

# PODIUM

Winter 2018

Volume 44 No. 1

## Podium Editor

Monica Bertrand  
Plainfield North High School  
mbertrand331@gmail.com

## Podium Assistant Editor

Katie Bruton  
Parkside Junior High School  
brutonka@myunit5.org

## Podium Graphic Designer

Bethany Johnsen  
Freelance Graphic Designer  
bethanyljohansen@gmail.com

## ILLINOIS ACDA EXECUTIVE BOARD

### President

Lee Kesselman  
College of DuPage  
lrkmus@sbcglobal.net

### Past President

Dennis Morrissey  
Heartland Community College  
dennismorr@aol.com

### President-Elect

Jeff Wilson  
Greenville University  
jeff.wilson@greenville.edu

### Treasurer

Paul Nielsen  
Grayslake North High School  
nielsenacda@gmail.com

### Secretary

Laura Coster  
Retired  
laura.coster@sbcglobal.net

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*~Lacking transitions~*  
By Lee Kesselman

Where will you be on June 27/28 of this year? (beat, beat, pause, breath) In Normal, Illinois, at the 2018 IL-ACDA Summer ReTreat, of course! Why? Because IL-ACDA is your organization, the home of your profession, the face of your profession's future.

(More on that in a moment...)

What a year! The return of our *Fall Conference* in October, the annual *Show Choir Festival* in October, the second edition of *Join Voices, Chicago* in December, a rich tapestry of the choral art at *IMEC* in January, the 23 choirs at year 5 of the *Treble Choir Festival* in February. No one can say we're not active or not meeting the needs and goals of our members. And still to come - - the first joint conference of *Central & North Central Divisions* in February (next week, as I write this), the *Two Year College Festival* at Harper College in April, and the *Summer ReTreat* in June. If you're counting, that's SEVEN IL-ACDA events in one year (plus the *IMEC Conference*). Name for me another statewide professional organization that offers so much to you, so much potential if you choose to enter

into its activities? And the center of it all is the Summer Re-Treat. (More on that soon...)

Why do people sing in choirs? Why do we lead them? I'm sure there are lots of reasons. But for me, they reduce down to a few major reasons. I think people inherently search for *Beauty, Meaning* and *Community* in their lives. Oh, I'm sure some people sing in choir for other, more pedestrian reasons like (a) the other classes were unavailable, (b) the bowling league was full, (c) you just had to get out of the house one night a week. But when I poll my singers, *Beauty, Meaning, & Community* consistently rise to the top of the list. Much has been written of the health benefits of singing, of how music makes us smarter, develops our brains, our coordination. And no doubt learning how to sing better, alone or in a group, helps our self-esteem, helps us to self-actualize, contributes to our house of worship, our community, our school. But I'm still going with *Beauty, Meaning, & Community*. And we, the choral directors of Illinois, are privileged to bring this opportunity to the choral singers of Illinois. Wow, what an awesome responsibility and opportunity!

## REPERTOIRE AND RESOURCES CHAIRS

### Children's Choir

Renee DeJager  
Timothy Christian Schools  
DeJager@timothychristian.com

### College /University Choirs

Andrea Solya  
University of Illinois, U-C  
asolya2@illinois.edu

### Community Choirs

Steven Szalaj  
McHenry County College and  
Voices in Harmony  
szjsings@mac.com

### Composition Contest

Phil Spencer  
Joliet Junior College  
philipspencer@sbcglobal.net

### Ethnic & Multicultural

Darius Polikaitis  
Dainava Lithuanian Chorale  
darneviskas@gmail.com

### Female Choirs

Aubrey Dunham-Prince  
Riverside Brookfield High School  
dunhamaubrey@gmail.com

### Historian

Bob Boyd  
Retired  
bealextoo@aol.com

### ILMEA Choir Chair

Curtis Fischer-Oelschlaeger  
Rock Ridge High School  
choir@rr300.org

### Male Choirs

Andy Jeffrey  
Glenbard West High School  
andrew\_jeffrey@glenbard.org

### Membership

Jess Palmisano, co-chair  
Plainfield East High School  
jesspalmisano@gmail.com

### Membership

Brandon Catt, co-chair  
Glenbard East High School  
bcatt2@gmail.com

### Middle/Jr. High Choirs

Debbie Aurelius-Muir  
Olympia High School  
debbie.aurelius-muir@olympia.org

### Music in Worship

Jeff Hunt, co-chair  
Baker Memorial UMC  
mmsdir1@aol.com

### Music in Worship

Michele Hecht, co-chair  
First Congregational Church  
of Glen Ellyn  
michele@fccge.org

### Senior High School Choirs

Sarah Catt  
Elk Grove High School  
sarah.catt@d214.org

### Show Choirs

Seth Durbin  
Waubonsie Valley High School  
seth\_durbin@ipsd.org

### Student Representative

Cristian Larios  
Illinois State University  
clarios@ilstu.edu

### Two-Year Colleges

Thomas J. Stauch  
Harper College  
tstauch@harpercollege.edu

### Vocal Jazz

Jennifer Seiler  
Metamora High School  
jseiler@mths.us

### Youth and Student Activities

Andy Jensen  
Southwestern Illinois College  
andrew.jensen@swic.edu

### Webmaster

Jason Hawkins  
Western Illinois University  
jasonhawkins@comcast.net

(President's Message continued from page 1)

Tommy Brown. A college singer in one of my first choirs ever. A lovely man. Math major. A tenor with significant hearing loss. Child of the Deep South. Passed away yesterday. On Tommy's last trip to Chicago, he and I met for dinner after years apart. He shared some powerful feelings about finding Beauty, Meaning & Community in our little choir at St Andrews Presbyterian College. He told me that he always worried about how much he could contribute as a singer with hearing loss. But he also said that he found a true home in that choir. I will always remember Tommy, RIP.

My community chorus has just begun work on James Whitbourn's powerful and stunning *Annelies*, the first major choral work based on texts from *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Many tears shed at the first read-through. Why sing music which has such pain and tragedy at its very heart? Because it is Beautiful. Because it tells a story which demands to be told, especially in a time where

## IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	.....1
Newsflash!	.....4
The Church Choir	
Experience	.....4
Ethnic and	.....5
Multicultural	
2018 Treble Ensemble	.....6
Sing and Share	
Festival Review	
Choral Composition	.....7
Contest	

## IL-ACDA DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

(President's Message continued from page 2)

### District 1

Richard Nunley  
Kenwood Academy  
rnunley@cps.edu

### District 2

Ben Holmes  
Woodrow Wilson Middle School  
bholmes3@gmail.com

### District 3

Ben Luginbuhl  
Normal Community High School  
Luginbbr@unit5.org

### District 4

Josh Spear  
Rochester High School  
jspear@rochester3a.net

### District 5

Jacob Elam  
Central A&M Middle School  
elamj@cam.k12.il.us

### District 6

Andy Jensen  
Southwestern Illinois College  
andrew.jensen@swic.edu

### District 7

Sean Newman  
Round Lake Middle School  
snewman@rlas-116.org

### District 8

Drayton Eggleston  
Sycamore High School  
dreggles@syc427.org

### District 9

Bryan Kunstman  
Kaneland High School  
Bryan.kunstman@kaneland.org

facts and truth are constantly challenged. Because by bearing witness together, as a Community, we grow stronger and achieve something we could never achieve alone.

The Summer ReTreat. (I warned you -- no transitions!) Why come? I come to be inspired. To get out of *my* space and into *our* space. To learn how to do what I do better from people I admire and who inspire me, both our guests and our own members. I come to be with you, our members, both younger and 'more experienced' as we plow, plant and nurture the future of choral music in Illinois.

This year, I am coming to learn from **David Fryling**, a real master from New York State. I've watched him teach and conduct, have broken bread with him, have heard him speak passionately about our profession. David will conduct our Director's Chorus, work with a high school choir, share rehearsal techniques and repertoire with us.

I am coming to learn from Canadian **Kathy Armstrong**. Kathy is an expert in music from Ghana. While I can bear witness to Kathy's teaching and expertise from personal experience, I have also watched her work with choirs and directors of all ages on the wonders of African drumming, dancing and singing. Kathy has stretched my musicianship to the limits, she has given me a real physical workout as I try to dance and sing at the same time. She has also done extensive research on health benefits of this holistic practice.

I am coming to learn from our new Harold Decker Award winner, **Laura Lane** of Knox College as

she receives her award and shares her thoughts with us. Talk about inspiring! Laura has been a model of our profession for decades, a true scholar, artist-teacher, and devoted choral master.

I am coming to learn from our new Composition Contest winner, from all of you who attend, from the interest sessions and reading sessions, and the camaraderie of meals, walks across the beautiful ISU campus and the occasional drink. Checkout the bios of our headliners and other news, as it becomes available, at <http://www.il-acda.org/il-acda-summer-retreat/>

Why come to the Summer ReTreat? To become better at what we do. To be with friends. To move further along the path to Beauty, Meaning & Community with people who believe in the enduring power of choral music. And for those of you who say, well, maybe next year, I would say, why not *this* year?

I am active in ACDA, I go to the Summer ReTreat, because I *LOVE* our world of choral music. And to paraphrase Rabbi Harold Kushner, because it makes it easier for me to be grateful for today and hopeful for tomorrow. LRK



## NEWS FLASH!!

ACDA members - - - - a deal you can't resist! Due to successful events in IL-ACDA these past 4 years, we are able to offer you a one-time-only special offer for registration for our Summer ReTreat 2018 at ISU on June 27-28. All registration fees have been reduced, but there is a HUGE (RIDICULOUSLY HUGE) incentive for students and first-time attendees to attend this year's ReTreat. This year's fees are:

- **Regular ACDA members \$170 for early registration, \$195 after that deadline**
- **Retired members \$90**
- **One day attendance \$100**
- **Student members \$25**
- **First-time attendees \$25**

All Summer ReTreat attendees must be ACDA members. More information about our Summer ReTreat can be found at: [www.il-acda.org/il-acda-summer-retreat/](http://www.il-acda.org/il-acda-summer-retreat/)

### The Church Choir Experience

Sean Newman  
District 7

Church choirs come in all shapes and sizes. Having recently come back to church music ministry, it brings me great pleasure to be able to make choral music with a group of individuals who volunteer their time to "make a joyful noise". Church music has always been a consistent part of my life and I seem to learn more about it every day. It has always been important to challenge my singers, whether they are in a school or a church setting. No matter what age or ability a singer brings, it is important to give them something they can grow from. If we do not challenge even our church choirs, we cannot expect our music ministries to grow. Selecting quality repertoire that fits our ensembles while having faith in the singers that come before us can give us a sense of purpose in the positions we hold.

My growth as a public school music educator has extended far beyond those of my classroom. Church music ministry has not only given me an opportunity to do what I love by serving a congregation, but to give myself ways to grow as a choral educator. The root of so much repertoire goes back to the church. This gives me an opportunity to grow in my knowledge of history, composers and score-study.

Challenging a church choir should be a process that should be strategic, worthwhile, rewarding and inspired. Church choir directors must understand the ministry environment in which they find themselves. There are many church choir configurations that can either be successful or unsuccessful. It all depends on the voicing, repertoire, rehearsal time and the choir's role in the church service. Some of these considerations present a unique

challenge to not only the choir but more so the director. Planning a choir season is much different than planning for a concert in that the music has the purpose of serving the congregation to enhance the worship service, rather than to solely entertain. It's important to consider our church choirs as a team and a community of people gathered for the same reason - to learn and serve in song with their voices, a God-given instrument.

So rest assured, it is okay to challenge a church choir as long as it is done in a considerate, compassionate, loving and purposeful way. We want our choral singers (regardless of age or background) to have a place and ultimately be lifelong musicians who truly appreciate the art of choral music in whatever setting they find themselves in.

## Ethnic and Multicultural

Darius Polikaitis  
Ethnic and Multicultural

Hi! I've recently begun serving as the Ethnic and Multicultural Repertoire and Resource representative for IL-ACDA. I am honored to have been asked, and thankful for the opportunity to give back to the organization from which I have received so much. In this, my first Podium column, I'd like to introduce myself and to share some experiences from 25+ years of work with an ethnic choir in the Chicago area.

I am the child of immigrants. Both of my parents were born in Lithuania, a small Eastern European country situated on the shores of the Baltic Sea. My grandparents fled Lithuania in 1944 at the height of World War II to escape the coming Soviet occupation. My parents were young children then. My mother still remembers leaving her favorite doll on their porch step as they left under cover of night - there was no room in the horse-drawn wagon for toys. Eventually, thanks to the kindness and generosity of the American people, both families made their way to the United States. My father's family settled in Detroit, my mother's in Chicago. We kids (I am the oldest of four children) were raised in an ethnic neighborhood on the south side of Chicago, speaking mostly Lithuanian at home. We were a musical family, and our community provided many opportunities for sharing our talents with others.

And so it was probably natural that just out of college I was asked to serve as the director of an ethnic choir in the Chicago area. The Dainava Lithuanian Chorale had been established in 1945 by Lithuanian exiles in Hanau, Germany.

In its early days the choir provided emotional refuge for people who no longer had a home to return to. Several years later, as choir members began immigrating westward to the United States, a conscious decision was made to move the choir as well. The initial singers arriving in Chicago made arrangements for their colleagues, and eventually Dainava reestablished itself in the Windy City. What a testament to the significance of choral tradition in people's lives!

When I began my work with Dainava, I knew next to nothing about choir directing. Amazingly, the choir board did not seem to have many concerns about that! What mattered to them was that I was a fairly capable musician that could speak Lithuanian. I suspect that this is not uncommon for ethnic choirs. Often musicians with little or no formal training in choral conducting are asked to lead such choirs because they have some level of fluency in the language. My advice to anyone in that situation is - join ACDA! Throughout my years of membership, ACDA has truly been a lifeline - a treasure-trove of knowledge and experience that has made me a better choral musician. Sometimes people within an ethnic community are reluctant to step outside of that community for educational opportunities. My experience has been that stretching one's comfort zone in that way can only bring benefit - to both the individual AND the community.

In 25+ years of work with Dainava, my perspective on the role of the ethnic choir has evolved. Certainly, its primary purpose is to serve a particular ethnic community. At its best, an ethnic choir allows its

singers to experience their heritage in a deep and meaningful way, and provides a comfortable social fabric for those experiences. Yet I've also come to believe that it is just as important for ethnic choirs to share their choral traditions with those outside of their heritage, and especially to participate in cultural exchanges. A practical benefit is that such opportunities protect the choir from stagnation. After all there is a limit to how many times one can perform for the same general audience! However, a more profound benefit is that while sharing our heritage we can also gain a deeper respect for the beauty of other choral traditions. Such exchanges can help to overcome the barriers our society often places between groups of people, fostering a spirit of mutual respect and understanding that our world so badly needs today.

Some years ago, Lee Kesselman invited Dainava to perform the Brahms Requiem and a piece by Lithuanian composer M.K. Ciurlionis with the Dupage Chorale. One of my altos, a recent immigrant from Lithuania, wrote the following about that concert: "... Because we were seated according to height, I found myself between Mary and Diane. They were very friendly, but I still felt uncomfortable. My English was not so good. And to sing such difficult pieces next to strangers! Since the Ciurlionis piece was in Lithuanian, I felt a bit more confident and sang with all my heart, all the while feeling as if Ciurlionis himself was standing by my side. Later, as we rose to begin the German Requiem, I was surprised to find that Ciurlionis was still there. He gently took my trembling hand and said - Say hello to my brother Brahms. And

both of them stayed with me for the rest of the concert, providing the courage to sing those seven great movements, to climb those

seven imposing, yet hopeful steps to redemption ... After the concert, as we said our good-byes I looked into Mary's and Diane's eyes and

smiled. We were strangers no more. Such is the power of music!"

## 2018 Treble Ensemble Sing and Share Festival Review

Aubrey Prince  
Female Choirs

The 5th Annual Illinois ACDA Treble Ensemble Sing and Share Festival took place on Thursday, February 1 at College of DuPage McAnninch Arts Center. This year our festival was bigger and better than ever with 22 high schools participating treble ensembles, 4 amazing Illinois female clinicians, and a featured performance of the University of Illinois Women's Glee under the direction of Andrea Solya. The day kicked off with a massed warm-up led by Laura Bogan from St. Xavier University. The day continued with 20 minute clinics and 10 minute performance spotlights for the participating high school ensembles.

"Getting to hear all the performances throughout the day helped me as performer to see how I could apply their strengths into my individual performance. It was so fun," said Maggie Greenlees, a junior at Riverside Brookfield High School.

A highlight for many students and directors was the University of Illinois Women's Glee performance.

"Their piece about social justice was incredibly inspiring and empowering. It was a highlight of my festival experience," said Angela Murray, a junior at RBHS.

The clinicians for this year's festival were Laura Bogan - St. Xavier University, Karyl Carlson - Illinois State University, Mary Lynn

Doherty - Northern Illinois University, and Andrea Solya - University of Illinois. The feedback and growth experienced from the participating ensembles was incredible. The day culminated in a massed choir performance of Amy Bernon's piece, *She Sings*.

"The whole thing was really amazing! The clinic helped everyone focus on text stress and overall musicality. The clinic was very valuable for our successful concert performance the following week," recounted Sydney Hamer, Sophomore at RBHS.

"The massed choir was beautiful hearing all the voices come together. I took a video and it gives me chills when I listen!"

Illinois ACDA continues to provide meaningful experiences for not only the professional growth of the organizations membership, but also for our choral students throughout the state. This is a wonderful example of how ACDA is empowering the choral arts in Illinois.

"Overall the experience was so good! Getting to listen to a bunch of other choirs, just like yours who have been learning all year, was a great experience," said Alex Angeloni, a sophomore at RBHS. "You can see everyone's strengths and progress. It was super empowering as a member of a women's choir to see all the greatness from all the participating groups come together in one event."

The beautiful facilities at College of DuPage was a perfect location to host an event of this nature. A huge expression of thanks is due to Lee Kesselman and the incredible administration at College of DuPage for continuing to open their doors to this festival experience for Illinois ACDA. As the Female Choirs Repertoire and Resource Chair for IL-ACDA, this event is my favorite to organize and an event I am extremely proud of. The 2019 festival is on the calendar for Thursday, January 31, 2019. Event registration will go live on the Illinois ACDA website on Friday, May 4, 2018. Mark your calendars!



AMERICAN  
CHORAL  
DIRECTORS  
ASSOCIATION

# Choral Composition Contest

**WIN \$1000 FOR YOUR CHORAL  
COMPOSITION!**



*Illinois composers with a creative voice and clear compositional ability are invited to submit works to Illinois-ACDA's annual Choral Composition contest—for a \$1000 prize. The winning composition will be premiered at the Illinois-ACDA Summer Re-Treat, summer 2018. In addition, winning composers are invited to display their works at our annual summer Re-Treat.*

**Entry Deadline is April 1st, 2018**  
**Sponsored by IL-ACDA, Lee Kesselman, President**

**Who may enter:** Illinois composers who are 18 or older by April 1st 2018.

**Award:** \$1000

**Compositional Requirements:** An original work for treble or male voices (*a cappella* or accompanied), approximately 3–8 minutes in length; texts must be free of copyright restriction, or submitted with proof of the author's permission.

**Entry Materials:** E-mailed pdf score, with separate identification form.

**Entry Forms and Specific Details** are available at: <http://www.il-acda.org/awards/>

**Additional Information** can be obtained from:

Philip Spencer, Chair, Illinois-ACDA Composition Contest e-mail:  
[Philipspencer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Philipspencer@sbcglobal.net)