and strictly contemporary demand.” He continues, “I mean the demand created by the sudden establishment in England and Scotland of new university campuses, so that by 1965 or so England had, instead of Oxford and Cambridge and a few respectable nineteenth-century provincial universities, as many universities as it has dioceses.”⁵ Routley connects the emerging contemporary style of church music composition to the commissioning taking place for chapels at these various schools that were experimenting with all things non-traditional, specifically citing compositions by John Gardner and John Joubert.

Rise in Professionalization

The same development took place within academia in the United States. In 1959, the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) was chartered and the following

statement was included in the purposes of the organization: “to foster and promote the development of choral music in the church and synagogue.”⁶ The birth of this choral association signaled the rise in the professionalization of choral music pedagogy and performance, along with training and degree programs that would assist and identify the development of sacred music. Training programs and advanced degrees in choral music conducting and sacred music studies could be found in the years that followed not only in the legacy schools and universities of the northeast but all across the country.

Furthermore, colleges and denominational seminaries dedicated specific training programs and terminal degrees to the study of sacred music. Along with this emphasis came a natural emphasis on sacred music composition, which grew hand in hand with educational and performance programs. In many instances, the person leading the charge in education was also a choral composer and a choral conductor.

As a prime example, church music educator/conductor/composer Lloyd Pfautsch led the way into this new era for the United Methodist Church. Pfautsch provided a model that can be found in most denominations in the second half of the twentieth century in the United States.⁷ He was a pioneer figure in the early days of the professionalization of choral conducting and in establishing the possibility of a career in sacred music. He is mentioned often in the literature of his day for such foundational programs. Lloyd Pfautsch was a pivotal musician and choral conductor in what may have been the “greatest generation” of United States church musicians of the twentieth century. Succeeding generations of choral and sacred music leaders were influenced by his teaching and composition. Significantly, the primary publisher of his compositions was the United Methodist Church owned and operated publishing house, Abingdon Press.

Born in 1921 in Washington, Missouri, Pfautsch earned his bachelor’s degree from Elmhurst College in 1943, where he was preparing for a career in ministry. He continued his education that fall at Union Theological Seminary and sang as soloist at Brick Presbyterian Church and in Toscanini’s NBC Symphony Chorus. He continued his graduate work at Union, narrowing his focus to sacred music, graduating from Union in 1948

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with the Master of Sacred Music degree. While in New York City, Pfautsch sang on the early Robert Shaw recordings, and it was Shaw who recommended him as the choral conductor for the 1965 Convocation of Religion for World Peace. This relationship with Shaw became one of the most fortuitous events in his career. In Pfautsch's words: "I was a typical Shaw disciple. I used a lot of his rehearsal procedures. But I had also learned the dangers of blindly copying someone else's style and techniques." He studied with both Shaw and Julius Herford while in New York.

Pfautsch taught at Illinois Wesleyan University from 1948 to 1958, and then at Southern Methodist University from 1958 to 1992. At both schools he established prominent choirs. At SMU, he established the Master of Sacred Music and the Master of Choral Conducting programs, teaching both in the School of Theology and the School of Music. He later held the administrative post of associate dean. He wrote three books: the widely used *English Diction for the Singer* (1971), *Mental Warm-ups for the Choral Director* (1969), and *Choral Therapy* (1994).

The point in establishing Pfautsch's legacy is that his most popular composition, the twenty-five-minute 1969 sacred cantata *A Day for Dancing*, inspired by the English traditional carol *Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day* and John Gardner's setting of it (1966), is an archetype of what became the American school of church music composition. This is Pfautsch's account of the writing of this work:

The idea for *A Day for Dancing* sort of came from having done the Britten *Ceremony of Carols*. I thought, you know, there ought to be another way of celebrating Christmas with instruments because the Britten is not long enough to fill a concert by itself."⁸

Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day was the first carol that came to his mind as he composed the work.

With this work by Pfautsch and the sacred music environment surrounding it, we witness the traditional sacred choral canon, the influence of master composers such as Britten on composers of this era, sensitive choral craftsmanship, all fused into a contemporary and celebrated expression of faith, and all with new cultural

influences playing out in sacred music composition intended for use in worship.

Contemporary Composition

Similar works followed Pfautsch's publication such as the youth musical *Tell It Like It Is* (1969) by Ralph Carmichael and Kurt Kaiser.⁹ In 1971 two incredibly influential musicals with Christian themes opened on Broadway: *Godspell* by Stephen Schwartz, and the rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Following on the heels of these works, Broadway-inspired extended compositions appeared such as *Celebrate Life!* (1972) by Buryl Red and Ragan Courtney published by the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination.¹⁰ Such publications and movements were visible in the United Methodist and Southern Baptist denominations, and at first, throughout other evangelical denominations. Later, this emphasis would be observable in every mainline denomination. The musical language may have varied, but the cultural influence taking place was undeniable and universal.

If this were an isolated phenomenon, it would be at the most a footnote to church music history. To the contrary, these experimentations led to a contemporary church music style of composition that could be seen throughout Catholic and Protestant churches. Simultaneously, elements of historical musical orthodoxy held ground by the same professionals and practitioners, fitting nicely but not always comfortably in the newborn focus on celebration. These changes were taking place in England and in the United States simultaneously, with Geoffrey Beaumont and John Gardner leading the way.

The giant push forward came, however, when sacred music composer John Rutter emerged from his editorial post at Oxford University Press into the mainstream of Protestant church music choral composition. In 1974, Rutter was commissioned to write a setting of the Latin *Gloria* text, resulting in his three-movement *Gloria* premiered in Omaha, Nebraska.¹¹ The piece is scored for choir, brass, percussion, and organ and was published in 1976 by Oxford University Press. Rutter's *Gloria* captured the same elements that John Gardner, Lloyd Pfautsch, John Ness Beck, Natalie Sleeth, Austin Lovelace, Katherine K. Davis, Gordon Young, Emma Lou Diemer,

Kirke Mechem, Leo Sowerby, Everett Titcomb, Alice Parker, Healey Willan, Martin Shaw, Edwin Fissinger, Ruth Watson Henderson, Robert Young, Hank Beebe, Jane Marshall, Gilbert Martin, Ron Nelson, and a long and golden list of composers embraced in their sacred music compositions. The music was immediately accessible by conforming to music and textual parameters suitable for the trained volunteer church choir. These composers were informed by ancient liturgy and tradition but were not inhibited by it. Contemporary composers later in this period dropped the false distinction between sacred and secular, permitting the familiar, the vulgar, the kitsch, the cliché, the relational, the inspired, and the transformational to enter contemporary sacred choral music expression.

This group of composers active between 1960 and 2000 could be called the American school of sacred music composition. They form a separate group altogether from the classical composers of an earlier era who composed in multiple areas and for multiple genres, including the large forms of opera, symphony, and multi-movement chamber music compositions. The American school of sacred music composition wrote music specifically intended for church music presentation by the volunteer church choir. Their sphere of composition and interest was intentionally focused on the worshipping church, and the publishing industry surrounding them was intentionally focused on their style of composition.

As to the larger body of classical choral composers, occasionally world-renowned composers set a biblical text, which may or may not have ever been intended for church or cathedral performance. To be sure, most of the works written on biblical texts by these composers found their way into performance within the walls of cathedral, church, and synagogue, but the composers would hardly be classified as church music composers in the practical sense. To use a commercial term, their “market” was never primarily the church. Composers of this category include Samuel Barber, Ernest Bloch, Dominick Argento, Leonard Bernstein, Pablo Casals, William Schuman, and William Mathias, to name only a few, all who wrote great pieces on sacred texts or sacred subject matter but operated outside the scope of church, cathedral, or synagogue as their primary compositional focus.

There are also significant composers of sacred music who are somewhere in-between the categories listed above in terms of where their music finds an audience. They either did not write or are not known for composing the large classical forms, but were universally accepted both inside the church and on the school and concert stage. This group is represented by composers such as Randall Thompson, Morten Lauridsen, Jean Berger, John Tavener, Ned Rorem, Vincent Persichetti, Arthur Frackenpohl, Howard Hanson, Daniel Pinkham, Conrad Susa, Eric Thiman, and Peter Warlock, once again, to name just a few.

For musicians working in sacred choral environments such as worship services, academic chapel settings, and college and seminary laboratories, it is imperative that developments in hymnody not only be observed but that a study of the emerging trends in hymn writing and hymnal publication inform an understanding of a very significant body of fundamental choral composition. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the new hymn most likely served as tomorrow’s choral arrangement, anthem foundation, or basis for a significant choral work.

Revision of the Hymnal

By 1965, in light of hymn writing activity since World War II, it became apparent that the hymnals of the various denominations needed revision. However, both the economy and the difficulty of judging quality of hymns made new hymnal publication prohibitive. Every major denomination both in England and America decided to solve the matter in the same way. They produced a supplement that was to be used along with the existing parent hymnal. Eric Sharpe points out in the article “Developments in English Hymnology in the Eighties” that this decision was “a wise and diplomatic way of keeping the hymnology of the church up-to-date.”¹² For one thing, it bowed to the economic stringencies of the time, which favored postponing the very costly publication of completely new hymn books as long as possible; and it recognized the assaults that were being made on tradition, leaving the old undisturbed.” This solution had its advantages: “The editors of a new supplement could concentrate on what was new, without feeling that one

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new piece meant the extinction of one old one; and the relatively inexpensive supplements might be renewable in a shorter time than economics would dictate in the case of a full-sized hymnal.”¹³ This posture of “let’s wait and see what sticks” was indeed an appropriate response during this explosive period of hymn composition.

The following list represents hymnal supplements and their “parent” hymnal published prior to 1982:

Protestant Sources

- Broadcast Praise (BBC), 1981
- English Praise (The English Hymnal), 1975
- 100 Hymns for Today (Hymns Ancient and Modern), 1969
- Hymns III (Episcopal), 1980
- Hymns and Songs (English Methodist), 1969
- More Hymns and Spiritual Songs (Hymns Ancient and Modern), 1980
- New Church Praise (United Reformed Church of England), 1975
- Praise for Today (English Baptist), 1974
- Psalter Hymnal (Christian Reformed Church), 1974
- Praise Ways (The Presbyterian Church in Canada), 1974
- Supplement to the Book of Hymns (United Methodist), 1982
- Songs of Celebration (Episcopal), 1980
- Sing and Rejoice (Mennonite), 1979
- Worship Supplement (Lutheran Missouri Synod)

Catholic Sources

- Hundredfold, 1978
- New Hymns for all Seasons
- A Song in Season, 1970
- Veritas Hymnal, 1973

Non-Denominational Sources

- Ecumenical Praise, 1977
- Gospel Songbook, 1967
- Partners in Praise, 1979
- Songs for the Seventies, 1972
- Sixty Hymns from Songs of Zion, 1977
- Songs of Thanks and Praise, 1980
- Westminster Praise, 1976

Other Sources

- Alive Now, July/August, 1981
- Praise for Today (Augsburg Press), 1964
- Because We Are One People (Ecumenical Women’s Center), 1974

As an indicator of hymn popularity, the following list of “Top Ten Hymns” resulted from a 1990 poll of the listeners of the BBC Radio 2 program, *Good Morning Sunday*:

- No. 1 Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
- No. 2 How Great Thou Art
- No. 3 The Old Rugged Cross
- No. 4 The Day Thou Gavest
- No. 5 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
- No. 6 Love Divine all Loves Excelling
- No. 7 What A Friend We Have in Jesus
- No. 8 O Love That Will Not Let Me Go
- No. 9 Great is Thy Faithfulness
- No. 10 Abide With Me

At the same time of this poll, each of those top ten hymns existed in multiple published choral settings:

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind—Choral settings by Whittier, Wesley, Pedrette, Parry, Maker, Soderwall, and Pottle.

How Great Thou Art—Choral settings by Bock, Bolks, Cain, Elrich, Lojeski, Mickelson, Mieir, Carter, and Hine.

The Old Rugged Cross—Choral settings by Red, Marsh, Bock, Brown, Bolks, and Mercer.

The Day Thou Gavest—Choral settings by Chambers, Scholefield, and Schalk.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross—Choral settings by G. Martin, Schalk, Allen, Carter, Hopson, Leech, Mason, and Young.

Love Divine All Loves Excelling—Choral settings by Andres, Archer, Stainer, Nicholson, Pritchard, Rorem, Rhiman, and Van der Hoeck.

What A Friend We Have in Jesus—Choral settings by Althouse, Best, Coates, Haan, and Young.

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go—Choral settings by Ness Beck, Carter, Ferrin, Purifoy, and Peninger.

Great is Thy Faithfulness—Choral settings by Lorenz, Hayes, Hall, Bock, and Clydesdale.

Abide With Me—Choral settings by Gardner, Barnby, Bennett, Monk, Wilson, Manookin, Gratton, and Lee.¹⁴

As further proof of this popularity and the connection between hymns and choral settings, *Sacred Choral Music in Print* and *The Christian Music Directory* lists over thirty choral arrangements alone of the gospel hymn “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” over forty choral settings of “Great is Thy Faithfulness,” and over seventy-five arrangements of Isaac Watts’s “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.”

In the narrowest definition, a hymn is simply a song of praise. In considering the development of the hymn since Chrysostom and on through Luther and Calvin, the hymn is more completely defined as a strophic song on a Christian subject capable of being sung by a congregation. Austin Lovelace defines a hymn more narrowly as “a poetic statement of a personal religious encounter or insight, universal in its truth, and suitable for corporate expression when sung in stanzas to a hymn tune.”¹⁵ Whether presented to an audience through a crafted and refined performance of a choral setting, or sung in its original form by the musically untrained congregation, the hymn remains at the heart of the choral medium for worship. In his book *Protestant Worship*, James F. White states, “It is not always easy to find which are the most representative hymns, but the genre certainly has to be recognized as highly significant in shaping and reflecting both piety and belief.”¹⁶

The 1980s witnessed the publication of over twenty new hymnals by major denominations

and independent publishers (Table 1). In the years that followed, new hymnals were published by the Covenant Church, Mennonite Church, Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Christian Scientists, Friends Conference, Assemblies of God, American Moravian Church, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and Unitarian Universalists.

Throughout the century and up until this current moment in time, texts continued to pay respect to the canon of sacred literature taken from the Psalms of the He-

Table 1.

Lutheran (Missouri Synod)	Lutheran Worship	1982
Brethren in Christ	Hymns for Praise and Worship	1984
Episcopal	The Hymnal 1982	1985
Reformed Church in America	Rejoice in the Lord	1985
Seventh-day Adventist	Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal	1985
Roman Catholic	Worship III	1986
Christian Reformed	Psalter Hymnal	1987
Church of God	Worship the Lord	1989
United Methodist	The United Methodist Hymnal	1989
Presbyterian (U.S.A)	The Presbyterian Hymnal	1990
Presbyterian (P.C.A.)	Trinity Hymnal	1990
Nazarene	A Hymnal	1990
Baptist (Southern)	The Baptist Hymnal	1991
Non-denominational Hymnals		
The Hymnal	Word Music	1986
Worship His Majesty	Gaither Music	1987
Sing Joyfully	Tabernacle Publishing	1989
The Worshiping Church	Hope Publishing	1990
Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs	John Knox Press	1990
Hymnal for Colleges and Schools	Yale University Press	1990

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brew scriptures, historic liturgies, prose from Hebrew and Greek scriptures, and ancient through contemporary poetry inspired by these sources and captured in hymns.

In form, the American school of church music composition followed norms that had been solidly established since the polyphony of the Renaissance, the chorale of the Reformation, and the homophony of the high Baroque. While text, form, and timbre remained orthodox for the most part, it was elements of melody, rhythm, and harmony that appeared most susceptible to the vernacular, the popular, the experimental, and the ephemeral.

Growth in Gospel Music

Flowing into this new era of celebration and fusion with the vernacular was a steady growth in the area of gospel music popularity and publication. After World War II, following decades of steady growth, the gos-

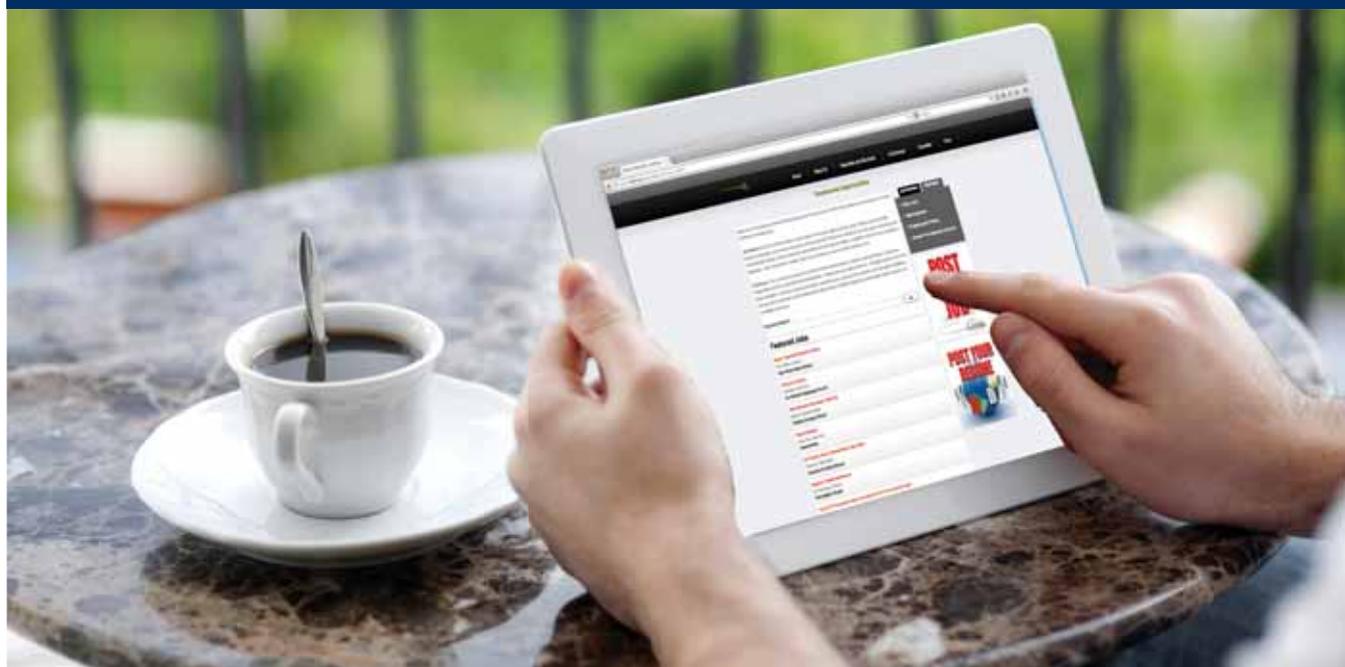
pel music network exploded in the United States. Five decades of blending old-time religion and technology produced a small army of highly skilled music business proprietors, educators, engravers, marketing specialists, entertainers, composers, arrangers, studio engineers, and publishers who were able to create music with sacred and secular appeal.¹⁷

At a moment when the vernacular was desirable in sacred music, an entire professional network and industry was developing to speak to this growing appetite. And to add to this expansion of interest, due to the advent of radio and television broadcasting, the time needed to disseminate new musical styles was greatly shortened. While proponents of musical change still had to contend with skeptical publishers or reactionary congregations, they established large followings and developed support through denominationally sanctioned radio and concert tours that provided exposure to marquis personalities and new choral models.

Denominational growth in the 1950s, the establish-

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ment of Bible colleges and para-church organizations, and the migration from rural to urban centers all affected the expansion of various popular and gospel music styles within church music. And although they were not aware of it, the Pentecostal church in the United States helped produce Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and “Little Richard” Penniman, which fueled a movement that would also change the nature of the music of the mainline church in years to come.¹⁸ Mass evangelistic campaigns with figures such as Billy Graham, the advent of radio, and the youth movement each contributed to the growth and influence of gospel and popular religious music. The explosion of interest in sacred music composition was fueled by a developing and prosperous music publishing and distribution commercial enterprise.

The market for a growing base of amateur church choral singers was served, resourced, and fueled by commercial publication and mass distribution. As market and capitalistic realities took hold, the commercialization of this industry increased in activity through denominational publishing houses, profit-based corporations, and private entrepreneurs. The church and its music was economically vibrant, leading to full-time professional positions for vocational church musicians, and a commercial market of resources to service the variety of expressions of musical taste represented by a divergent population of professionally trained leaders and engaged amateur participants.

As resource needs were met through publications, and as profits were realized, an explosion of creativity was enhanced by a complete industry that formalized every conceivable aspect of the musical creative process. In 1985, the prototype was launched that led to the founding in 1988 of Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI), a privately owned company that offered copyright licensing of hymns, anthems, songs, and other music resource materials for use in Christian worship.¹⁹ A commercial industry continued to develop devoted to capturing revenue for every aspect of intellectual property offered through the medium of poetry and music.

From the ephemeral to the next sacred music classic, the time between completing a composition to its performance in multiple locations throughout the world is limited now only by one’s access to the Internet and

the ability to sort through all the creative expressions available in sacred choral music composition. No longer is availability of sacred choral music limited by established publishing companies. For practical reasons, much of the best music of this style remains the intellectual property of established publishers, but by no means do they retain a monopoly in this area. This new reality of the twenty-first century has led to a renaissance of creativity, accompanied by a new burst of entrepreneurialism. At this moment, any attempt to list the sacred music composers who are actively creating the excellent, the good, and the ephemeral in sacred choral music would result in a grossly incomplete list and would be out of date the moment it was printed.

Conclusion

Sacred music compositions of the second half of the twentieth century are still widely performed in churches that value and support a trained choir, in the historic and traditional sense of choral performance. Sacred music settings where 1) the presentation of compositions and arrangements are conceived for a trained group of singers and 2) that use compositional elements idiomatic to the choral ensemble, still draw upon this vast body of sacred music repertoire. However, the decline of choirs in churches, the rise of pop music idioms replacing choirs in some churches, and the decline in church attendance in the last twenty years have all contributed to a decline in the programming of this body of repertoire and classical repertoire in general. Nevertheless, much of this body of music remains relevant.

The one thing that does not change for church, synagogue, and cathedral music is the fact that there are still fifty-two Sundays in the church year, complete with multiple festivals of celebration spread throughout the seasons and inserted into the worship ordo. And with that certainty comes an equal certainty that sacred choral music in some form will freight the texts of prayer, praise, theological understanding, and celebration, through a harmonizing community of faith singing “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”²⁰ 

SACRED MUSIC PUBLICATION IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

NOTES

- ¹ Donald P. Hustad, *Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal* (Carol Stream: Hope Publishing Company, 1989): 537-8.
- ² http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm
- ³ Robert Webber, *Signs of Wonder: The Phenomenon of Convergence in Modern Liturgical and Charismatic Churches* (Nashville: Abbott Martyn, 1992): 80-87.
- ⁴ Erik Routley, *A Short History of English Church Music* (Carol Stream: Hope Publishing Company, 1997): 104-5.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.
- ⁶ Christina Prucha, *American Choral Directors Association* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009): 2009, 20-26.
- ⁷ Kenneth W. Hart, *A Day for Dancing! The Life and Music of Lloyd Pfautsch* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2014): 20-54.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.
- ⁹ Ralph Carmichael and Kurt Kaiser, *Tell It Like It Is: A Folk Musical about God* (Waco: Lexicon Music, 1969).
- ¹⁰ Buryl Red and Ragan Courtney, *Celebrate Life! A Pulpit Musical Drama* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1972).
- ¹¹ John Rutter, *Gloria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).
- ¹² Eric Sharpe, "Development in English Hymnody in the Eighties," *The Hymn* 42, April 1991: 7-11.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 7-11.
- ¹⁴ Gary S. Eslinger and Mark F. Daugherty, *Sacred Choral Music in Print, Second Edition* (Philadelphia: Musicdata, Inc., 1985).
- ¹⁵ Austin Cole Lovelace, *The Anatomy of Hymnody* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1965): 5.
- ¹⁶ James White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1989): 21.
- ¹⁷ Vernon M. Whaley, *Trends in Gospel Music Publishing 1940-1960* (Norman, OK: Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, 1992): 62-76.
- ¹⁸ Martha Bayles, *Hole in Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty and Meaning in American Popular Music* (New York: The Free Press, 1994): 127-134.
- ¹⁹ <https://us.ccli.com>
- ²⁰ *The Holy Bible*, Colossians 3:16 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).



WSCM2020 in New Zealand – the choral experience of a lifetime!

Planning continues in earnest for the 12th World Symposium on Choral Music, to be held in Auckland, New Zealand, July 11-18, 2020.

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www.wscm2020.com

Sacred Music Choral Reviews

The Final Harvest

Music: ST. GEORGE'S, WINDSOR

George J. Elvey (1816-1893)

Arr. Jonathan Stommen Campbell

Text: Henry Alford (1810-1871), alt

SATB, piano with 2 violins

Augsburg Fortress

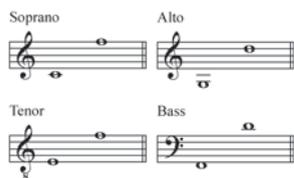
978-1-5064-1397-6

Free violin parts available for download from the publisher

www.augsburgfortress.org

Performance demonstration:

<https://soundcloud.com/jon-campbell-589736139/9781506413976-the-final-harvest>



Johnathan Strommen Campbell's setting of the hymn "Come, Ye Thankful People Come," aptly named *The Final Harvest*, begins with a poignant violin duet beautifully descending in sequence to usher in the opening bars of the hymn. The violins continue in counterpoint to Campbell's warm, comforting choral writing. The choir remains *molto sostenuto* throughout in a slow simple quadruple meter against a flowing piano accompaniment and more

florid violins. The second verse is set with octave patterns in the piano which sparkle underneath an echoing choral texture. The violins double the voices, providing an almost orchestral timbre to the ensemble, which leads to a subtle *crescendo* and interior climax. The third verse features the sopranos and altos in a chant-like texture, lightly accompanied by the violins. The entrance of the tenors and basses concludes the verse unaccompanied. Finally, Campbell effectively concludes the piece with a satisfying canonical *alleluia*. The violins soar above the choir on the hymn melody while the piano provides forward momentum through pedaled arpeggios.

Fix Me, Jesus

Music and Text: Traditional African American Spiritual

Arr. Brandon Waddles

SATB, *divisi*, unaccompanied

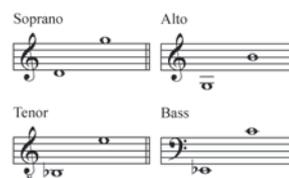
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Performance demonstration:

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Brandon Waddles opens his moving arrangement of *Fix Me, Jesus* with

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Sacred Music Choral Reviews

an extended, eight-part chromatic choral tapestry, weaving voices together into what he instructs should be a warm, seamless whole. The introduction gives way to the chorus of the piece, first introduced by a simple soprano solo that floats over the vocal “oohs” like prayer. The choir repeats the soprano solo material in a hymn-like four part texture that nevertheless remains chromatic.

The music features a call-and-response structure, though the slow tempo obscures this. The chromatic material and significant *divisi* call for an accomplished sacred ensemble and enough singers to adequately sustain the phrases through stagger breathing. The middle section of the piece features the first two verses of the spiritual. The choir continues the chorus material, however, while the soloist juxtaposes the verses so that the text “fix me, Jesus, fix me” functions as a choral refrain.

Waddles gives the third verse to both the choir and the solo, though now the soprano functions as a soaring descant, reaching a beautiful climax at the words “starry crown.” The fermata gives way to a short bridge, wherein the soprano soloist echoes the choir three times, building even more musical tension. The final return of the chorus is peaceful, cathartic, and profound.

Midwinter Song

Music: Susan Labarr

Text: Daniel Elder

SATB, piano

Walton Music, Andrew Crane

Choral Series

WW1723

www.giamusic.com

Performance demonstration:

www.giamusic.com/store/resource/midwinter-song-pdf-dww1723

Musical notation for the first few notes of 'Midwinter Song'. It shows four staves: Soprano (treble clef), Alto (treble clef), Tenor (treble clef), and Bass (bass clef). The notes are chromatic and spread across the staves, illustrating the 'divisi' texture mentioned in the text.

Susan Labarr’s *Midwinter Song* is a new work for Advent or Christmas featuring a unique collaboration with composer Daniel Elder, who penned the text. Labarr opens the piece with a gentle piano solo that perfectly captures the mystery of Elder’s poetry—the words seem to travel out of a time in the deep past and give homage to the neglected art of both rhythm and rhyme. In particular, the description of the world gathering in “amber halls” in the first verse wonderfully conjures images of medieval castles or mead halls lit only with firelight and candles, full with the sound of carols.

The sopranos and altos begin the first verse with a haunting d minor melody, lightly punctuated by syn-copation. The tenors and basses introduce the consequent melodic line before being joined by the upper voices for the concluding phrase. Labarr’s accompaniment never intrudes on the poignant tune, which immediately penetrates the ear as

any finely crafted melody must.

The second verse is highlighted by a counter melody in the tenor and bass under the unison sopranos and altos. The full choir enters for the first time on the consequent phrase accompanied by a busier and fuller piano, before soaring into a gorgeous melodic bridge that is Labarr’s most compelling moment. The gentle return of the melody on the third verse is made even more touching by the warm choral harmony, light soprano descant, and final tenderhearted piano gestures.

Adoravit

Music: Michael Bussewitz-Quarm

Text: Traditional Latin

SATB, double chorus, *divisi*,

unaccompanied

MB Arts

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<https://mbqstudio.com/>

Performance Demonstration:

<https://soundcloud.com/michael-bussewitz-quarm/adoravit-bussewitz-quarm>

Musical notation for the first few notes of 'Adoravit'. It shows four staves: Soprano (treble clef), Alto (treble clef), Tenor (treble clef), and Bass (bass clef). The notes are chromatic and spread across the staves, illustrating the 'divisi' texture mentioned in the text.

Michael Bussewitz-Quarm’s setting of the charming Latin text *Senex puerum portabat* explores mysterious paradox in the context of the Incarnation. The music successfully straddles the demarcation point between ancient and modern. Set for double SATB choir with *divisi*, the piece alludes to a late-Renaissance

homophonic ethos, particularly in the antiphonal passages, which would delight the ear in a venue like the famous St. Mark's Basilica. The music's use of a half-note pulse even seems to mimic the look of a Venetian motet. Harmonically, however, the piece flutters with very modern dissonance, opening with a full declamatory announcement in *f* minor, highlighting the text's wordplay "an ancient held up an Infant, but the Infant upheld the ancient."

Bussewitz-Quarm begins the B section of the piece in a lilting five pattern—a modern plainchant—building tension through increasingly complex *divisi* and subtle chromaticism. The return of a declamatory homophonic passage at *fortissimo* completes the B section. The antiphonal final passage introduces the double choir. The upper choir sings "adoravit," or "she adored," in half-notes, echoed each time by the lower choir in quarters on the Latin text "ipsum quem genuit," or "the one she brought forth." Bussewitz-Quarm begins in the subdominant, increasing the dynamic at each repetition, mirrored by an ever-extended range in the upper choir. The climax of the piece is highlighted by a particularly high-tessitura tenor and alto, which ushers in a final homophonic statement of "adoravit" in both choirs at *fortissimo*. The choir finishes the piece with two more solemn repetitions of "adoravit"—the first an unresolved dissonance, and the second a Picardy resolution at the dominant.

Bound for the Promised Land

Music: Matilda T. Durham
(1815-1901)

Arr. John Leavitt

Text: Samuel Stennett (1727-1795)

SATB, *divisi*, piano, optional orchestration

Hal Leonard

HL00248982

www.halleonard.com

Performance demonstration:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-xuXWo0Nfc>

The image shows four staves of musical notation for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. Each staff contains a single half-note on a G line (G4 for Soprano, G3 for Alto, G3 for Tenor, and G2 for Bass). The Soprano and Alto parts are on treble clefs, while the Tenor and Bass parts are on a tenor clef and a bass clef respectively. The notes are placed on the G line of each staff.

John Leavitt's *Bound for the Promised Land* is a new setting of the beloved hymn "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand." This hearty, rustic approach to the tune and text perfectly aligns with its colonial American roots, utilizing a minor variant of the tune.

Throughout the setting, the voices act in concert with the orchestral accompaniment to provide rhythmic punctuation and percussive energy. In the SATB setting, the opening stanzas are set in sectional unison, but later verses employ exciting three-part *divisi* in both upper and lower voices, requiring an ensemble with sufficient numbers and experience to pull it off. There are also alternative SSA and SAB versions available that provide attractive options for smaller choirs. Leavitt's string quintet and percussion parts are available from the publisher, breathing further energy and life into the piece with only minimal investment. It is an exciting edition to the piece, providing an attractive timbre to an already well-written setting.

Timothy Michael Powell
Atlanta, GA

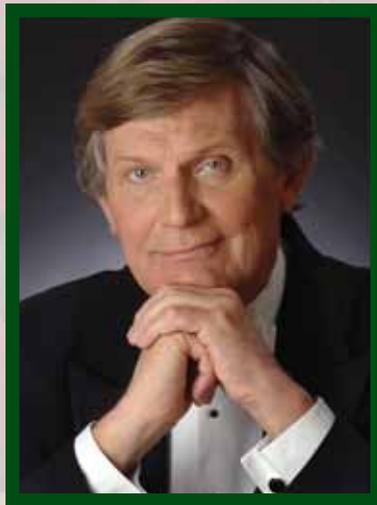
Attention: Student Chapter Presidents

Every year ACDA Student Chapters are required to submit an annual report by May to reactivate their chapter for the next school year. These reports give us vital feedback about the growth and activities of choral students across the nation. This year the report can be filled out online at <http://bit.ly/2H11XFg> See also: https://acda.org/ACDA/Repertoire_and_Resources/Collegiate/Student_Chapters.aspx

Throughout the year we will share some of the summaries of activities of various chapters, so be sure to include those activities that really make your chapter stand out.

In Memoriam

Joseph Flummerfelt 1937–2019



Joseph Flummerfelt passed away on March 1, 2019, at the age of eighty-two. He studied organ and church music at DePauw University, and choral conducting at the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music and University of Illinois. Early in his career, he taught at the University of Illinois, DePauw University, and Florida State University. He was named Musical America's Conductor of the Year in 2014 and was founder and musical director of the New York Choral Artists. For thirty-three years he conducted the Westminster Choir before retiring in 2004. He was an artistic director of the Spoleto Festival USA for thirty-seven years, holding the post since the birth of the festival in 1977 until his retirement in 2013. He was awarded a Grammy for the New York

Choral Artists recording of John Adams's *On the Transmigration of Souls* and also received two Grammy Award nominations and five honorary doctoral degrees.

Flummerfelt collaborated on hundreds of choral/orchestral performances and recordings throughout his career; he worked with noted conductors and numerous American and international choral ensembles and orchestras. He was highly sought after for conducting and teaching engagements, and a number of his former students hold major choral positions throughout the United States. Conducting engagements have taken him to the world's most prestigious concert halls.



ON THE VOICE

Duane Cottrell, editor

“Put Me in, Coach!”

Rethinking the Needs of the Vocal Athletes on Your Team

by Noël Archambeault and Blake Smith

The concept of the *vocal athlete* has been surfacing frequently throughout voice pedagogy literature for the last decade. This relatively new concept was developed in an effort to reorient singers' perspectives regarding the training and maintenance of their instruments. Thinking of oneself as a *vocal athlete* recognizes that singers command an uncommonly refined skill that requires a unique combination of talent, training, and, ultimately, deliberate care with which most non-singing voice users are rarely concerned. Adapting this emergent idea into the choral classroom provides an exciting new way to inspire student participation in singing and can empower the choral director to better serve both the needs of their ensemble and the individual needs of their singers. This article will briefly investigate the concept and usage of the term vocal athlete and discuss how the choir director might act as an effective coach to guide the vocal development of the ensemble and the individual.

So, what is a *vocal athlete*? The vocal component is obvious, but the usage of the term “athlete,” which has so many obvious popular associations, is worth investigating. Sarah Elizabeth Richards, from the *Daily Burn*, an online fitness site, states the following:

The term “athlete” is both confusing and loaded with stereotypes. Merriam-Webster defines it as “a person who is trained or skilled in exercises, sports, or games requiring physical strength, agility, or stamina.” Meanwhile, the top entry on Urban Dictionary is more inclusive and democratic: “An individual who participates in sports. Characterized by dedication, focus, intelligence and work ethic.”¹

Parallels to physical singing skills are immediately apparent with the mere adjustment of a few minor words in the above definitions; perhaps the addition of a word like *coordination*, which is so critical in singing, and also highly valued in many sports, would draw an even closer parallel to singing if included in our definition of an “athlete.” Moreover, who could argue with the

notion that organized singing activities, such as choir, do not require “dedication, focus, intelligence, and work ethic?” In short, treating the voice like a high-performance machine and an ensemble as a highly integrated and efficient cooperative effort can assist young choral musicians in the care of their instruments and the care of their teammates.

The choral setting provides a uniquely keen microcosm of “team” mentality and its many challenges. A fundamental idea of team sports is that we prioritize team success over our own individual success, and the value of this metaphor to choral singing has both ideological and practical benefits. This mentality in a choral ensemble creates an environment where students support one another enthusiastically through individual challenges while encouraging growth and better decision making. The wisdom to decline an invitation to a noisy restaurant, not have that extra drink or late-night snack, or

consider an early bedtime before a big event may be impactful and practical considerations for those with athletic lifestyles.

The physical and ideological rationales for calling singers *vocal athletes* appear to be both prudent and empowering, so how does the choral director effectively “coach” all of the skills they want their students to develop? The good news is that much of that training is already happening, as many choral directors execute strategic “game plans” in daily rehearsals to help their singers achieve optimal performance. Physical stretches can help release tension and develop body awareness, strategically chosen ensemble warm-ups can be utilized to build strong vocal habits and address the unique needs of repertoire, music theory and sight-singing train the senses and mind, and, ultimately, thoughtfully programmed choral and solo repertoire can provide the practical, game-time challenges that increase the fitness levels and emotional fulfillment of the entire team!

Many of these great things are being done daily to encourage the vocal health and enjoyment of our choral singers, but additional parallels from the sports world can provide new and exciting strategies for coaching the development of your singer/athletes. Let us consider the health and performance of a singing athlete through the metrics we might use to investigate the performance of other athletes:

- training threshold
- rest

- physical fitness
- nutrition
- mental preparedness
- training pace (warm-up, cool down, and taper)
- cross-training
- feedback and analysis
- preventative care
- support team
- targeted training

We would like to bring a particularly valuable resource to your attention before beginning an in-depth discussion of these elements. The National Center for Voice and Speech is an interdisciplinary organization with many resources for all professional and amateur voice users. Their website includes one particularly valuable document called “Tips to Keep You Talking,”² which we would highly advise posting in your classroom and, perhaps, providing a copy in your students’ choir folders on the first day of rehearsal.

Training Threshold

The voice, as an instrument, has a daily usage threshold that is different for everyone and highly dependent upon genetics, age, conditioning, and, sometimes, natural ability. Many vocal athletes may experience vocal fatigue on occasion and, hopefully, learn to monitor their behavior to prevent it from interrupting their lifestyle or work. Perceptive vocal athletes can become extremely sensitive to minute changes in the flexibility, clarity, and power of the voice, which might go unnoticed to the untrained ear.

However, even the most skilled, unamplified professional solo singers try to avoid high-impact singing days in close succession, as such intense usage requires recovery, like a starting pitcher in baseball may require several days of rest between starts.

It is critical that choral directors establish an honest dialogue and rapport with the vocal athletes on their team. Young voices are typically resilient, but taking the time to discuss changes that a singer may perceive in their voice, addressing healthy voice habits with the ensemble, and building strong vocal fundamentals is the cornerstone of a positive relationship with your team.

Game Plan: Most choral rehearsals that happen during the day are not especially long, but extended rehearsals before concerts and community organizations that may have only a single, longer rehearsal each week should be planned carefully and executed deliberately. Teach your ensembles to displace octaves (this includes higher voices taking notes down an octave AND allowing lower voices to sing notes up an octave) and encourage them to do so frequently when repeating challenging passages. Finally—and the authors understand this is a highly nuanced issue—be mindful of extensive pre-concert rehearsals and the impact they may have on younger singers.

Rest

All physical exercise requires

recovery of some sort to maintain physical equilibrium. Furthermore, most of our young vocal athletes will spend more time each day using their voices *outside* of the rehearsal hall or studio. It is quite important that all voice professionals clearly communicate with young singers regarding the need to treat the voice well when not using it for singing. Practicing good vocal hygiene, maintaining adequate hydration, getting enough sleep, and deliberately monitoring healthy speech habits are valuable physical skills for both general and vocal fitness, and choral directors are often the first point of intervention for young singers. Students who care about singing will need to prioritize rest as much as they prioritize practice.

In addition, it is useful to address vocal rest as a therapeutic tool. Effective use of rehearsal time is often of paramount importance to choral directors, and it can be an enormous source of frustration if critical individuals or large groups of singers are not able to participate in a rehearsal. However, the importance of rest simply cannot be overstated in regard to high-impact athletes, particularly in cases of illness or injury. Encouraging your athletes to be students of their own instruments and communicating clearly with their coach and support team is invaluable for a lifetime of healthy singing.

Game Plan: Communicate with your students about the need to rest their voices during the day, and create time in intense rehearsals for

your singers to rest. One fun way to do this is to have a designated “Story Time” or some other fun or informative ritual to insert into the rehearsal that gets your ensemble off of their feet and quiet while still maintaining their attention. Some strategic three- to five-minute breaks in a particularly intense rehearsal can easily become some of the more valuable team-building opportunities for your ensembles.

Physical Fitness

There has been much recent research about the impact of physical

fitness on singing, and this area offers a rather literal view of singers as physical athletes. The positive impacts of functional fitness and cardiovascular, flexibility, and resistance training to overall wellness is exceedingly clear and strongly recommended by the American College of Sports Medicine.³ There is considerable extant research on pulmonary function in different types of training among professional athletes; this has inspired quite a bit of voice pedagogy scholarship, some of which suggests that aerobic training aids singers in the execution of vocal tasks and re-



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covery.⁴ One of the author's high school choral directors used to have students run laps around campus before every choir rehearsal and, while this was likely a little superfluous, their value of the relationship between physical activity and vocal health was quite clear!

Game Plan: The first and best thing we can do is to simply encourage our students to be physically active outside of school. Stretches at the beginning of rehearsal can be valuable, and some teachers may even be able to include some low-impact yoga, Tai chi, or other

movement activity in your rehearsals provided they are chosen strategically, respect personal space, and do not cause physical or emotional discomfort. One might even consider starting an ensemble club team if the school or institution has the existing infrastructure, or encouraging the students to informally participate in a running or walking group.

Nutrition

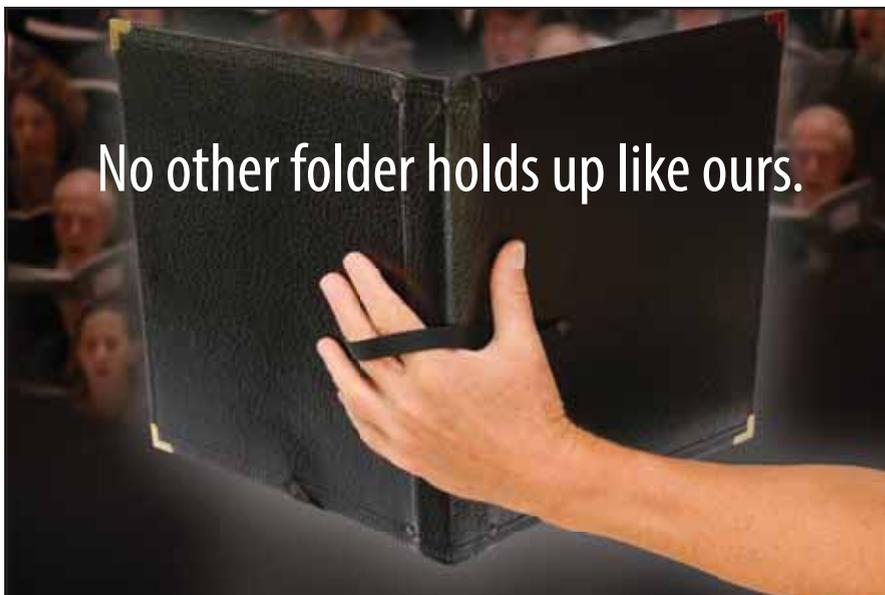
The impact of nutrition on singers, much like that of physical fitness, has only recently come into focus amongst voice researchers. The

importance of proper hydration has long been a cornerstone of vocal hygiene, and the effects of alcohol, dairy products, and certain foods have been frequent areas of both scholarly investigation and anecdotal observation. The common occurrence and treatment of acid reflux in the singing community in particular has become a rather prominent area of frequent concern and study for laryngologists and other voice researchers. Current advancements in medical science and voice research are allowing for more objective investigation of the impact of diet on the voice. It is highly recommended that choral directors make every attempt possible to stay abreast of this evolving field of research in order to make informed voice-related recommendations regarding nutrition and to identify signs that may indicate the need for a student to seek additional care.⁵

Game Plan: Nutrition is a highly individual issue and sometimes deeply personal. There are, however, some basic tenets of voice-related nutrition that are quite innocent and universal. The single most important is to simply stay hydrated; drink lots of water, particularly if you drink caffeine or alcohol, which can dehydrate the vocal folds. Large meals, spicy foods, and eating late may lead to acid reflux, so try to plan accordingly when preparing for a concert or important voice-related event.

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is an oft overlooked area of singing that has, in the last decade become an area of considerable research and scholarship. The mere notion of mental preparation in singing is a potentially vast area of inquiry and could include topics as diverse as performance anxiety, memorization skills, and musical perception. Many celebrated athletes have spoken or written about the mental part of competition, and considerable information and coaching is available regarding game/race day performance. Naturally, vocal athletes could benefit from similar mindfulness and routines, particularly in relation to competitions or auditions. There is an abundance of resources available to singers looking to improve their mental preparation, from books on musical perception and aesthetics, articles on memorization techniques and practice strategies, apps for mindfulness and meditation, and the engagement of a trusted mentor.

The following books represent some insightful examples that could be of particular use when working with student singers:

- *Power Performance for Singers: Transcending the Barriers* by Shirlee Emmons and Alma Thomas
- *The Singer's Ego: Finding Balance Between Music and Life, a Guide for Singers and Those who Teach and Work with Singers* by Lynn Eustis
- *Mind-Body Awareness: Unleashing Optimal Performance* by Karen Leigh-Post

- *The Perfect Wrong Note: Learning to Trust Your Musical Self* by William Westney

Going through some of the techniques listed in these resources during the choral rehearsal might highlight and better prepare your singers for the next concert or extended rehearsal. Every sound we make begins in the brain, and training the brain for success is almost certainly worth some time in each rehearsal.

Game Plan: Expose your students to the practice of mindfulness and visualization during the rehearsal process. There are numerous guided meditation apps (*Headspace* is a particular favorite of one of the authors) available for smartphones and tablets, some of which offer short sessions that could be utilized in a rehearsal and all of which provide some very basic guidance in how to quiet the senses and encourage focus and mental presence. Mindfulness and quiet can be a difficult sell to younger ensembles, but small bits infused into a rehearsal or pre-performance ritual can be as valuable to the teacher as they are to the student.

Training Pace (Warm-Up, Cooldown, and Taper)

Warming up, cooling down, and tapering are concepts no longer exclusive to professional athletes. Most choral rehearsals include warm-ups, most of which are, hopefully, deliberately chosen for their voice-building or repertoire-specific value.

However, how often have you made time for a cooldown? Cooling the voice down has many benefits and should be included as often as possible, particularly at the end of long or late rehearsals.⁶ Young vocal athletes may be trained in techniques to cool down independently after a rehearsal, but the value and execution of the exercise must be clearly demonstrated by their “coach.”

Another recent introduction to the vocal athlete regimen is the idea of tapering, or decreasing activity immediately before a demanding contest.⁷ Professional athletes frequently do this before big events; for example, many football teams don't even practice in full pads the day before a game. How much better would your choir sound if they were vocally “fresh” for that competition or concert?

Unfortunately, the rehearsal paradigm is often the exact opposite, as concerts are typically preceded by several days of intense rehearsals and early rehearsal calls on the evening of the performance. What if much of the “heavy lifting” was done far in advance of a big event? Perhaps re-thinking the pacing of our rehearsal processes could encourage better practice habits and vocal health in our singers.

Game Plan: Re-visit your warm-ups and their pedagogical rationales to ensure they are building the voices and skills you seek and, if you are not already, build a short cooldown into your rehearsal schedule. Another popular pacing tactic is to prepare your most vocally taxing and challenging repertoire in small

sections and piece it together progressively to build stamina. Moreover, consider scheduling longer rehearsals, perhaps a retreat, early in the preparation process rather than later.

Cross-Training

Cross-training, or incorporating exercises from other sports for optimal fitness, has long been a part of traditional training plans for the professional athlete. The conceptual benefit of cross-training is to disrupt familiar muscle function patterns with less common actions in order to stimulate growth and foster more refined coordination. There is considerable interest in the voice pedagogy world in the value of vocal cross-training for this very reason, particularly between traditional “classical” vocal techniques and contemporary commercial music (CCM) forms. Previous chasms between traditional and CCM pedagogical methods are quickly narrowing, and voice research has consistently demonstrated that proper techniques exist to safely execute virtually all vocal styles. Investigating efficient and healthy ways to execute different styles can be both vocally and holistically valuable to your young vocal athletes. There is no need to choose exclusively between choral and solo singing, classical and CCM singing, or something as simple as straight tone and vibrato. They all have a place and can help your vocal athlete achieve total fitness!⁸

Game Plan: Every teacher brings

unique competencies and experiences to their ensembles, and a wealth of educational resources exist to expand those skill sets. Spend time training your own ears and the ears of your ensemble to stylistic and aesthetic details of less familiar genres. Investigate workshops and summer training programs in CCM or a cappella styles, if your background is mostly classical, and decode these popular, and potentially rewarding, musical worlds.

Feedback and Analysis

The value of feedback seems quite obvious and is an aspect of professional training in virtually all sports, but how often do we employ it with our singers and ensembles? Many classic sports movies have those obligatory moments where the team is reviewing game film or scouting an upcoming opponent, and the value of this process can be immense when guided by a thoughtful coach/teacher. Recordings are uniquely unbiased, and a deliberate and constructive approach to the analysis of audio and video footage can be truly formative to a choir or a solo singer. It can be a difficult process, particularly for young solo singers, but we should seek to develop critical and *constructive* listening skills in our students.

Game Plan: Utilize any and all technology you can to support your instructional goals. Make audio and video recordings of strategic rehearsals. Encourage the students to listen once with music and once without, and then have them iden-

tify and consider both positive and constructively critical elements of the performance. Consider using online learning communities provided by your institution (Blackboard or Canvas, for example) or closed social media groups to post content and request responses if rehearsal time is limited.

Preventative Care

Every athlete deals with injury, and it is actually quite normal for those who frequently engage in high-impact activities with their bodies. However, modern medical care is designed around the notion of *preventative care* and *early intervention*, and one should certainly seek a similar paradigm with their vocal health. The evidence-based voice pedagogy community advocates the assembly of a voice care “team” for those experiencing some sort of vocal difficulty, and, very often, the choral director is a de facto member of this voice care team. Most avocational singers will never develop a vocal injury, but it is critical that the choral directors have a network of qualified vocal professionals in their area for when the care of such a team is necessary.

The first component one should seek is a *laryngologist*, not merely an otolaryngologist (typically referred to as an ENT). A laryngologist is a specific type of otolaryngologist with a specialization in pathologies of the entire vocal mechanism, and they typically have specialized training in dealing with injuries of the voice. In addition, one should seek out a speech pathologist and

a singing health specialist or vocalist.⁹ These professionals would make an excellent team should care be necessary, but it is never a bad idea to encourage your more serious singers to seek out a “baseline” laryngoscopic exam, taken when in good health for future comparison. Singing is a deeply personal process and there are still many stigmas surrounding vocal health; choral directors have the ability to largely demystify the potentially frightening prospect of a medical evaluation, and having a relationship with that voice care team will be a source of comfort for everyone involved.

Game Plan: Identify key members of your preventative care team and invite them to interact with your ensemble. Even a recorded video message specifically for your group from a local laryngologist, speech pathologist, or singing health specialist can significantly decrease anxiety and hesitation related to seeking care. Finally, always encourage your students to err on the side of caution when experiencing sudden vocal changes and seek care as soon as possible.

Support Team

Support staff for sports organizations could include anyone from an athletic trainer to a strength and conditioning coach, and many similar support networks exist in the voice world. A support team for vocal athletes could be voice teachers, choral directors, other music teachers, diction coaches, stage directors, choreographers, collabora-

tive pianists, vocal coaches (who are quite different than voice teachers), and any other person whose work informs or impacts their singing. It is rarely necessary for a young vocal athlete to need such an expansive

support staff, but there will be times in their musical life when there are many other sources of input or instruction, particularly if they are involved in a school musical or other extracurricular musical activities.



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Communicate with your students regarding their vocal commitments outside of your ensemble. Some of these activities, such as applied voice lessons, could and should be extremely positive for their development and, ultimately, impactful to the ensemble, but respecting boundaries, demonstrating professional courtesy, and communicating with those other parties when appropriate will allow you to be the best mentor possible to your young vocal athletes.

Game Plan: Collect contact information for other professionals with whom your students musically collaborate. A simple note card file or

computer spreadsheet with email and phone numbers for a student's voice teacher, accompanist, theater teacher, etc., can facilitate efficient communication regarding a student's vocal health. It is very likely that you will never need to contact any of these individuals, but quick access to them can prove invaluable.

Targeted Training

Finally, there are many factors that impact what type of role a particular player fulfills on a team or the specific sport to which an individual is drawn. A recent conversation on this very topic with celebrated author

and former NATS president, Dr. Scott McCoy, yielded a particularly profound observation regarding the incredible breadth of skills and tendencies that may be represented in a room full of young vocal athletes: do you have a room full of power lifters, marathon runners, sprinters, or a very diverse set of players? There are certain musical and vocal competencies we can expect all functional singers to demonstrate, but how often do we observe the individuals in our ensembles closely enough to understand their unique strengths and weaknesses? Any healthy team will require a variety of "skill players," and the greatest contribution a

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choral director can make to the *vocal* health of their team is understanding these critical components and planning accordingly, particularly with regard to vocalization exercises, repertoire, and rehearsal pacing.

Game Plan: Develop a set of brief diagnostic exercises, including tests of agility, sustain, pitch retention, and interval recognition, and take the time to evaluate each student individually a few times throughout the year. Plan and/or create vocal exercises that develop specific skills and find strategic segments of repertoire to apply these skills. We understand this requires a substantial investment of time, but the familiarity it will provide with the voices of your ensemble and the ability to monitor their progress and development can be truly transformative to the success of the individual and the “team.”

Conclusion

Most reasonably healthy people would be able to run for forty yards, but few people could cover that distance in 4.2 seconds. Most people could throw a baseball sixty-and-a-half feet, but very few can throw it at a speed of 104 miles per hour. Virtually everyone sings, but relatively few have the opportunity or ability to use their voices in the way that even the most modest amateur would in a Palestrina motet or a Brahms waltz. Singers train in order to accomplish elite tasks with their bodies, much like the runner and pitcher in the above examples. Treating these vocal demands like the high-perfor-

mance skills that they are creates a template for thoughtful care and individual growth while supporting the strength and success of the ensemble. The choral director is typically the first, and often the only, “coach” a singer may have, and it is worth the extra time and effort to put together the most deliberate and comprehensive game plan possible for the success of your team and your players. ■

NOTES

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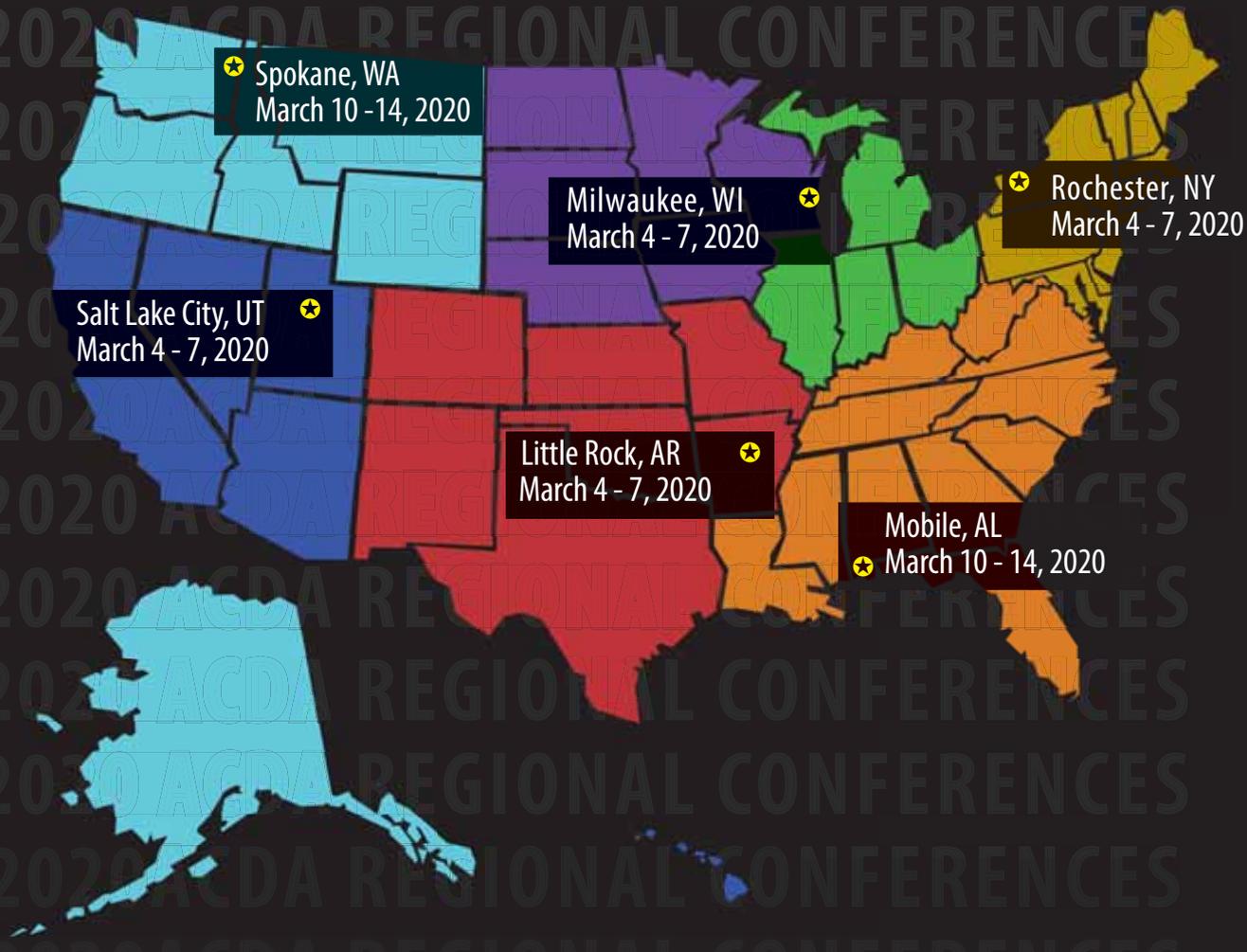
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Rehearsal Break

Inspiring a Growth Mind-Set in the Choral Classroom

by Matthew Potterton

Mind-Set Philosophy

Last year I read a book that completely changed my thinking about my students, my program, and even my personal life. As I was preparing for the upcoming year and reflecting on the previous one, I realized how much I had been influenced by the ground-breaking research in the book *Mindset: A New Psychology of Success* by Carol S. Dweck.¹ I became convinced that her thought-provoking discoveries had great relevance to our music programs and could both strengthen our teaching and enhance our relationships with students.

In her book, as well as in her TED Talk presentation,² Dweck discusses two ways people approach learning. She labels these two attitudes *fixed* mind-set and *growth* mind-set. She describes students with a fixed mind-set as those who believe that talent and intelligence are inherent and that hard work or effort have little impact on success. Fixed mind-set individuals are prone to believing they were born a cut above the rest,

or, conversely, that they have no talent and nothing will fix that fact.

Students with a growth mind-set, however, believe that their own effort will influence their achievement. Regardless of their inherent skills or talent, they believe that they can influence outcomes through practice and hard work.

I recently had a student (whom we'll call John) who came to our university with a great deal of natural talent. In fact, we gave him a large scholarship and accepted him as a music major. John came from a rural school where he often got the solo and his teachers and parents enjoyed telling others how talented he was.

I felt fortunate to have him as my voice student as he was the best tenor I had heard in some time. However, it quickly became clear that he was not progressing. He came into each lesson sounding about the same as at the previous one. As I gave him more challenging literature, he had excuse after excuse as to why he couldn't do it. Rarely did he admit that he just didn't work at it. The excuse was

usually that someone or something else had caused his lack of progress.

John had gotten through high school because of his innate capabilities, but when he got to college and was challenged, he froze. He didn't know what to do. Teachers were upset with his work ethic and wrote him off as a failure. He knew he was talented but he was failing school and was afraid to work to try to fix the issue. Instead, he decided that music just wasn't for him and he ended up dropping out of school all together.

I had another student whom I will call Anna. Anna was moderately talented. We gave her a scholarship but not as much as John's. Anna came from a strong music program and she had to work very hard to learn her music. If she didn't get the solo that she auditioned for, she worked hard the next time with the goal of earning that honor.

Anna was also one of my voice students. She came in every week with her assignment learned and I could hear some growth in her technique. While not as naturally gifted



better because they know that hard work is what it takes to master something. They take failure as a learning experience and they will attempt to do better the next time.

Working with a Fixed Mind-Set Student

So, what do we do as teachers? I have taught students with a fixed mind-set many times throughout my high school and college teaching career. They sometimes present as students with poor attitudes or large egos and may exhibit a sense of entitlement. Sadly, as educators, our first reaction may be to write these students off—declare them lazy and unteachable and perhaps determine prematurely that they will fail.

The key, as Dweck explains, is first to understand their mind-set. If we realize that we are faced with a fixed mind-set individual, we can guide them to more productive ways of thinking. She continues to explain that we are changing the student's brain. Our brains are quite capable of change and even though our students' ways of thinking and coping have been engrained from childhood, they can change. The first step may be to explain mind-set theory and how it effects their approach to life and their music. This knowledge can start them thinking and reacting in new ways.³

I have started to explain mind-set theory to my students. This helps open the conversation for struggling fixed mind-set students. I will point out behaviors that fall into the fixed mind-set category. Sometimes, it even allows the student and me

to laugh about a certain response. Once the wall begins to come down, I provide small steps to success and I praise the process and effort that the student is going through rather than the final outcome. Dweck describes in her TED Talk a college class that gives the grade “yet” and “not yet.” Learning is a process and getting an answer wrong is not a failure—it’s a “not yet.” Focusing on helping the student understand his or her own mind-set and then giving them small action plans and praising their work effort and improvement has made a tremendous difference in my teaching. I have seen the negative mind-set reactions slowly shift to, “I can do this!”

Teachers should praise students for their effort, not their innate talent. Instead of saying, “You are really great at that,” try, “You have really worked hard to achieve this.” Also, be sure that students who receive poor grades are not treated as failures. Yes, they did poorly, but discuss what they can learn from this. Remember, the fixed mind-set person will push back and their first impulse may be just to give up. They are not used to failure, especially if they have been a high achiever throughout high school. For new college students, the shock of becoming a small fish in a large sea can be devastating.

Had I been aware of Dweck's theory, I might have been able to inspire John to succeed. He had an incredible voice and I'm still sad that he was not able to reach his full potential as a musician. Anna, however, is now in her second year of graduate school preparing to get her master's degree in vocal performance. Because of

her hard work, she surpassed more naturally talented students like John to achieve great musical success.

I have seen a turn around in my teaching since I embraced Dweck's mind-set theory. In the process, I've become more aware of my own mind-set. We all have a little fixed and a little growth mind-set within us. If we recognize our own mind-set and the mind-set of our students, we can become better educators and help more students succeed. With my own children, I have begun to acknowledge how their hard work has helped them achieve success as opposed to just complimenting their talents. I don't allow the word “can't” to be spoken in my studio. They are allowed to say “not yet.” ■

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NOTES

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CHORAL CONVERSATIONS



A Conversation with Emma Lou Diemer

by Amanda Bumgarner with Hilary Apfelstadt



Emma Lou Diemer is a composition graduate of Yale and Eastman (Ph.D.) and also studied composition at Tanglewood and in

Brussels on a Fulbright Scholarship. She was composer-in-residence in the Arlington, Virginia, schools under a Ford Foundation Young Composers Grant from 1959 to 1961 and professor of theory and composition at the University of Maryland before holding the same position at the University of California, where she was on the faculty from 1971 to 1991 and is now professor emeritus. Her compositions have been published since 1956 and include works for many mediums from orchestra and band to chamber, solo, and choral works.

Who were the major musical role models in your life and how did they influence you?

My earliest influences were family members—mother, father, grandmother, sister, twin brothers—who

played and sang. All of them played an instrument except my father, who was a busy school administrator. I can remember as a child sleeping through the annual performances at the college of *Messiah*, waking up when Handel arrived at “For unto us a child is born,” excited by the rhythm and vitality of that particular chorus. I sang second soprano in the girl’s glee club in high school in Warrensburg, Missouri, but I had become organist of my church at age thirteen, and being at the keyboard precluded singing in the church choir.

Of course, through accompanying my siblings and other singers and choirs then and for many years since, I became well-aware of vocal ranges and timbres and choral writing and its possibilities. As a composition and piano student at Yale, I wrote a few choral pieces and discovered an interest in poetic texts and their inspiration for musical settings. I’m a pianist, organist, and for the most part prefer choral music that includes instrumental color but also like a *cap-pella* sound that is nuanced and timbrally varied. I am influenced and admiring of composers who were/

are broad in their abilities to write instrumental and choral music at all levels. And most of all, I appreciate choral conductors who have an innate understanding of one’s music. One sometimes becomes a better composer of choral music by watching a talented conductor.

Tell us how your compositional style and approach developed over time.

Choral music didn’t interest me as much as instrumental music until I spent two years as composer-in-residence in the Arlington, Virginia, schools and wrote a great deal of choral music that was tailored somewhat to the spirit and abilities of young choral groups and their conductors. Out of that experience came the *Three Madrigals*, a work that has been in the repertoire since 1962, and some other published works that have braved the constant wave of new choral music and survived. The later writing of music for more mature voices in professional choruses and in church has produced many works of varying difficulty. My more adventur-

CHORAL CONVERSATIONS

ous musical styles have not been in choral music but rather in keyboard works and some orchestral/chamber compositions influenced by electronic music while on the faculty of the University of California, Santa Barbara. However, there have been excursions into more “avant garde” writing: breathing sounds in “Blow, blow, thy winter wind” and the use of clusters in “Sweet dreams form a shade” in *A Feast for Christmas* and the choral speaking in *Three Anniversary Choruses* and the buildup of tonal blocks in the recent “Ring out, wild

bells.” Those excursions always have a textural purpose rather than “effect for effect’s sake.” My favorite medium is chorus/orchestra. These are well covered in Jennifer Flory’s *A Conductor’s Guide to the Choral/Orchestral Works of Emma Lou Diemer*.

How do you select texts for your choral works?

I look for texts that are not wordy, not “preachy,” not burdened by overly weighty thoughts that do not need to be set to music. I like poems about nature, love, joy, praise, remembrance, sadness, texts that have rhythm, imagery, sometimes humor. Brevity is an asset because words/phrases can be repeated. (Some of us have written works using just the word “Hallelujah!”) Emily Dickinson is a favorite of composers perhaps because of her brevity and depth and quantity. The lightness and rhythm of Renaissance poets is enticing. When looking through sources I find that the first line is the most important, and that ensuing ideas/images need to be striking, moving. A text becomes more vivid and understandable as one sets it to music and finds inspiration in the sounds of certain words and their meaning. In a recent work written for the Huntsville (AL) Master Chorale, the poet at the time of the writing of the poem was ten years old, and she had won first place in a Young Writers contest. Her poem, “My Apple Orchard” has a flow that poems must have and an innovative use of punctuation: “Inside my orchard, summer green. Quiet. Gentle. Still. Serene...Lush grass shadowed by

bushes...” I found the word “shadowed” especially conducive to repetition and the pauses easy to set. Never feel that composers are so interested in the music they are writing that the words have no importance. It is the sound of words that encourage the music. Of course, the Bible has some of the most beautiful texts in existence. I have set almost all the psalms either vocally or chorally or for instruments.

Looking back at your career, what impact, if any, did your gender have on your development?

This is a huge aspect. Women composers can readily be accepted as the writer of piano pieces for children, songs (especially pop songs that are popular, whether it is known that a woman composed them or not), perhaps short organ compositions. But women have written masses, symphonies, concertos, much of it neglected or of short life. I’m sure there was (and still is) a great deal of impact especially regarding publication and performance. Female composers may tend to be looked upon with suspicion by publishers and performers unless there is a women’s festival or a conscious effort and need/obligation to include music by women. However, women composers of music for film have become prominent and outstanding. I would not like to be labeled a “choral composer” or “organ composer,” etc., any more than men have liked to have those labels when they have written music in many kinds of mediums. My main interest is to write

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music, and it has been a great joy to do so for most of my ninety-one years.

What advice would you give young composers as they embark on a career?

Be acquainted with and knowledgeable in all styles and periods and forms of music and proficient in one instrument at least and sensitive to vocal/choral sound and words. Be motivated and “set on fire” by music and the writing of it. Write music for your friends to play and sing. Say “yes” more often than “no” when asked to write a new composition. Try different styles, different

mediums, inspiring texts.

How does one capture, reconcile, and balance the conductor’s interpretation with the composer’s vision and intentions of a choral work? (This question was supplied by the previous column interviewee.)

The composer can only try in a sometimes imprecise use of notation to write down her musical intent. It is up to the conductor to study other works by the composer, consult with the composer if possible, and interpret the music in the most effective way. This varies greatly from conductor to conductor, of course.

Sometimes (or always) a sensitive and skilled conductor will bring more life and beauty to a piece than the composer imagined was there. That has happened to me more than once.

What else would you like our readers to know about you from this article?

I feel that choral music is the most intimate musical communication.

Please provide a question for the next interviewee to answer.

Which is more important to you: the text or the music?



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Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson: Jazz-Influenced Choral Music

by Sarin Williams

Composer and percussionist Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson (1933-2008) has the distinction of being the first, and still primary, Icelandic composer of jazz. His first influence with the genre was during the American occupation of his homeland during World War II, where he received “two yards of jazz records from an American guitarist who had previously played with Benny Goodman’s orchestra and led the dance orchestra at the American soldiers’ most popular dance hall in Reykjavík.”¹ Perhaps because of this influence, Gunnar became a vibraphonist who began his career with the *KK Sextet* and played percussion for nine years in the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. His first formal musical education was at the Reykjavík College of Music.² Three years after his graduation

in 1961, he traveled to Amsterdam to continue his studies at the Conservatory until 1966 and then at the State University Institute of Sonology (1973-74).³ After returning to his native country, Gunnar worked as a jazz musician and composer in Reykjavík and as a teacher at the New School of Music.

Although jazz is relatively new to Iceland, the country’s vocal music is an old tradition that grew from the Viking recitation of folk poetry and eventually moved into the Christian church and sacred plainsong in the medieval era. Due to the country’s geographical isolation, it was not until the late nineteenth century that musical activities blossomed in Iceland and choral singing became a favorite pastime. The *Pólyfónkór* [The Polyphonic Choir] was founded by Ingólfur Guðbrandsson (1923–2009) in 1960 and established new standards for the a cappella choral art, affecting the many church, school, youth, and children’s choirs in the country. By 1990 there were over 4,000 members in the *Landsamband blandaoðra kóra*⁴ [The Federation of Mixed Choirs, LBK, founded in 1938], with thirty-five member choirs still today.⁵

Preferring to write music for a

primarily functional purpose, Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson does not appear on the Icelandic popular music scene; instead, his compositions are foremost for amateur choirs, theater, church, and jazz clubs. Gunnar utilized his varied musical education in compositions that, while eclectic, show a marked jazz influence from his own performance history along with elements of his classical conservatory training. “He has composed many works in the Third Stream spirit [influenced primarily by Lennie Tristano and Lee Konitz], where he uses classical music and jazz as a starting point—not as opposites but as matching genres.”⁶ Beyond these influences, Icelandic folk music often appears in his oeuvre, particularly in his compositions for choirs. The composer himself was open about his international musical background: “If you start at the age of nine with jazz, then you are international. I look at the universe, not at Iceland alone.”⁷

Although the word *jazz* covers a divergent group of musical practices, including some popular musical styles, certain elements pervade its history. The following list of seven salient jazz features has been adapted from Frank Tirro’s book *Jazz: A*

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*History*⁸ and is useful when considering the application of jazz to choral music:

- Vocal improvisation (both solo and group), including the use of scat syllables
- Rhythm sections
- Rhythmic features involving swing, syncopation, and cross-rhythm
- Popular song or blues forms
- Pitch materials consisting of the blues scale, blue notes, and extended tonalities

• Timbral features particular to the voice, including shakes, glissandi, and falls

• A performer-centered aesthetic

Of all of Gunnar's compositions, four stand out as a combination of jazz and the choral art featuring the jazz elements of improvisation, rhythm sections, rhythmic features, popular song form, and extended tonalities⁹:

• *Maður Hefur Nú* in two arrangements for either SATB or SSAATTBB unaccompanied choir

• *Söngvaseiður* for Mixed Choir, Alto Saxophone, Piano, Guitar, Double Bass, and Percussion

• *Ég Heyri Vorið Vængjum Blaka* for Mixed Choir, Alto Saxophone, Guitar, Double Bass, and Percussion

• *Alt Fram Streymir* for Mixed Choir, Clarinet, Guitar, Double Bass, and Percussion

Jazz influences abound, with extended tonalities and a rhythm section occurring in all four analyzed works. Improvisation is also included in each composition, although in three of the four pieces it is instrumental improvisation; the only vocal improvisation occurs in *Maður Hefur Nú*. As Gunnar was a vibraphonist, percussion plays a prominent role in these compositions. A percussive element is included in each—with *Maður Hefur Nú* even featuring a vocal rhythm section—and both *Alt Fram Streymir* and *Söngvaseiður* feature

expanded percussion in the form of nontraditional jazz instruments. The composer also frequently uses syncopation, scat syllables, and popular song form, with syncopation occurring in three works and the latter two elements—scat syllables and popular song form—utilized in two. Another rhythmic element—swing—can be found in one work: *Söngvaseiður*.

Maður Hefur Nú

Year of Publication: 2000

Duration: 3:00

Scoring: SATB and SSAATTBB, unaccompanied

With both a tune and text by Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson, *Maður Hefur Nú* [*One Really Has*] appears in two different arrangements. The first, by Hildigunnur Rúnarsdóttir (b. 1964), is for unaccompanied SSAATTBB chorus, while the second, arranged by Sigurður Halldórsson (b. 1963), is for four-part mixed choir, also unaccompanied. Both arrangements are available through the Iceland Music Information Centre and feature the extensive jazz elements of popular song form, scat syllables, improvisation, a rhythm section, syncopation, and extended tonalities.

Sveinsson's original tune is in G Minor, and both arrangements hold to that basic key, although Halldórsson's veers away to end a minor third lower, imitating a blue-note relationship (lowered third) through the arrangement's tonal centers. The minor key is appropriate to a text that speaks of enduring through winter:



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Oh, one really has, one really has endured such already this winter and done, yes, done ever so much, so much better.

If it goes slowly, almost not at all we will see to it in the spring.
If without success in spring and not at all in summer then surely all will come to be by autumn.¹⁰

Scat syllables anchor the jazz el-

ements in these two arrangements. Both pieces maintain an AABA popular song form with the text of the A sections either the first stanza of the poetry or scat syllables, while the B section text is stanza two of the poetry. Scat syllables more familiar to the Icelandic language have a prominent place, with syllables like “dú” and “bí” common to both arrangements (Figure 1); the acute accents over the vowels “u,” “i,” and “a” are characteristic of Icelandic.

These scat syllables lead to A1 and tag sections that sound like group improvisation in both arrangements. Although scat is frequent throughout both works, the A1 section does not use Sveinsson’s poetry at all but moves to Icelandic scat syllables in all voices—a change from all other longer sections in which the melody carries poetic text. In addition, the melody moves from the soprano to the alto voice, and the accompanying voices have quicker rhythmic

Figure 1. Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson, arranged by Rúnarsdóttir, *Maður Hefur Nú*, mm. 16–25.

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figures (triplets and sixteenth notes, see Figure 1), a change from the consistent quarter- and half-notes of all other sections of the works. The tag of both arrangements also feels like group improvisation, with a freer melodic line in either the alto or soprano voice, and a syncopated harmonic figure using only scat syllables (Figure 2). Halldórsson's arrangement even specifies "ad lib." above the soprano melody.

Scat syllables also lead to the feel-

ing of a vocal rhythm section in the second appearance of the A section in both arrangements, although this jazz element is not as prominent as others are. The A1 section uses "bramm" (notated in m. 15 of the Rúnarsdóttir and continuing in mm. 16 – 20 of Figure 1) or "brm" (in the Halldórsson) to imitate percussive sounds in the tenor and bass voices, followed by a walking bass line imitating a string bass. The section ends with triplets in all voices intimating a

typical drum cadence. These rhythmic sounds add to the feeling of an improvisatory section as discussed above.

A prominent, albeit brief, instance of syncopation occurs in the tag section of each work (mm. 54 – 55, Figure 2), and extended tonalities are prolific in both arrangements (for example, the E11 chord in m. 18 of Figure 1 or the unlabeled C9 of m. 56 in Figure 2).

The musical score for Figure 2 consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 52-55, and the second system covers measures 55-58. Each system includes four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment staff. The lyrics are in Icelandic. The piano accompaniment includes various chords and rhythmic patterns. The score includes several performance instructions: "rit." (ritardando) above the piano staff in measure 55, "Em⁹/C#" and "Em^(b6)/C" above the piano staff in measure 55, "ad lib." above the soprano staff in measure 55, "colla parte" above the alto, tenor, and bass staves in measure 55, and "div." (diviso) above the tenor staff in measure 58. The lyrics for the first system are: "míkl - u, míkl - u bet - ur. dí ba dú dí ba dú dí ba". The lyrics for the second system are: "dú dí ba dú dí ba dú dú dí ba dú dí ba dí ba dú".

Figure 2. Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson, arranged by Halldórsson, *Maður Hefur Nú*, mm. 52–58.

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Söngvaseiður

Duration: 3:00

Scoring: Mixed Choir, Alto Saxophone, Piano, Guitar, Double Bass, and Percussion

Söngvaseiður [Song], available through the Iceland Music Information Centre, is a lively drinking song text by Árni úr Eyjum¹¹ set to an original nocturne by Oddgeir Kristjánsson.

(Let us, brothers, meet in Herjólfssdalur)¹²
youth will reign at the feast
Let's fill the high mountain hall

with songs of celebration through the night.

We will drink the splendid nectar, joyfully empty in one the cup of life.

With song our wishes come true, sorrow and pain fade away.

Joy smiles bright and clear, the seabirds chatter softly round the valley.

The fire burns on Fjósaklettur;¹³ in the night, love binds soul with soul.

It utilizes a rondeau-like form, and the feel of the piece alternates between Latin rhythms and swing (as

labeled by the composer) and features the jazz elements of syncopation, swing, a glissando, scat syllables, a rhythm section, instrumental improvisation, and extended tonalities.

Syncopation is prominent throughout *Söngvaseiður*, occurring mostly in an eighth-quarter-eighth rhythmic pattern, and only in the sections with a Latin feel. This rhythm is found in both the vocal and instrumental parts (Figure 3) and helps to give the piece a strong jazz influence.

Swing appears in contrast to the prevalent Latin feel of the work

81 Latin rhythm 82

S
A
T
B
Pno.
Alto Sax.
Cb.
Perc.

da ra ra dí ra, da ra ra dí ra, da ra ra da ra ri, dí ra.
da ra ra dí ra, da ra ra dí ra, da ra ra da ra ri, dí ra.

Gmaj7 G Am7 Am9 C Dm D#m Em

gliss. gliss. gliss.

Fine

Figure 3. Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson, *Söngvaseiður*, mm. 81–85.

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and occurs in only twelve of the eighty-five measures of the piece. Sveinsson specifies this feel (Figure 4) and notates swung eighths as regular straight eighth patterns in the vocal parts and as a dotted-eighth sixteenth pattern for the percussion with an indication for the pattern to repeat.

One timbral effect particular to the voice—a glissando—can be found in the final measures of the tag. It occurs in all voice parts, the alto saxophone, and the double bass from the penultimate E11 chord to the final E7 (Figure 3, mm. 84 – 85) along with a decrescendo. This example also shows the scat syllables that are found throughout *Söngvaseiður*, both interspersed with the poetic text and occurring alone.

The rhythm section in *Söngvaseiður* consists of percussion, piano, guitar, and double bass; but, as in his other pieces that include instruments, Sveinsson goes beyond the expected combo instrumentation, adding Latin percussion (claves, congo drums, timbalas, and maracas) as well as the melodic alto saxophone. Although there is no vocal improvisation in this piece, instrumental improvisation occurs almost constantly for the guitar, saxophone, and percussionist. Extended tonalities are also frequent throughout the work, occurring in both the written chord symbol notation for the guitar, and through spelled chords in the instruments and chorus. Figure 3 shows several extended tonalities. First, an A9 chord is notated as a symbol for the

instruments and spelled in the pitches of the instruments and voices; and, second, the penultimate chord is an E11. Although not notated by symbol, this chord is spelled in the pitch content of the measure.

Ég Heyri Vorið Vængjum Blaka

Duration: 3:00

Scoring: Mixed Choir, Alto Saxophone, Guitar, Double Bass, and Percussion

The Spring Poem *Ég Heyri Vorið Vængjum Blaka*, set to a song by Oddgeir Kristjánsson and text by Ási í Bæ (1914–1985),¹⁴ is a light work with two verses and a “tra la la” refrain (Figure 5). The text lends itself to this F Major setting:

44

S
A
Fjós - a - klett - i brenn - ur bál og bönd - um ást - ar teng - ir nótt - in,

T
B
Fjos - a - klett - i brenn - ur, brenn - ur bál og bönd - um ást - ar teng - ir nótt - in,

Alto
Sax.
-

Cb.
Bm⁷ B^o C⁶ C^o G A⁷ Am⁹ Am⁷ add4 Em⁷

Perc.
Latin Rhythm stop
swing

Figure 4. Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson, *Söngvaseiður*; mm. 44 – 47.

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I heard Spring flutter her wings,
 echoed by my hopes,
 for I am a child of Summer
 and my spirit yearns for the sun.

When sea glitters under blue
 domed sky
 and tiny birds are rocked by the
 breeze
 and love shines in your eyes,
 I gladly accept my lot.

The piece is available through the Iceland Music Information Centre and features three jazz elements: popular song form, a rhythm section with instrumental improvisation, and extended tonalities.

Ég Heyri Vorið Vængjum Blaka is in AABA popular song form, with one additional A section appearing at the end (Table 1), which is labeled by Sveinsson as an “extra chorus.” The introduction, B section, and tag are instrumental, featuring the alto saxophone as the lead. The only melodic instrument, the saxophone also appears in sections A and A3 with the “tra la” text, but not in A1 or A2 while the chorus sings the poetic verses. The B section provides the standard break from the tuneful A section melody.

Sveinsson expands the typical jazz rhythm section of guitar (included in the score but not listed on the cov-

er in the arrangement’s instrumentation), bass, and drums to include a melodic instrument—alto saxophone—who has one “solo” area (as marked by the composer) in the B section. Chord symbols are the only included notation for the guitar, necessitating improvisation throughout the work. The double bass provides the standard harmonic function with pizzicato writing (Figure 5, m. 33) but also has moments of arco bowing as indicated by the composer.

While extended tonalities are present *Ég Heyri Vorið Vængjum Blaka* through both written chord symbols for the guitar and in the pitches notated in the instruments and chorus, they are

Table 1. The Popular Song Form of *Ég Heyri Vorið Vængjum Blaka* by Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson

Sections	Intro	A	A1	B	A2	A3	Tag
Measures	1 - 16	17 - 48	49 - 84	85 - 100	101 - 132	133 - 164	165 - 169
Text		“Tra La”	Verse 1		Verse 2	“Tra La”	

The musical score for Figure 5 shows the following details:

- Staff 1 (Soprano/Alto):** Measures 27-34. Includes the vocal line with lyrics "Tra la la la la la la" starting at measure 33.
- Staff 2 (Tenor/Bass):** Accompanying vocal line.
- Staff 3 (Alto Saxophone):** Instrumental accompaniment with chord symbols: Dm⁹, Dm, B⁶, Am, Gm, G^o, Dm, F, C, E^{o7}, F, C¹³, C^{9b}.
- Staff 4 (Double Bass):** Accompanying bass line with a *pizz.* marking at measure 33.
- Staff 5 (Percussion):** Rhythmic accompaniment.

Figure 5. Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson, *Ég Heyri Vorið Vængjum Blaka*, mm. 27–34

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a minority of the harmonies in this work.

Alt Fram Streymir

Duration: 3:00

Scoring: Mixed Choir, Clarinet, Guitar, Double Bass, and Percussion

To an original song by Sigfús Einarrsson and a text by Kristján Jónsson Fjallaskáld,¹⁵ *Alt Fram Streymir* [*All Flows Endlessly*] has a melancholy tone that begins with the text and pervades its G Minor music. This work, available through the Iceland Music Information Centre, features three jazz elements: extended tonalities, a rhythm section with instrumental improvisation, and syncopation.

Extended tonalities appear throughout *Alt Fram Streymir*. These jazz chords are indicated both in the

written chord symbols for the guitar and are created by pitch composition in both voices and instruments. In Figure 6, a C9 chord ends the first half of the B section and leads into verse 2.

Other jazz elements of instrumentation and syncopation are prevalent as well. Although the composer strays past the instruments included in a traditional rhythm section¹⁶ they are still present, with guitar, double bass, and drums. Syncopation appears throughout the work, in both the instrumental and vocal parts, although the most prominent uses appear in the instruments.

Conclusion

Beyond jazz elements, other influences of Sveinsson's native Iceland are apparent in the works analyzed. Folk elements are prominent, with

three of the four works utilizing both an original tune and text by a native Icelander; only the text and tune of *Maður Hefur Nú* are the composer's own creation. *Ég Heyri Vorið Vængjum Blaka* has a particularly strong folk influence with its "Tra La" refrain.

With the depth and breadth of Sveinsson's compositional output, these four works are his only choral pieces to include a jazz influence and are quite different from one another. From the lighthearted *Ég Heyri Vorið Vængjum Blaka* to the more complex arrangements of *Maður Hefur Nú*, these compositions demonstrate the composer's folk and jazz influence in a variety of settings. While extended tonalities are frequent, all of these arrangements are appropriate for amateur choral ensembles and can also provide an accessible introduction to the Icelandic language. ■

The musical score for Figure 6 consists of six staves. The top two staves are for Soprano (S) and Alto (A) voices, with lyrics 'A' and 'a' written below the notes. The next two staves are for Tenor (T) and Bass (B) voices, also with lyrics 'A' and 'a'. The fifth staff is for Alto Saxophone (Alto Sax.), marked 'arco'. The bottom staff is for Percussion (Perc.). The score shows a sequence of chords and melodic lines across four measures, with a C9 chord indicated at the end of the first half of the B section.

Figure 6. Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson, *Alt Fram Streymir*, mm. 21–24.

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NOTES

- ¹ Göran Bergendal, *New Music in Iceland*, trans. Peter Lyne (Reykjavík: Iceland Music Information Center, 1991), 103.
- ² Iceland Music Information Centre, *Brief Biographical Notes about Living Icelandic Composers and a Catalogue of Their Works* (Reykjavík: Iceland Music Information Centre, 1983), 4.
- ³ Gunnar was a pioneer in this area and set a trend for Icelandic musicians to travel to Holland for further musical education.
- ⁴ Svavar Gestsson, forward to *Arts and Culture in Iceland: Music*, by Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson (Reykjavík: The Icelandic Ministry of Culture and Education, 1990), M-9.
- ⁵ Margret Boasdotir, Chairman of LBK, e-mail message to author, October 19, 2014.
- ⁶ Vernharður Linnét, “Hot Music in a Cool Zone,” *Nordic Sounds* 3 (2006): 17.
- ⁷ Bergendal, *New Music in Iceland*, 105.
- ⁸ Frank Tirro, *Jazz: A History*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1993), xvii.
- ⁹ There is a notable lack of any blues influence in Gunnar’s compositions; blues form, the blues scales, and blue notes are not used in any of his included compositions. Cross-rhythms are also entirely absent. The final two jazz elements from Tirro’s list—timbral features and a performer-centered aesthetic—are particularly hard to identify without any extant recordings of these works. Although there is one notated instance of a glissando at the end of *Söngvaseiður*, timbral

effects are typically added as a part of a performer-centered aesthetic, along with the similar jazz element of improvisation. Because of Sveinsson’s jazz background and inclusion of improvisation, it is probable that the composer would want performers to bring their own flavor to his jazz-influenced works, but aural evidence of this does not currently exist.

- ¹⁰ Icelandic translations by Oliver J Kentish.
- ¹¹ Árni úr Eyjum denotes the poet is connected to a particular place—Árni from Eyjar in the Westmann Islands (Oliver J. Kentish, composer and conductor, e-mail to author, November 2, 2014).
- ¹² A prominent city on the island of

Dalvegur, Iceland, south of the main body of land.

- ¹³ A city just North of Reykjavík, Iceland.
- ¹⁴ Ási í Bæ denotes the poet’s connection to a particular location—Ási at Bær—a community fond of the arts North of Reykjavík in Western Iceland (Oliver J. Kentish, composer and conductor, e-mail to author, November 2, 2014).
- ¹⁵ Kristján Jónsson is known as “fjallaskáld” or “mountain poet” (Oliver J. Kentish, composer and conductor, e-mail to author, November 2, 2014).
- ¹⁶ Beyond the traditional guitar, drums, and pizzicato double bass, Sveinsson also includes a gong for the percussionist and some bowed double bass.



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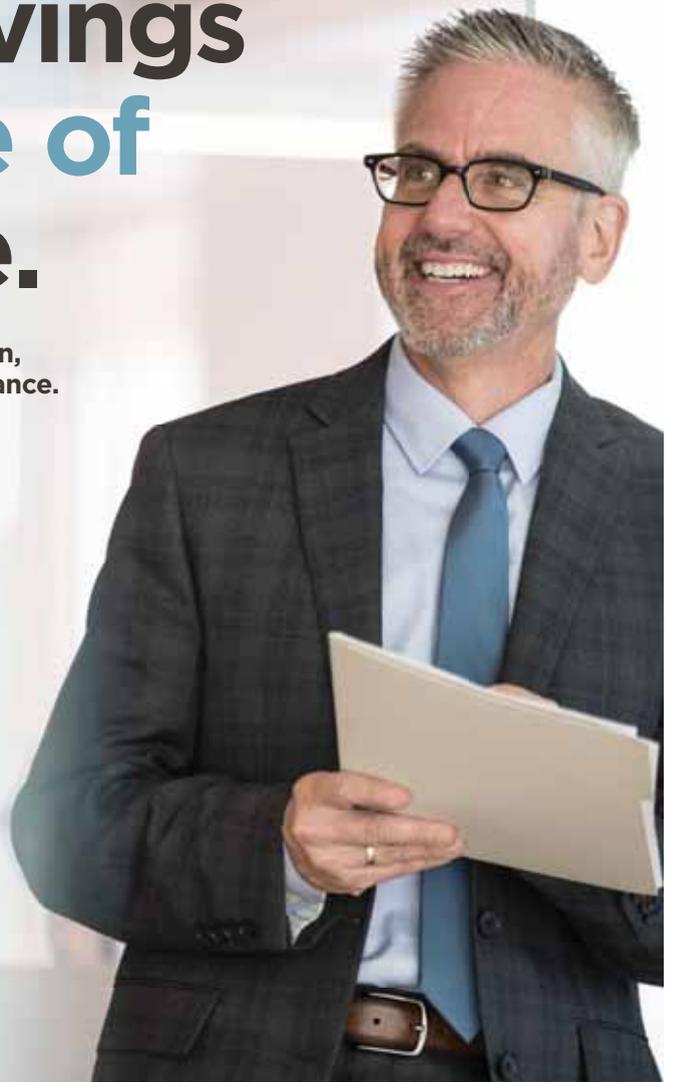
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In Memoriam

Dominick Argento 1927–2019



Dominick Argento, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and America's leading composer of lyric opera, passed away on February 20, 2019, at the age of ninety-one. He was born in Pennsylvania and as a small child taught himself music theory from library books. He served the United States Army in East Africa as a cryptographer for two years (1945-47) before receiving degrees from Peabody Conservatory (BM, MM) and Eastman School of Music (PhD). After earning his doctorate, he spent a year in Italy on a Guggenheim Fellowship. He taught music at the University of Minnesota from 1958 until his retirement in 1997, later becoming Professor Emeritus. In 1993, he was awarded the George Peabody Medal for his exception-

al contributions to music in America. He was honored with the title of Composer Laureate to the Minnesota Orchestra in 1997, a lifetime appointment and the first such appointment in the nation. Best known for his operas, Argento also composed works for orchestra, chamber choir, and music for plays. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1975 for his song cycle "From the Diary of Virginia Woolf"; in 2004 he won a Grammy Award for best contemporary classical composition ("Casa Guidi"). He was married to soprano Carolyn Baker from 1954 until her death in 2006. Dominick Argento was highly sought after as a beloved mentor, teacher, and commissioned composer.

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LAURIE BETTS HUGHES

I Died For Beauty

- SATB; piano accompaniment; some spoken utterances; English (Emily Dickinson)
- 4'. Composer's description: ". . . a reminder of the relationship between creativity and emotional expression." In memory of a singer who took her own life. Broad programmatic use, however. Gentle lyricism sometimes imitatively presented sustains interest. Accessible for high school and community choirs. ProjectEncore.org/laurie-betts-hughes



ANDREW JACOBSON

At the Mid Hour of Night

- SSAATTBB; piano accompaniment; brief aleatoric section; English (Thomas Moore)
- 4'11". Moving art song for choral ensemble. Soaring melodies and tender, pensive moments. Often soprano melody with ATB harmonic support; some imitative writing. Dreamlike quality. Piano writing contributes its own unique character. Thick texture, requires numbers; but accessible for good high school choirs. ProjectEncore.org/andrew-jacobson



CAROLINE MALLONEE

Light Through Windows

- SATB; some S/A divisi; a cappella; English (Caroline Mallonee)
- 3'15". A portrayal of meaning through architecture and stained glass artistry (which is compared to manuscript illumination). Perfect for celebration of a gothic space; but broader programmatic use through concepts of light, hope. Lyrical lines; compound and non-symmetrical meters. Solid high school and above. ProjectEncore.org/caroline-mallonee

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JOHN MUEHLEISEN

River Moons

- SSAATTBB; a cappella; English (Carl Sandburg)
- 6'30". Portrayal through voices of "the sacramental beauty of Nature." Companion piece to "Prairie Waters by Night" (also endorsed by P:E). Evocative of memory and wonder. Rich harmonic palette, frequent antiphonal passages, abundantly programmable. Requires solid choir with excellent intonation.
ProjectEncore.org/john-muehleisen



DONALD M. SKIRVIN

Sometimes, for eternity

- SATB; some incidental divisi; with violin; English (Gordon E. Abshire)
- 3'19". Written as "an ode to those whose lives were well-lived in music;" poem written as by one who has passed on. Rich harmonic palette, accomplished with minimal divisi. Violin paints each described scene, while voices tell the story. Beautifully direct and accessible. Must have excellent violinist and flexible voices.
ProjectEncore.org/donald-m-skirvin



KEANE SOUTHARD

In this short life

- SATB; divisi in all parts at times; English (Emily Dickinson)
- 5'. Conceived as a "meditation focusing on the transience and preciousness of life and what one can (or can't) accomplish within it." Requires an ensemble capable of sustaining long lines with control, and producing the substantial dynamics and articulations indicated. Challenging; worth the work!
ProjectEncore.org/keane-southard



DEANNA WITKOWSKI (NEW to PROJECT : ENCORE)

A Christmas Carol

- SATB; minimal divisi; a cappella; English (G.K. Chesterton)
- 3'6". In this mostly-strophic setting of the four-stanza poem, both poet and composer have gone beyond the traditional nativity story, suggesting the road that would lie ahead. Expansive programmatic use beyond seasonal. Largely homophonic, with some imitative elements. Clear intonation a must; excellent high school and above.
ProjectEncore.org/deanna-witkowski





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Ēriks Ešenvalds: The Doors of Heaven

Portland State Chamber Choir
Ethan Sperry, conductor
NAXOS 8.579008 (2017; 58:37)

Born in Latvia in 1977, Ēriks Ešenvalds is well known to choirs and conductors worldwide. A number of recent albums have been released dedicated to his works, including this one by the Portland State University Chamber Choir. The auditioned choir was founded in 1975 and has been conducted by Ethan Sperry since 2010.

Those familiar with Ešenvalds's works know his compositional style is firmly rooted in the twenty-first century, featuring sustained chords with expanded harmonies (using rich dissonances found in the diatonic scale, such as sevenths and ninths); timbral effects including whistling, audible breathing, and chanting; and uneven meters. Ešenvalds, however, often eschews the homophonic texture so common in many modern works for lyrical melodies and, at times, polyphonic sections. Frequently, his advanced choral techniques are in service of the texts, which are often assembled by Ešenvalds himself.

The First Tears is a powerful song based on the Inuit legend of the Raven and the Whale, a story of how

grief came into the world, using Native American flutes, jaw harps, and drums to tell the story. Over lush, sustained choral chords, antiphonal soloists deliver the narrative, on occasion building to more dramatic declarations. Bolstered by the bass drum and the spectral power of the flute figurations, it is a moving introduction to the recording.

The next track, *Rivers of Light*, is one of several works by Ešenvalds about the Northern Lights. It uses ancient Sami Scandinavian folk melodies (with texts alluding to the *aurora*) with passages from British explorers' journals describing the sight of the *aurora* for the first time. While the middle section is less compelling, it is bolstered by the Suzanne Vega-like soprano folk melody surrounding it. *A Drop in the Ocean* is a well-known choral work written in memory of Mother Theresa.

The final work on the recording is Ešenvalds's *Passion and Resurrection*. Written in 2006, it is his first oratorio and is scored for soprano soloist, vocal quartet, choir, and string orchestra. The libretto comes from a variety of liturgical sources, including the Byzantine liturgy, Stabat Mater, and scriptural passages from the Old

and New Testaments. It begins with a portion of a Renaissance motet by Cristobal de Morales. Overlaid by a string orchestra in a different key, the choir continues unaltered, led by excellent soprano soloist Hannah Consenze, whose bright, dramatic voice and sterling intonation highlight Mary's observation of the events and her wondering if her own sins are to blame. The next section is more active, recounting the horror of the arrest and crucifixion, with *Psycho*-like repeated notes in the strings.

The work concludes with humanity's response to the crucifixion. The Renaissance homophony returns and is greeted with haunting unease by the strings. At the end, instead of a triumphant Hallelujah, there is a repeated chant of "Mariam Rabboni" as Mary sees Jesus from beyond the grave and follows him into Eternity.

Sperry and the Portland State University Choir should be commended for this fine album. The listener nearly forgets one is listening to a choir of college singers and not a professional ensemble. The singers approach the music with a free, relaxed sound, and one can only find brief moments where there are some slight intonation problems. Due to the large amount of reverberation, the songs could use more diction.



And in some areas, the string orchestra eclipses the choral voices. These are lesser flaws.

Ultimately, this album represents fascinating contemporary music that is worth hearing and acquiring. It rivals the quality of other albums of Ešenvalds's music and should appeal to both choral music lovers and more general audiences.

Tobin Sparfeld
Los Angeles, California

Ecstatic Songs

mirabai
Sandra Snow, conductor
Blue Griffin Recording, Inc.
B07B9R8DF8 (2018; 1:13:09)

In her 1998 *Choral Journal* article titled "A missing chapter from choral methods books: How choirs neglect girls," Patricia O'Toole wrote, "directors and singers have an implicit sense that choirs with males in them command more attention, a more diverse repertoire, and greater authority." With the appearance of the new professional treble ensemble mirabai (Sandra Snow, artistic director) and their inaugural recording *Ecstatic Songs*, this paradigm is hopefully changing.

Ecstatic Songs features a wide variety of repertoire, much of which is composed by women for women. The texts represented here feature a wide variety of experiences, from the lovelorn *The Kiss* by Jussi Chydenius to the rich tapestry of the three-movement *Ecstatic Songs* cycle by David Brunner in which the mystic Mirabai is given voice—

here beautifully embodied by soloist Lindsay Kesselman. This ensemble also explores forgotten women composers of the past by including recordings of new editions by Meredith Bowen of music by Sulpita Cesis (1577-?) and Chiara Margarita Cozzolani (1602–1678). The Cesis piece, performed with cello, is haunting and contrasts with the Baroque style and phrasing of the Cozzolani.

The tone of the choir is vibrant and mature. There are beautiful examples of supported low singing on this album, most notably in *Lineage* by Andrea Ramsey. This album can be a teaching tool for K-12 choral educators; it provides a beautiful vocal model for young sopranos and altos. This new ensemble brings a rich tapestry of vocal colors and life experiences to their singing, especially highlighted in pieces like Sean Ivory's setting of "The Peace of Wild Things." One complaint is that, now and again, the recording quality is not what one would wish based on the talent of the singers.

Dr. O'Toole's article questions the norm that SATB choirs are often considered the "elite" ensemble, especially in school and college/university settings. If there were more choirs like mirabai present in the American choral scene, perhaps this norm would be disrupted.

Joshua Palkki
Long Beach, California

Provenance

Kinnara Ensemble
J. D. Burnett, conductor
Affetto Records AF1708
(2017; 67:27)

With a multitude of new *a cappella* choral recordings to choose from each year, a few still manage to stick out in the crowd. *Provenance*, the debut album by the Kinnara Ensemble and conductor J. D. Burnett, is a jewel that combines appealing, varied programming with sterling musical qualities and direct, memorable artistic communication.

Founded a decade ago in New Jersey, and initially comprising mostly Westminster Choir College graduates, Kinnara now draws professional singers from across the United States. The album design by Cory Klose and the CD notes by the conductor greatly increase the visual and intellectual appeal of this album. A diverse repertoire, covering six languages, three continents, and four centuries, has been carefully arranged so that each piece illuminates the selections immediately before and after when the album is heard without pause.

Gitanjali Chants, by Craig Hella Johnson, opens the album with haunting simplicity. This is an ideal opener that highlights the depth of the ensemble's sound while also preparing the listener for the varied aural landscape to come. Di Lasso's sublime *Musica Dei donum optimi* unfolds with a beautiful serenity, sounding in its richness like a work that would not be out of place in a much later era. One is aware here of the superior vocal and ensemble



skills in this group, which allows the elaborate counterpoint to shine effortlessly.

Johannes Brahms's careful study of Renaissance choral writing heavily influenced his own *a cappella* work, especially *Fest- und Gedenksprüche*. Indeed, the distance from di Lasso to this three-movement piece seems hardly a leap at all. Herein lies a tricky interpretive balancing act, requiring a decision between a more restrained, transparent sound or a more full-throated Romantic approach. Kinnara splits the difference: the first and third movements are more reserved, while a Romantic robustness is clearly evident in the second movement. By not going too far in either interpretive direction, they effectively create a bridge between eras.

Poulenc's choral chansons are always a pleasure for their quirky uniqueness, acidic harmonies, and unpretentious brevity. Three of the *Sept Chansons* are included here. Poulenc's music is best performed with a touch of detachment, and Kinnara achieved this particularly in "A peine défigurée" and "Belle et ressemblante." The witty, clipped phrases are shaped to perfection, while lingering chords are exquisitely balanced. Morten Lauridsen's *Soneto de la Noche* again tests the ability of the ensemble to achieve an even, balanced sound. Kinnara delivers just as sensitively in these dense homophonic textures as they did in the polyphony of earlier works, never breaking through the plush fabric of beautifully balanced harmonies. Lauridsen's extended harmonies serve much the same function as Johnson's

Chants: the listener can regroup, refresh, and prepare for the challenges ahead.

Hieremiae prophetae lamentationes, a three-movement work by Alberto Ginastera, provides a sonic laceration that challenges the works on either side. The opening measures of "O vos omnes" bring forth a sound unlike any other we have heard to this point. Though some of the compositional techniques are traditional, this composer pushes the emotional and harmonic palette, yielding a more anguished, dramatic vocal quality that, at times, hints at the operatic. The discomfiting qualities

reach their apex in the third movement, "Recordare domine," finally dissolving into a sublime resolution. Of all the works in this album, this piece most seriously tests the range, depth, and vocal versatility of Kinnara's singers. They sound like a very different ensemble here—and rightly so. In this rendition, Burnett has made a commendable addition to the small number of recordings of this significant work.

The listener will appreciate the inclusion of two lesser-known works by the late Stephen Paulus. *Day Is Done* and *The Old Church* are both charming and quietly moving pic-

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Recorded Sound Reviews

es. James Erb's beloved arrangement of *Shenandoah* sounds fresh and new in Kinnara's hands, and the lovely, though less oft-heard *Marianne* brings this recording to a satisfying close. What strikes the listener immediately is not just the youthful energy and fresh perspective, but also a sense of emotional investment and shared musical ideals. Though each track retains its individuality, common threads of effortless singing, lyrical impulse, and thoughtful interpretation run through the whole.

Nathan Zullinger
Ardmore, Pennsylvania

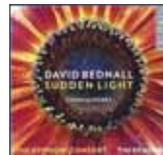
David Bednall: Sudden Light

Epiphoni Consort
Tim Reader, conductor
Delphian (DCD 34189)
(2017; 70:54)

Approaching his fortieth birthday and already enjoying a sizeable number of recordings that attest to his playing and composition (principally on the REGENT label), it would be misleading to characterize David Bednall as a new talent. His music, however, continues to amaze and impress for its invention and vivacity. His harmonic opulence reminds me of the painter Maxfield Parrish: you either love or hate its brilliant,

even surreal, hues, but it's unmistakably his own. For all this originality, Bednall owes much to his training at Oxford University and then various cathedrals, notably Wells, and he has drunk deep of the Howellsian springs that inform so much of English church music.

Unlike some of his contemporaries, he is clearly a composer who is well versed in the organ, and not an organist trying his hand at choral music. His accompanied works are dramatic but not virtuosic, while his *a cappella* writing is exquisite and assured.



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This new release serves him well, showing music written in the last ten years, especially 2015. Bednall's willingness to take texts familiar from earlier versions and paint them with his own palette is evident here, e.g., *Rise Up, My Love* combines with *Set Me As A Seal* to form a wedding anthem that recalls not Healey Willan or Walton but rather Patrick Hadley's *My Beloved Spake*. Tallis is recalled as an imitation of *Te lucis ante terminum* that alternates plainchant with a harmonized verse, and in the disc's opening track, the declamatory *Lux orta est iusto*, scored for forty voices and intended to complement that Tudor masterpiece, *Spem in alium*.

While this track attests to Bednall's inspired and sure hand as a choral writer, it also highlights one of the performers' only weak moments on this disc. The Epiphoni Choir, made up of trained musicians who have decided not to pursue music as a career, is young both as an ensemble (it was founded in 2014) and in its vocal stamina. To perform the forty-part motet it is obliged to supplement its forces, and this exposes a coarseness and straining among some of the voices that is mostly absent from the rest of the disc.

In general, though, we have here a most impressive debut recording by this British chamber choir, led by an inspired director, Tim Reader, who is to be congratulated for introducing listeners to more outstanding music by David Bednall. To conductors and singers who are tiring of minimalism or cluster chords *ad nauseam*, here is a brilliant compositional voice that has matured and is

now a most worthy addition to British choral writing from the past 100 years, from Howells to Gabriel Jackson. Some will detect the influence of French music, but as the extensive CD notes by Andrew Stuart are at pains to suggest, the composer's "art grows from the ground of native tradition." Stuart writes eloquently, even floridly, about Bednall; one might have wished to know a little more about the occasion prompting each piece of the CD, but in general the accompanying booklet is at-

tractive and helpful. The recording in a prominent London church has been engineered somewhat close-up, which helps to capture the tonal colors of the choir, as well as the assured organ playing by Stephen Farr. This is a release worth investigating both for the beauty of its singing, and its largely unfamiliar repertoire, much of which is recorded here for the first time.

Philip Barnes
St. Louis, Missouri



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