

PODIUM

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PAUL LAPRADE

I would like to begin with a word of gratitude to all of our members who voted in our recent election. As you may know, our President-Elect is Amy Branahl, and Ben Luginbuhl has been chosen as our President-Designate. It is a joy to have them on board, as we are already setting several initiatives into motion regarding membership accessibility, onboarding, and even planning the 2025 Summer ReTreat. Both come to their positions with a plethora of wonderful ideas, some of which will be implemented or prepared during my term.

Your votes also approved our revised ByLaws by over 88% of the IL-ACDA membership. The newest version has already been valuable in adding flexibility in choosing dates for our ReTreat, and in creating more precise governance and processes for committees. A parallel effort to create a policy manual to guide other elements of our organization's operation is also being undertaken with the assistance of the entire board. Again, your leadership team appreciates your kind support in these and all our efforts.

ReTreat 2024.

We are proud to announce that Dr. Maria Guinand and Dr. Marques Garrett have accepted our offer to be our 2024 Summer ReTreat headliners. These wonderful musicians are no strangers to many of you, but they have yet to grace the IL-ACDA roster of headliners. Dr. Guinand is internationally renowned for her work as a conductor, premiering music by John Adams, Osvaldo Golijov, and many others. An expert on South American music, Dr. Guinand will offer a different perspective on essential literature we may wish to program for our choirs. In a similar vein, Dr. Marques Garrett's work as a conductor, composer/arranger/editor, and author expands our familiarity with and understanding of African-American music. His book, "Beyond Elijah Rock: Non-Idiomatic Music of Black Composers" is considered to be an essential read for anyone in our field. We are honored to have them as headliners for this exciting conference.

IL ACDA BOARD continued..

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Please note: due to the timing of the Juneteenth holiday during the week, our ReTreat will begin a day later than what has traditionally been our choice; it is now planned for Thursday and Friday, the 20th and 21st of June 2024.

New Board Members.

Although new members will be added by the time this issue is published, we would like to share the names of some of our newest additions to the IL-ACDA Board. First, our new Children's Choir is Marianna Kosaya, the founder and director of the Children's Choir at the Campenella Center. Many of us heard Marianna's choir at the Fall Conference, and her first article for the Podium is found in this issue. Music in Worship will now be chaired by Dr. Keith Hampton, no stranger to anyone who has been in Illinois-ACDA; we appreciate Keith's return to governance in our organization and also value his contribution to this issue of the Podium. Finally, we are pleased to announce the addition of

Dr. Randy Haldeman as our Collegiate Outreach chair. Randy begins his term with a newly-defined position that will hopefully support other initiatives related to accessibility and membership. While relatively new to Illinois-ACDA, Randy brings many years of experience to this position. He is currently at Highland Community College after a long tenure at the University of North Carolina.

This is an exciting time to be in Illinois ACDA. Laura Coster's masterful planning of our Fall Conference still runs through my

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memory as one of the most fulfilling conferences I have attended in our state, and it is an honor to work with her and the members of our board. I will always welcome your comments, suggestions, and constructive criticism as I believe we are strongest when decisions and paths are chosen collectively.

In service to you,



Paul Laprade
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If you have any questions or comments, please reach out at www.il-acda.org/contact-2

Please reach out to Paul Laprade if you are interested in any open positions at paullapradeacda@gmail.com

Teaching middle school musicians to “work hard, be kind and keep it classy!”

Carol Munn

Youth Choirs Coordinator &
Middle/Jr. High Choirs
McHenry Middle School

I have found that creating a purpose statement for your ensemble can help to clarify goals and expectations for young musicians who may not understand the function of how their actions affect the ensemble as a whole. Several years ago, our administration asked teachers to post a purpose statement or motto under their name plate on their classroom door. After thinking a while I decided on “work hard, be kind”. Encouraging students to work hard may be obvious in an educational setting, but I wanted to focus on exactly what “work hard” meant in the choral classroom, a class that is usually expected to be easy and fun or sometimes something to do instead of going to study hall (as in the case of my school setting). Kindness in the school setting is not automatic for many students and behavior is contagious. I am working to challenge students to question if their behavior towards each other, the classroom, the teacher and the music is kind. Being kind is something almost everyone appreciates!

What does “work hard” look like in a choral rehearsal? The best students and singers make it look easy, but it takes effort. I asked my students to name the singers in our choir who would be most noticed or missed if they were absent. Time after time, students named the same five or six students.

I asked what qualities these students had that made them so valuable to our choir. They listed the following: They made an effort by having their music out, being on task, paying attention to the detail in the music, marking their music with a pencil, using hand symbols when sight singing. They used good breath support, they were able to hold their own part, they were not just relying on the other voices when singing. Therefore, we recognized that all of these actions took attention and effort. After defining these qualities, I listed them on my board in the front of the room. I keep them as reference for ways where we can improve our work ethic throughout the year.

What types of people would we like to be surrounded by in our chorus rehearsals? No one wants to sing in a room full of disrespect or hostile people. Students come from all different backgrounds and unfortunately some of these backgrounds may not always demonstrate how to be kind. Being kind starts by observing and practicing classroom rules that show respect to the classroom, the teacher, fellow students and the music that is being rehearsed. Keeping the classroom clean, saying hello and goodbye when entering or leaving the classroom, waiting your turn to speak, listening to others, and not complaining are all demonstrations of kindness. Middle school students are still learning to have social awareness of how their actions affect others around them.

As much as I would like to just teach the music, any unkind behavior must be addressed first, otherwise our musical growth will be limited due to time dealing with non-musical issues.

I added “keep it classy” to my classroom motto this year to take our interactions with others to the next level. Compliments are free, and they brighten peoples’ day when they are genuinely given and received. I teach my students to say hello and thank you to the bus driver when we go on school trips. We applaud the piano accompanist upon their arrival and completion of rehearsal. We complement the band students after their concert. We smile and say “good job” to the choir that performs before us at competitions. It is possible that no one would notice if we didn’t do any of these things, however, teaching high quality choral music to high quality humans is the goal. I realize I am privileged to stand in front of young students every day and I have an opportunity to teach them to be the best version of themselves

both musically and interpersonally.

Our students are watching us. My motto would not be effective if I didn’t demonstrate working hard and being kind in my professional life. We are teachers, and we are already working hard. We go above and beyond when offering students additional singing opportunities. We help out other teachers in our buildings by substitute teaching. We mentor new teachers. We are conscious about the energy we bring into the building. We build our coworkers up by showing appreciation. We offer to pay it forward. We don’t badmouth other choir programs or directors. We are open minded to learning new things. Creating a motto for my chorus classroom has caused me to examine my behaviors and my reasoning for hard work and kindness. I share this with you as a possible way to help guide our young musicians to be better humans who also make great music.

Programming Considerations for Culturally Diverse Students

Roland Hatcher

District 7

Stevenson High School

As a person whose ethnicity is Puerto Rican, who is also white-presenting with a name like “Roland Hatcher”, I have found that awareness of race, heritage and culture have become central to my identity as a person and a teacher. At every level of school, I largely assimilated (and continue to assimilate) with my Caucasian peers.

As such, I didn’t realize how much my own Hispanic heritage, musically and personally, mattered to me and influenced me until I was teaching predominantly Puerto Rican students in Humboldt Park at my first job with Uniting Voices Chicago (formerly Chicago Children’s Choir), and saw many of my own life’s experiences reflected in them. I spent the first handful of years of my career wondering how I could have been so unaware of my own cultural identity within the profession I have grown to love so dearly, and it clicked - I had never seen myself in music education. I had never worked with a Latinx conductor (until I was co-teaching with a brilliant mentor in Humboldt Park, as a

young professional); moreover, I hadn’t sung or performed music in Spanish, or by a Hispanic composer at any level in the 10+ years I had been singing.

Educational Researcher Dr. Lisa Delpit coined the phrase “The Skin That We Speak”, a concept that is aimed at helping educators learn to make use of cultural differences apparent in language to educate children. One of my most important mentors, Dr. Julia Shaw highlights a parallel between language learning and vocal music: “Shaw (2012) notes “...since music is one of the most intimate expressions of identity, indeed, ‘the skin that we sing,’ then to reject a person’s music can only feel as though we are rejecting [them]”. We as educators control what we program, and control what narratives enter our spaces; I encourage everyone to ponder the following questions as we engage in programming music for our students and ensembles:

- WHY do we select music? Is culture factored into this process?
- WHO does our repertoire represent?
- WHO may our repertoire intentionally or unintentionally exclude, or 'other'?
- WHAT is the dominant cultural voice in our classrooms?
- HOW are our students connected to the music we sing?

Below are a handful of considerations for repertoire selection - this is by NO means a "be-all end-all", but rather an opportunity to more deeply examine our current practices, and connect with students who are not represented by the voices that have traditionally dominated our field: white, male, Eurocentric choral composers and arrangers.

Authenticity

Let me start by saying that I feel the word "authentic" has become a buzzword of sorts; everywhere you turn, whether pertaining to food, music or any aspect of a culture that people aren't familiar with, the world clamors for something AUTHENTIC - whatever that may mean to the wide range of people who use or misuse the term. For our intents and purposes, let's use Volk and Spector's definition, as they define authenticity as "the degree in which music material is 'historically or culturally informed.'" They categorize authenticity into 4 categories:

- Category 1: Pieces whose only connection to the culture is via the title.
 - Often focused on brotherhood/world peace, or are contemporary songs with little to no meaning sung in another language "for fun".
- Category 2: Pieces that employ Western musical forms, but incorporate melodies from other cultures.
 - May be a folk melody, but with an English translation without including the original language text, or a newly composed English text to fit the original melody
- Category 3: Pieces that make a conscious effort to

- incorporate melodic and rhythmic elements from another culture:
 - These pieces employ the original language of the culture and include traditional/culturally accurate accompaniment instruments (i.e. specific percussion, not just generically adding djembe or cajon)
- Category 4: Pieces that are either original compositions by composers from the culture.
 - Volk and Spector suggest transcriptions that are close to the original folk music; I would also contend to add music taught by rote via a culture bearer, especially if the music would traditionally be taught by rote.

At times, categories 1 and 2 can fall into cultural appropriation. This is by no means a 'shaming' of categories 1 and 2; we all have music we love that falls into those descriptions, and maybe sometimes it is still considered acceptable to perform without the relevant cultural context. However, the more frequently that we can be utilizing music from categories 3 and 4, the more likely we can be responding to the cultures of our students, and giving them opportunities to connect to the music they are tasked with performing each concert cycle. While it may take more time and more research to find music by diverse, culture-bearing composers, I have found that it is always worth the extra effort to provide representation for students who have likely never seen themselves in music education before. Arguably the most important part of this equation: high quality authentic repertoire allows for students to learn more about each other's cultures during the learning process, and those bridges built can be invaluable to rapport among students in your classroom.

Linguistic Representation vs. Cultural Representation

A quick word of caution - be careful not to assume that because a student presents a certain way, or speaks a specific language, that all music from that language and its various subcultures will validate them. Culture refers to a way of life, a specific set of beliefs, and can overlap in countless ways with race, nationality, heritage and ethnicity.

Linguistic Representation is simply referring to the ways in which a given language and its semantics may be represented in a space. An example: I previously mentioned I am Puerto Rican - singing in Spanish validates a specific, significant part of my identity, linguistically (still important!). However, if we are singing a folk song from another Spanish speaking country, I likely don't understand any of the subtext behind the song, making it less meaningful to me than a song from Puerto Rico - especially since Spanish is such a specific and geographically nuanced language. The same principle applies to countless other ethnicities, cultures, and regions of the world; making a concerted effort to understand where your students' backgrounds lie is crucial to finding cultural representation.

Utilize Culture Bearers

Perhaps the only thing that any of us could consider valuable from the treacherous time we called "virtual learning" would be that we were forced to share resources with each other, and thus came the advent of connecting with brilliant musicians and conductors far and wide via Zoom. While inevitably geography, budgets, or other challenges may make connecting with a culture bearer challenging, I have found that many people are willing, if not eager to share their culture's music, share their cultural experiences, and help teach something that they are so innately passionate about.

Two important thoughts about this: first, it is never required of a culture bearer to share their music with you - there are times where context would not be appropriate to share the music for an educational

setting, or where they simply may not feel comfortable sharing something; please respect that decision if it is the one they make. Similarly, it is imperative that we, as teachers and conductors, learn alongside our students. It should not be, and cannot be completely incumbent on the clinician or culture bearer to share the music that one time they come in or Zoom in with our ensembles; it's a group effort, and one that involves building a bridge between the culture bearer and our programs. Building personal connections, above and beyond the musical connections we make, with members of communities that are not our own is one of the most rewarding parts of this creative and collaborative process. Also remember - whenever possible, try to compensate culture bearers for their efforts in sharing music; they may not have an octavo for you to buy, but their time, knowledge and efforts are valuable, and for decades, if not centuries, many minoritized people have had their music stolen, or improperly adapted in the name of commercial choral music. Our actions place or displace value on diverse genres and cultures of music.

So What?

Representation matters. Dr. Juliet Hess (2019) states "until music education is a better place for everyone, it is not a good place for anyone." When we are intentional about diversifying our repertoire to widen the scope of our programming, we open our doors to broader groups of students, and we can provide ALL of our learners with validating musical experiences, so that everyone can see themselves in our magical world of music.

A Community Choir Winter Repertoire Review

Christopher Windle, DMA

Community Choirs R&R Chair- *Chicago Chamber Choir*,
William Ferris Chorale, & *Church of the Atonement*

I find holiday concerts a particularly interesting programming challenge for Community Choirs. Audiences often want something familiar, singers seem to oscillate between a desire for challenging repertoire and familiar music, and everyone is anxious and tired as we near the end of the calendar year. Now that the December concert

season is over, I wanted to do a review of what other community choirs from around the state did for their holiday themed programs.

I asked several directors of community choirs throughout the state to send me pieces they performed at their holiday concerts that were either particularly interesting or successful. You will notice the enormous diversity of ensembles - and of repertoire - throughout our state. What a wonderful



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and exciting thing that choral music is thriving. I hope that you find something for future programming in the lists that follow.

Chicago Chorale

Chicago, IL

Bruce Tammen is the founder and conductor of the Chicago Chorale. The Chicago Chorale is an auditioned 60 voice choir that describes themselves as “a professional-level ensemble of singers who cultivate their craft out of genuine love and dedication, giving freely of their time and talent.” This volunteer ensemble rehearses on Chicago’s South Side in the Hyde Park neighborhood and performs throughout the season. Tammen suggests the following from this last December concert:

Javier Busto

O magnum mysterium

SSAATTBB a cappella

Latin text

Approx. 5.5 min

Carl Fisher LLC

#CM9573

Kerensa Briggs

A tender shoot

SATB divisi a cappella

English text

Approx. 2.5 min

Boosey and Hawkes

#M060138492

Sigurdur Saevarsson

Magnificat

SATB a cappella

Icelandic text

Approx. 6 min

Available through the
Iceland Music

Information Centre

(<https://shop.mic.is/work/9895>)

Péter Tóth

Da pacem Domine

Six-part mixed choir a
cappella

Latin text

Approx. 5 min

Available through

Kontrapunkt Music

(<https://kontrapunktmusic.com/en/product/toth-peter-o-salutaris-hostia/?v=7516fd43adaa>)

Rihards Dubra

Oculus non vidit

SATB a cappella

Latin text

Approx. 4 min

Alliance Music

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#AMP 0551

Heartland Community Chorus

Highland, IL (approx. 30 miles east of St. Louis, MO)

Conducted by Luanne Murphy, the Heartland Community Chorus is a 46 member choir with singers ranging in age from their 20s to their 80s. Its mission is to “promote and preserve the tradition of choral music for the cultural enrichment of the Metro East Region.” Now in its 11th season, this auditioned ensemble draws its membership from a dozen small towns downstate.

Murphy says, “We are breaking with tradition this year and exploring some lighter, jazzier holiday songs, although also including several ‘more reverent’ pieces, as we usually do.” She suggests the following:

Elaine Hagenberg
Love's Pure Light
SATB and Piano with
optional String Quartet,
Flute, Oboe, and Timpani
English text
Approx. 6 min
GIA #G-EH1020

Mel Torme and Robert Wells
Mark Hayes (arr)
The Christmas Song
SATB and Piano with
optional orchestral parts
English Text
Approx. 4.5 min
Shawnee Press #HL 35030140

Kyle Pederson
First Cradle
SSAA and Piano with
optional cello
English text
Approx. 6 min
Walton Music.
#WW1996

Felix Mendelssohn
Josh Sparkman (arr)
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
SATB and Piano
English Text
Approx. 3.5 min
Santa Barbara Music Publishing
#SBMP 1670

Chicago Master Singers

Barrington, IL

Founded in 1979, and conducted by John Hughes, the Chicago Master Singers have over 100 auditioned members. Their mission “is to inspire singers and audiences through personal connections and musical excellence,” and they seek to “grow a culture of inclusive, intergenerational ensemble singing through extraordinary musical experiences that lift the human spirit.” This volunteer ensemble draws its membership from Chicago and its suburban communities.

From their December concert, Hughes recommends:

Florence Jolley
Lara Hoggard (arr)
Gloria in Excelsis Deo
SATB and Organ or Brass
Latin Text
Approx. 3.5 min
Shawnee Press
#A0326

Francis Lynch
Every Stone Shall Cry
SATB a cappella
English Text
Approx. 4 min
Francis L. Lynch
FVM1001

Dan Forrest
Festival First Noel
SATB and Organ (opt Brass and Percussion)
English Text
Approx. 6 min
GIA
#G-8720



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Glen Ellyn-Wheaton Chorale

Glen Ellyn, IL

Founded in 1985 and conducted by Jennifer Whiting, today the Glen Ellyn-Wheaton Chorale has 60 auditioned members. Its three-fold mission is to “1. Develop the musical abilities and awareness of its members; 2. Provide participants and audiences with an enjoyable and creative outlet for their cultural needs; [and] 3. Serve as a reminder to the community of the beauty and universality of music in every sense.”

Whiting offers that – for this December concert – they “collaborated with Anima-Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus (Evan Bruno, Artistic Director). The program was anchored by movements from Karl Jenkins' *Stella Natalis* [Boosey & Hawkes #M060122163] and filled out with holiday classics as well as three Willcocks carols (sing-along). Our singers numbered 65 adults and 35 children. We had five strings, one trumpet, two percussion, organ, and celeste.”

She suggests the following works from that program:

African American spiritual	Traditional Welsh carol	Leroy Anderson	Karl Jenkins
Kevin Phillip Johnson (arr)	Mack Wilberg (arr)	Hawley Ades (arr)	Benedictus from The
Children Go Where I Send Thee	Deck the Hall	Sleigh Ride	Armed Man: A Mass for
SATB, Soprano Solo, Piano, and	SATB and Piano (opt Piano	SATB and Piano	Peace
Percussion optional rapper and	Four Hands)	English text	SATB and Piano (with
bass guitar, rap crafted by	English text	Approx. 3 min	multiple Orchestrations)
Ayana Davis	Approx. 2.5 min	Shawnee Press	English text
English text	Oxford University Press	#HL 35020651	Approx. 7 min
Approx. 5 min	#9780193413764		Boosey & Hawkes
Carl Fisher Music			#M060115455
#CM9743			(full vocal score)

Chicago Community Chorus

Chicago, IL

Dr. Keith Hampton is the Artistic Director and Founder of the 130 voice Chicago Community Chorus. This choir's mission is “to provide an advanced choral experience for anyone who loves to sing.” Its volunteer singers rehearse on both the North and South sides of Chicago.

This December's program featured “traditional holiday songs from the USA, Africa, Philippines, Spain, and Ukraine,” and was conducted by Hampton, Brandon M. Brown, Christopher A Joyner, and Michele Douglas. It also included music by composers such as John Williams and John Rutter.

Selections from this program include:

Jackson Berkey	William Dawson (arr)	Traditional Zambian Folk Song
Still, Still Night	Hail Mary	Victor C Johnson (arr)
SATB and Piano (or opt Harp)	SATB a cappella	Bonse Aba
English text	English text	SATB with opt Percussion
Approx. 6.5 min	Approx. 4 min	Bemba (Chibemba) Text -
Walton Music	Neil A. Kjos Music Company	Bantu language spoken primarily in Zambia
#WW1255	#T112	Approx. 2.5 min
		Alliance Music Publications
		#AMP 0626

Roman Yakub	Vicente D. Rubi
Dobryi Vechir! (Good Night)	George Gemora Hernandez (arr)
SATB and Piano (opt sleigh bells)	Ang Pasko Ay Sumapit
Ukrainian and English Text	SATB divisi a cappella
Approx. 3.3 min	Filipino Text
Santa Barbara Music Publishing	Approx. 4 min
#SBMP 1725	Pavane Publishing
	#P1752

Hinsdale Chorale

Hinsdale, IL

For over 20 years, the Hinsdale Chorale has sought “to enrich the musical culture of Hinsdale, Illinois and its surrounding neighborhoods by promoting the appreciation of choral singing in our community.” Directed by Mary Hopper, the 46 member volunteer choir attracts “singers from Chicago and the Western suburbs ...” and “... performs two concerts each year and participates in community events in Hinsdale and surrounding towns.”

This December’s concert centered on SATB version of Benjamin Britten’s A Ceremony of Carols (Boosey & Hawkes # M060014116). In addition, Hopper suggests the following:

Karen P. Thomas	Georg Philip Telemann	Ola Gjeilo	Traditional French Carol
The Birds at Winter Nightfall	Das ist je gewisslich wahr	Ecce Novum	Mark Hayes (arr)
SATB a cappella	SATB with Orchestra (Hopper	SATB and Piano	Masters in This Hall
English Text	adds, “It would be fabulous	(opt String Quartet)	SATB and Piano
Approx. 3 min	with a small orchestra but a	Latin Text	English Text
Available through the	good accompanist can carry	Approx. 4.5 min	Approx. 4.5 min
composer’s website	the accompaniment.”)	Walton Music	Harold Flammer, Inc
https://karenpthomas.com/birds-at-winter-nightfall	German Text	#WW1687	#35013991
	Approx. 3.5 min (first movement		
	only) Public Domain		
	Available on CPDL and		
	IMSLP in multiple editions		

Chicago Chamber Choir

Chicago, IL

Now in its 28th season, the Chicago Chamber Choir’s mission “is to create experiences that engage our community in high-quality choral art.” Directed by Christopher Windle, it performs three concerts a year, and has 44 volunteer singers. The choir auditions its singers primarily from the Northside of Chicago and the surrounding suburban neighborhoods.

This December’s concert focused on themes of “hope” and “home.” From this program, I encourage you to look at these:

Richard Causton	Edwin Fissinger	Alex Berko	Traditional Spiritual	Reena Esmail
The Flight	Love Came Down at	Exodus	Cedric Dent (arr)	A Winter Breviary
SATB divisi a cappella	Christmas	SATB divisi a	He’s Got the Whole World	SATB a cappella
English Text	SATB a cappella	cappella	in His Hands	(3 movements)
Approx. 6 min	English Text	English Text	SATB divisi a cappella	English Text
Oxford University Press	Approx. 2.5 min	Approx. 6 min	English Text	Approx. 12 min
#9780193410886	Walton Music	ECS Schirmer	Approx. 4 min	Oxford University Press
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How Do You Butter Your Toast?

Dr. Paul Nielsen

Treasurer

Retired from Grayslake North HS

Most days, I make breakfast at home. I butter my toast with imported European butter, and I am careful to spread it all the way to the edges. I like the edges and the crust, just as much as I love the buttery middle of the toast. Some people only eat the middle of the toast, leaving the crust behind. No judgement. How do you butter your toast? What does this have to do with being a choir director?

Consider the toast to be your choir program. The buttery middle is where you find your choral ensembles, the singers you want to spend your time with. I think we all tend to stay in the buttery middle of the bread. Consider the entire piece of bread to be every student in your school that enjoys making music. The challenge is to start looking toward the crust. The texture is different. The flavor is different. But the crust is still part of the bread. Those students on the outside of the bread are just as interested in making music as those in the center. The difference, of course, is that those on the outside make music in different ways that do not necessarily fit into our traditional school music programs. I do believe that, as music educators, we need to start buttering our toast all the way to the edges. The students around the edges deserve our attention just as much as those in the center.

How do we reach those students around the edges?

This is a tricky question, and the answer is not universal. Finding the singers and instrumentalists that are outside of your program can be difficult. I've found a few by going to open mic coffee houses at my school or having students tell me about their friends who have a band that are playing at the local bowling alley on weekends. It can take some extra time out of an already too busy schedule, but it is well worth it.

Once you've found these music makers, what do you do with them? Start some non-traditional ensembles. This takes time, energy and patience. I found some students who were interested in

Mariachi, so we started a Mariachi group. At times it was wonderful, and a struggle other times. I learned a lot about a type of music I didn't grow up with. I started a Motown group: singers, rhythm section and horn section. It attracted singers that didn't like choir music and rhythm section players that weren't into jazz. This group ended up flourishing over the years, with tours in Wisconsin, Ohio and Northern Germany. Pop ensembles, contemporary a cappella groups, and folk groups are all different ways to connect to the outer edges of the toast. Depending on the demographics of your school, you may find a number of other ways to connect.

My most interesting attempt to reach the crust of the toast was the formation of a Pirate Choir. It all started as an idea to bring more male voices into the choir program by getting a group together to sing pirate songs. It didn't really increase the number of male voices in the choir, but it turned into an entity all its own. This group of 8 to 16 boys would dress up like pirates and sing sea chanties, work songs and other pirate themed ditties. They performed at town functions, school events, and at area schools. There is so much that could be said about this group, but I'll leave that for another article.

I am sure there are so many more great ideas out there that would serve the fringe musicians in your school. It takes time, effort, and study to make it work, but the rewards are wonderful. The students find a sense of belonging as they make music together. I learn so much from the students about different types of music, as well, and I feel I became a better teacher and musician with a wider focus by doing so. Every time I butter a piece of toast, I am reminded to look outside of the comfortable, buttery, middle of the bread and to enjoy the different textures and flavors on the outside.

A Reflection on Sustainability

Puja Ramaswamy

Secretary

Lake View High School

As we start a new year, I reflect on how much we, as educators, have changed over the last few years. I remember what it was like to be a new teacher and **spend every free moment I had outside of the classroom thinking about the classroom.**

I would allocate countless hours choosing repertoire, lesson planning, organizing fundraisers, and whatever else I could to support my students and school community. Over time, I realized that working like this was unsustainable and I strived to balance my work and home life and make decisions that would not only support my students, but also myself as an individual. But when the Covid-19 Pandemic turned our lives upside down, my work/life balance was thrown in disarray. As educators, we had to learn to teach online, create virtual choirs, and step away from the comfort and reassurance of hearing the voices in harmony around us. We had to work harder and longer to recreate our curriculum and lesson plans to accommodate for our students' social and emotional learning (SEL) and make sure that the content we covered was relevant to their lives as well as national/global events. As we made our way back to the physical classroom, school returned to business as usual. **But we were not the same individuals we were before.**

In these last few years I've felt like a new teacher all over again as I try to resurrect the choir experiences I used to have with my students. Rebuilding community, confidence, and trust in the classroom takes an immense amount of time and energy and has led me to feel burnout countless times. With all that we have been through, how do we keep our role

as music educators sustainable? **My answer is by setting boundaries.**

Boundaries have such a negative connotation, but I see them as a positive attribute. Boundaries allow you to set expectations for yourself and others, which ultimately create spaces for you to be who you need and want to be at any given time. We juggle a myriad of personas on a daily basis and often put ourselves last. But with boundaries, there is time for you to be a teacher, a partner, a parent, a friend, but most importantly, time for you to be yourself. I encourage you to put yourself first as we enter 2024 and take the time to nourish your soul. When you leave rehearsal, let it go mentally and emotionally. Create space for yourself to be fully present wherever you are. Go for a walk outside, meet a friend for coffee, attend a concert, make time for a conference...do what you need to do to feel inspired and create balance in your life. Learn to say "no" when an opportunity will create more stress in your life than joy. **Listen to what you need.**

This change in my perspective has impacted my practice and made me a better educator. In fact, it liberated my creativity in lesson planning, which has led to more student engagement, and has ultimately **brought joy back into the classroom for both my students and myself.**

Estill in the Choral Profession

Ali Kordelewski

Treble Choir R&R

Plainfield East High School

Each year, I have the pleasure of bringing my Madrigal Singers to Western Illinois University where they work with the amazing staff on campus. Dr. Brian Winnie has worked with my students since the fall of 2019. It was then while they began to clinic with him, that I learned about Estill Voice Training (EVT). What he used with his teaching style was truly incredible to watch. My students were able to sing in different styles, and each time he would isolate something for them, things clicked so fast. From there, I wanted to learn and find out more. I attended Level One of Estill Voice Training last

summer. It has changed the way that I teach about the voice. Because of this, I wanted to share an interview that I conducted with Brian Winnie and encourage those in the profession to attend a training to see how it can transform your teaching as well.

What is Estill?

Estill Voice Training (EVT) teaches isolated movement of individual anatomical structures of voice production, which can help singers and speakers build endless voice recipes for varying contexts. It is based in scientific theory and research, and it maximizes understanding and voice control by combining explicit instruction with visual feedback using video endoscopy and spectrogram tools, kinesthetic exercises and exercise program using

Estill Exercises, and auditory feedback using recorded samples and training guides.

EVT offers four main courses:

1. Foundations of Estill Voice Training – a self-directed, fully online course to help learn the fundamental elements of the voice model.
2. Introductory Workshops – these workshops are led by Estill Master Trainers and Estill Mentor & Course Instructors.
3. Hybrid Level One: Figures for Voice – teaches the craft of singing and speaking. Participants explore 13 vocal structures with Figures for Voice exercises to help develop control of each structure's options.
4. Level Two: Figure Combinations for Six Voice Qualities – participants learn to mix the options from Level One into six basic voice qualities, which provide the foundation for the Estill Voice Model. From there, endless voice qualities can be created.

Each course offers lectures, small group practice with personal feedback, and open coaching sessions. Beyond the main courses, there are numerous special topics courses and advanced workshops available throughout the world.

When did you discover Estill?

As a public-school choral teacher, I felt I had gaps in my knowledge and many unanswered questions. I knew how to model expressive singing, but exactly what was going on in the voice to produce those outcomes? I had experience performing and teaching musical theatre vocal technique, but I didn't fully understand it. Even more so, I wanted more concrete answers to “why” we used specific warm-ups and how the voice functioned to sing varying styles of music.

I began my doctoral work at the University of Washington in 2011 and came across the name Jo Estill in my research class. Jo was the founder of EVT and her 1988 article, “Belting and Classical Voice Quality: Some Physiological Differences” provided me with the first answers to some of my questions. This led me to her voice training model, Estill Voice

Training. I attended the courses and started my certification journey right away so that I could use this work in my dissertation, “Contemporary Vocal Technique in the Choral Rehearsal: Exploratory Strategies for Learning.”

How has Estill changed your teaching style?

So much of what we do as choral teachers involves helping students sing more authentically and sustainably in a wide range of diverse repertoire. We teach this knowledge largely in a group ensemble setting, however, and our general feedback can be confusing to students. Some students need more explicit feedback that helps them know exactly what to change and what not to change. EVT provided me with exercises that correspond directly to aspects of voice production that need adjustments for various genres. With this knowledge, I was able to offer more individualized instruction and feedback from within the group ensemble setting. This helped make my teaching more effective and efficient. The addition of individual work during rehearsal also helped the entire ensemble grow by transferring the modeling and feedback to their own singing.

I have always believed that choral teachers are often a student's only voice teacher. This is an enormous responsibility, and Estill provided me with a model for teaching and learning about the voice that promotes life-long learning. I believe it's a choral teacher's responsibility to help singers know how the voice functions so they can practice effectively, transfer learning to future repertoire, and know how to functionally achieve their expressive goals.

What ways do you use Estill in your choral ensembles? Every component of my rehearsal incorporates the Estill Voice Model in some way. I have integrated it fully into my pedagogy at the undergraduate and graduate levels. I have developed a tech-up process that includes the basic elements of a vocal warm-up and develops the voice throughout the entire rehearsal. I use Estill Figures in my score analysis and lesson plan design, and I teach students to analyze their scores with the voice in mind. They analyze and prepare for how a particular pitch might cause the voice to respond and what other options exist

instead. From there, students can choose an exercise that helps them achieve that option in their own practice or for others.

When sight-reading music in rehearsal, students are using muscle memory in conjunction with sight-singing tools such as solfège. This has helped their sight-singing because they understand how a pitch or musical outcome corresponds to a particular vocal “set-up” rather than relying solely on their inner or outer aural awareness.

Students also incorporate a lot of gesture in rehearsal. This gesture is connected to an element of voice production such as for rib expansion, an onset, or tongue height to name a few. This awareness also connects students a bit more to a conductor's gesture as well, and it opens more possibility for gestural recipes.

Estill in the choral rehearsal mostly changes the way in which a conductor-teacher attends to adjustments. We can hear a voice or a section that needs a certain shift in recipe, and we can provide a quick exercise to help. Or once students have enough working knowledge of the voice, teachers can have students engage in a collaborative discussion of what needs to be adjusted toward a specific outcome. This type of teaching and learning environment can be extremely powerful and rewarding.

What training do you have in Estill?

I am an Estill Mentor & Course Instructor with Testing Privileges. There are multiple levels of certification that begin with Estill Figure Proficiency. From there, one can work toward Estill Master Trainer, and after a minimum of five years at that level can work toward Estill Mentor & Course Instructor. After that, various levels of advanced certifications can be achieved

to train future trainers.

Where can people find resources for Estill/courses that are available?

The best source for up-to-date information is estillvoice.com. From there, you can find upcoming courses, training options in the Online Academy, and an online store for resources. If folks are interested in how I have integrated this into the choral rehearsal, you can find my articles and resources in my website brianwinnie.com. There will also be future online and in-person courses on this topic coming within the next year.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Estill truly is for everyone. I have continued my training and professional development beyond EVT and have attended many other voice training workshops and courses throughout the world. I have always felt that Estill integrates well into anyone's current pedagogy and other pedagogies integrate well into EVT. I am also continually grateful for the continued growth and collaborative atmosphere of the Estill community.

iChoir: Finding Presence with iPads

Cory Boulton

District 3

Bradley University

As music educators, and especially as ensemble conductors, we are always seeking to give our students a meaningful experience. Not just an experience that makes them happy or that gets them to show up for rehearsal, but an experience that touches them so profoundly that they are changed. These are the experiences that only exist in the space of shared understanding. Empirically, we know that three psychological phenomena have to happen simultaneously in order for that peak experience to occur. Students have to 1) be making music with a very high performance level, 2) be in a state of superfluidity, and 3) be empathically blended. When investigated this way, we realize that it takes a tremendous split-moment in time to actually create this type of experience. If we are lucky, most of us may have two or three of these pinnacle moments over the course of our lifetime, and they are usually

between the ages of 12-22. Yet, we work to create these experiences for our students every day.

There are various rehearsal techniques and methods that can be applied to support an environment where these three phenomena can be met. Teachers spend a lifetime gathering these tools, but the one thread that runs through no matter what the technique or context is presence. Humans are only able to experience true connection, greatness, and ease when they are fully present. But, with technology being inevitable, we know that true presence is getting harder and harder to ascertain. One of the places where we can find presence most is in music-making. Being such a complex and intentional process, the brain only has the ability for full engagement. It's one of the reasons that many are afraid to open the door for technology in rehearsal, for fear that it will change the sacredness of music-making.

But, with the rise of digital and self-publishing, costs of printing sheet music are getting higher and higher. Not only are teachers paying for the number of copies needed but also paying to physically copy the music.

Because funding is rarely abundant, I decided that it was time to be brave and investigate the abyss that is the cross-section between technology and music-making. I wanted to know if there was a possibility for full presence in that space. After receiving a grant, my entire choir started the year with iPads and styluses.

Prediction: No big deal, right? Same music, easy substitution. All college students love technology.

Reality: Big deal. Same music, completely different experience. All college students do not love technology.

During the first six weeks, the discoveries that we made as an ensemble were astounding.

While the iPads had given us the advantages of portability, budgetary savings, and accessibility to a collective choral library, our observations of how the

energetic intricacies of rehearsal had drastically changed were unexpected and very important to note.

Typically, our rehearsals are pretty efficient, fast-paced, focused, and without excess chatter.

After introducing the iPads, rehearsals slowed in pace—it took students more time to open the music, scroll back to measures, and wake-up the stylus to write in markings. In addition, it often took multiple times to “turn the page” when the initial swipe left didn’t work.

When there were measures where a certain voice-part did not sing, instead of just following along until the next entrance, singers would “x-out” of the music, click a different app, open another piece of music, or check email. Oftentimes, subconsciously.

When a cut-off was given, there was immediate fidgeting and talking.

Students with dyslexia and other exceptionalities struggled to focus and read effectively on the screen.

Our collaborative pianist accidentally swiped two pages during the concert, and missed an entrance.

While work was still getting done, and we eventually came to the same level of musical success, it is most imperative to point out that students left rehearsals feeling frustrated and ungrounded for no known reason. After several conversations with the students, we discovered that it was the lack of full presence in rehearsal that was causing such a shift in energy.

Where there was once silence, there was now noise.

Where there was once stability, there was now instability.

Where there was once peace, there was now chaos.

Where there was once patience, there was now agitation.

The sacred space that was once our rehearsal, was now just a space like every other space in our day, and we didn’t even know it was happening.

Change was needed.

Now, at the end of the semester, I can tell you that things are still not perfect, but we have worked hard to find presence while using the iPads.

Students made an effort to change some of their behaviors they didn't even know were happening: (1) they unlinked their iPad with their phone so there were no notifications; some even turned off the internet, (2) they put the stylus back in the holder

when not writing in markings, (3) they prepared and memorized more efficiently so that they didn't need to hold the iPad, and (4) they swiped earlier in case two swipes were needed.

Most profoundly, the students became aware that every choice they make in rehearsal, and in their life, must be intentional towards creating that sacred space where they can experience full presence. Only then, are they changed. And, in the end, isn't this change the legacy we leave behind?

Why Do We Worship?

Dr. Keith Hampton

Music in Worship Chair

Chicago Community Chorus

I often ask myself the questions: Why do we worship and why should my music be involved in worship? My doctorate is in Church Music and I have a passion for worship, but I am inspired by what the Bible says about worship and music in worship. The passage in the Bible that justifies music in worship for me is 2 Chronicles 5:12-14

¹² and the Levites who were the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets—

¹³ indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

As a musician, I absolutely know that music has an impact on worship and sometimes may even be the focus. This sometimes feeds my ego because as the 14th verse states in my own imagination: "my music is so good, the minister just needs to say the benediction and we can all go home" But then I am put in my place when I ask myself, "Why do we worship?"

The purpose of worship, in my opinion, is to enter into a dialogue between God and myself. Additionally, I feel strengthened around other believers, because I can see their faith, and hear their experiences and testimonies. The Bible says in 1 Chronicles 16:29 NIV: Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness. In Psalm 95:6: O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

As I enter into the role of Music in Worship Chair, I want all of us to think about some questions and begin conversations around these questions:

1. What does worship look like in my church?
2. How did we worship "back in the day"?
3. To whom am I ministering and is my musical leadership relevant and meaningful to them?
4. What musical skills do I need in order to provide meaningful worship experiences?
5. How has the pandemic affected my worship and the worship of others?

Why Do We Worship? continued

6. What resources do I have available to me from the standpoint of financial, volunteer, musical colleagues/friends and equipment?

7. Finally, Do I truly have the energy and the passion to serve others with my musical leadership or am I just robbing God?

In closing, I love what Paul says in his letter to the Romans 12:1 So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life - your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life - and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do.

Dr. Keith Hampton is the Cantor to the Seminary Community at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; Director of Music and Organist at St. Thomas Episcopal Church; Assistant Director of Sacred Music at Trinity United Church of Christ; Artistic Director/Founder of the Chicago Community Chorus and President of DrKT Productions (drkeithhampton.com).



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Nurturing Musical Intonation Skills in Young Voices

Marianna Kosaya

Children's Choir R&R

Campanella Center

I offer greetings as the new Children's Choir R&R representative for Illinois-ACDA, and would like to introduce myself to our state chapter. My name is Marianna Kosaya, and I arrived in America 30 years ago. I was trained as a music educator and choir director for K-12 in Kiev, Ukraine. Ukraine has many

Ukraine has many rich choral traditions deeply ingrained in its culture. My passion for choral singing and the desire to share my knowledge and skills led me to establish my own choir program in northern Illinois: I am the founder and choir director of Campanella Children's Choir, based in Northbrook, IL. In this article, I aim to share techniques and ideas for improving intonation at an early age.

It is important to begin working on intonation accuracy with children at an early age.

Intonation inaccuracy can lead to difficulties in performing music. Addressing this problem enables children to successfully learn and perform music with a high degree of quality. Educators need to recognize the significance of this task and provide appropriate assistance to children to be successful. One must also keep in mind that teaching vocal skills requires careful development of the child's voice while preserving its natural sound, and that one must be intimately familiar with the physiology children's vocal cords. I would like to propose four important stages to consider when addressing intonation in young voices.

Speech Stage:

Developing voice through engaging vocal training activities allows children to freely express emotions beyond aesthetic boundaries. These activities help children explore the capabilities of their voices, manage them, and utilize the body's energetic resources. Speech intonation, similar to musical intonation, expresses feelings and the speaker's mood. Vocal games in this stage involve articulation exercises, exercises for speech and singing breath control, warm-ups, and rhythmic recitations. The aim is to prepare children's voices for singing by warming up the muscles, improving intonation perception, and teaching the reproduction of musical sounds.

Transition from Speech to Singing Intonation:

Forming singing intonation begins with simple and prolonged melodies on comfortable pitches. For preschoolers, songs on adjacent pitches, such as "mi-re" "fa-mi" or "sol-fa" are used. Due to the characteristics of vocal breath, starting from the higher pitch is advisable. After mastering primary pitches, it is recommended to practice melodies in different registers, sometimes using imagery, such as asking how a bear or a bird would sing them. It is important to ensure that children sing softly without straining their voices. Body percussion, such as clapping or stomping, can be used to enhance the musical experience.

Improving Articulation:

Improving articulation involves paying attention to proper mouth opening and avoiding a clenched jaw. Lowering or releasing the lower jaw promotes the correct positioning of the larynx. Teachers can instruct students to gently press on their cheeks to facilitate proper mouth opening.

Relative solmization techniques:

Relative solmization techniques, developed by the Hungarian composer, Zoltan Kodály, can accelerate the learning process. Kodaly recommends starting with exercises on lighter intonations, such as 1-3 and 1-5 scale degrees, gradually progressing to include all pitches in the full scale.

Additional techniques for developing pure intonation include:

- Accompanying piano
- Singing with a closed mouth
- Singing on the vowel "oo" (which has fewer overtones)
- Singing without accompaniment

In working with children, especially beginners, patience and systematic approaches are essential. The focus should be on developing coordination between hearing and singing, with accuracy achievable when these elements are fully aligned. The development of young voices relies on producing soft and light sounds from an early stage, and is best achieved when that development is guided carefully and systematically, such as through the process outlined above.