

Dr. Karyl Carlson



A Detroit native, Karyl Carlson was fortunate to have a formative music education in Redford, Michigan. With early studies of piano, then bassoon and voice, Carlson credits her early music education as the origin for her current success. Carlson is now in her thirteenth year as Director of Choral Activities at Illinois State University where she conducts the Concert Choir, Madrigal Singers, and teaches graduate conducting. Her graduate students have gone on to successful teaching careers and further study at major university graduate programs.

Carlson came to central Illinois after serving as Director of Choral Activities and Associate Chair of the music department of Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington where she conducted the Chamber Choir, taught graduate conducting, and undergraduate music education courses. She earned music education degrees from the University of Michigan and had the great fortune to start her teaching career at Franklin Elementary School in Sterling, IL. Further graduate study led her to a Master of Music Education at the University of Illinois. Karyl earned her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Michigan State University, where she studied with Charles K. Smith. Prior to earning her doctorate she taught in the public schools for twelve years in Miami, Florida. There she was Director of Vocal Music Hialeah-Miami Lakes High School, Miami Lakes Junior High, and then at the famed New World School of the Arts in Miami, FL. Having taught at every academic level, from elementary general music to auditioned collegiate choirs, Carlson has a unique perspective and abiding appreciation for choral music educators.

While at CWU and ISU, Dr. Carlson has conducted many major choral/orchestral works, including Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem" as the inaugural performance of the international *Benjamin Britten at 100: An American Centenary Symposium* (2013). Carlson has also conducted numerous operas and musicals, including the Illinois State University's recent productions of "Cabaret" and Kurt Weill's "Street Scene."

For many years, Carlson sang and recorded in ensembles with Robert Shaw in France and at the Professional Training Workshops at Carnegie Hall. She has also performed a wide variety of piano and vocal solo repertoire, but has particular fondness for playing and conducting chamber music. Dr. Carlson regularly works with contemporary composers and enthusiastically supports the commissioning of new choral compositions. Equally, student works are frequently given readings and performances on major concerts.

Carlson is an active choral adjudicator and honor choir conductor. Her choirs have been featured at state and regional festivals, and have toured nationally and internationally. The Illinois State University

Concert Choir, and the Madrigal Singers, have enjoyed collaborating with professional local and regional symphony orchestras. Under her direction she has toured internationally with her ensembles to Italy, Spain, England and France, and performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City. This summer, current research will take her to Aldeburgh, Suffolk, UK, to study early choral manuscripts of Benjamin Britten at the Britten-Pears Foundation Archive Centre. She will be there for the entirety of the Aldeburgh Festival, along with ISU Associate Professor of Voice Justin Vickers, to confer with festival administrators and artists. This extended visit is in preparation for the inaugural season of the *American Festival of Music and the Arts* in 2019 at Illinois State University.

Launched in 2016, Carlson was key in the development of an ACDA urban initiative choral festival: *JOIN VOICES, CHICAGO!* The event brought over 500 students together in a non-competitive environment focused on student performing and learning, and teacher professional development. The festival was funded in part with a grant from ACDA's Fund for Tomorrow. She ended the year with a second such festival: *JOIN VOICES, MIAMI!* Karyl is thrilled to see this initiative gaining interest in numerous urban and rural settings. As a strong initiator of music and arts advocacy, she is in frequent contact with legislators regarding arts funding issues.

Dr. Carlson is a member of NAfME, NATS, Omicron Delta Kappa (Leadership Circle) Sigma Alpha Iota, and the American Choral Directors Association. She has been active in ACDA for many years, having served on the Illinois ACDA Board as Women's Choir and Collegiate Repertoire & Standards Chair. Currently she serves as the IL-ACDA Past-President, on the ACDA Central Division Board representing Student and Youth Activities, and on a national sub-committee on Diversity Issues.

Karyl resides in Normal, IL, and enjoys spending time with family and friends. She has a wide variety of non-musical interests, including video production, constant rehabbing of her 1890's home, and caring for her rescue dogs, KoKo and KiefKief.