illinois acda

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PODIUM

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President's Message

Amy Branahl
IL-ACDA President
New Trier High School

President's Note: Renewed, Recharged, and Revitalized

I hope you have had a wonderful summer break and time for you to grow as a person but also as a conductor and musician. It was so wonderful to be serving in my second year in this role and stand proud that for over five decades our IL-ACDA chapter continues to provide resources for our members—sharing literature, hosting festivals, and networking within our vibrant community of choral conductors across the state.

Whether you are leading a children's choir, shaping voices in schools, directing in a sacred setting, or building ensembles in the collegiate or community sphere. We ask you to look at our upcoming events to see the value of an ACDA membership. These events provide opportunities for your singers to not only to learn, but also to contribute your own voice to the rich fabric of our choral organization. Please save the date for all the amazing events we have planned for this upcoming year by going to our website. https://www.il-acda.org/events/

- Composition Contest Award Deadline- August 1, 2026
- IL-ACDA Junior High Honors Chorus - October 3, 2026
- Join Voices, Chicago! - November 6, 2026 from 8:30am- 2:00pm: Northeastern Illinois University
- 2026 All State Show Choir Festival. October 8-10, 2026: Waubonsie Valley High School
- Extra-Curricular: Sing and Share - October 23, 2026: Waubonsie Community College
- Music in Worship Festival - November 7th, 2026: Pilgrim Congregational Church
- IMEC 2027
  - Thursday, 1.28.27: Obed & Isaac's 8:30-10:30pm
  - Friday, 1.29.27- Reading Sessions: Four Points Sheraton 3:30-4:45pm
- Central Illinois Treble Fest- February 11, 2027: Five Points Washington, IL
- North Treble Festival- February 11, 2027: College of DuPage, IL
- ACDA 2-Year College Festival -February 21, 2027
- HS SATB Festival (9-10 and 11-12 choirs): March 6, 2027
- National ACDA - March 7-10, 2027, Minneapolis, MN
- 2027 Re-Treat: June 23-24, 2027

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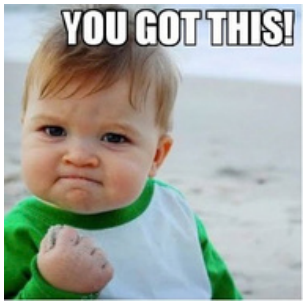
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President's Message continued

Thank you so much to everyone who has come out to this past year's Summer Re-Treat as we had an incredible day of two days of learning and music making as a Director's Chorus under the direction of Dr. Kristina MacMullen and learning so much from our composer and educator colleague, Dan Davison. I encourage each of you to join us at IMEC for our reception at Obed and Isaac's at IMEC and our annual reading session. Also, please save the date for our Summer ReTreat for next year June 23-24, 2027. The theme is "Voices for Life: Nurturing Choral Excellence from First Song to Lasting Legacy." We will be exploring how to work with singers of all ages. It promises to be another fantastic conference! Lastly, I want to take a moment to thank the IL-ACDA board for all the work they have and continue to do. May this year give us the courage to take a chance, be bold, and support one another with this renewed energy. I often write quotes to encourage me along the way. So with that, I leave you with this:



With gratitude,
Amy J. Branahl
President, Illinois ACDA

Empowered Singers, Sustainable Classrooms: Reimagining Student Leadership Through an SEL Framework

Christian Jackson
District 1
Francis W. Parker School

I am a 7th-year Chicago-based educator who simultaneously feels like I am finally "figuring things out" and the reality of teacher burnout. I find myself wearing too many hats, feeling the expectations of a high-performing program without the necessary support, and still having the internal drive to improve. I have created excellent relationships with my students, and I know they feel the pressures I face because they are always asking to help and do more to take some of the load off me. I have found myself asking "How can I continue to foster this care and this emotional awareness?" and "How can I create a student leadership model rooted in genuine emotional investment rather than simply offloading mundane tasks?" My graduate studies and personal professional development have led me to begin developing a Student Leadership model rooted in SEL.

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Empowered Singers, Sustainable Classrooms: Reimagining Student Leadership Through an SEL Framework continued_____

Secondary choir programs can easily turn into pressure cookers. Directors are rarely just teaching music—we are simultaneously running tours, managing uniforms, handling administrative paperwork, and offering emotional support to students. When every single decision and detail rests entirely on our shoulders, burnout and high turnover become almost inevitable.

To create a music program that actually lasts without exhausting the teacher, we need to move away from complete top-down control. Instead, shifting toward a framework built on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and shared student leadership offers a far more sustainable path.

Embedding SEL in student leadership targets core competencies such as self-awareness, relationship-building, and responsible decision-making. When student roles are designed around these principles—rather than just handing out repetitive chores—the choir transforms from a strict hierarchy into a connected community.

When students have real input, their commitment changes. They stop waiting around for orders and start actively shaping the rehearsal environment. This shift meets the developmental needs of high schoolers while protecting the director's time and energy.

To make this work in practice, responsibilities can be divided into three clear areas:

- **Section Leaders & Rehearsal Assistants (Musicianship):** Rather than just handing out pencils or passing out sheet music, I am beginning to involve students in leading most rehearsals. I will model the first half of warm-ups and allow a section leader to…attempt…the second half. Although this isn't successful in every single rehearsal, this builds independent musicianship and peer accountability.
- **Ensemble Officers & Logistics Managers (Administration):** Student officers may handle attendance, pass out sheet music, organize uniforms, and set up the risers. The biggest addition I have added this year is leading the riser placements. Students will have the most control over how they stand, the set order, and how they get on and off stage. Handing off these daily logistics clears away a huge amount of administrative noise for the teacher.
- **Culture & Welcoming Ambassadors (Community):** These leaders focus entirely on the environment—welcoming new singers, planning team-building activities, and keeping a pulse on group morale to ensure everyone feels included.

Sharing leadership isn't stepping away from your job; it's effective teaching. When students step up to resolve routine daily challenges together, you no longer have to micromanage every minute of class.

Ultimately, freeing yourself from routine operational stress lets you focus on what actually matters: expressive conducting, high-level artistry, and personal mentorship. By letting students share the load, you build a resilient program and cultivate independent musicians along the way.

For more ideas, feel free to reach out to me at christianjackson@fwparker.org or check out Puja Ramaswamy's fantastic article from the Winter edition of *The Podium* "Cultivating Leadership in a Rehearsal Setting".

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Student Leadership in High School Choral Programs

Abby Risner
District 8
Dixon High School

Student leadership positions are common in many choral programs at every level. Leadership opportunities can empower students to take ownership over their program and can help build a stronger community and culture in their choirs. As a student, I was fortunate to have many opportunities to lead throughout my high school and college years. These experiences made a substantial difference in helping me find my purpose, feel more connected to others in my choir, and most importantly, showed me that my presence mattered in choir. Now as a high school director, I made sure to continue and build upon the system that my predecessor created and have seen just how much these leadership positions mean to students and strengthen our program throughout the year.

The leadership system:

All of our choir leaders are known as the Choir Board. Within the board, there are leadership positions that have roles that represent the entire program as a whole and positions that operate within individual ensembles. Choir Board meetings occur monthly to discuss any number of items regarding program needs and student engagement. Choir Board members apply for their position, prepare a short speech that is presented to the entire choir program, and are ultimately voted in by the students at the end of each year.

At the individual ensemble level:

The leadership positions I have available as a part of each ensemble are choir secretaries and section leaders.

Choir secretaries are the “go to” student for each class period. They are responsible for checking our attendance board system and ensuring all students place phones and other personal tech in our school-mandated phone caddies. The secretary for that period will write the names of absent students and students who have failed to turn in their tech as we start warmup at the bell. I will then use their notes to quickly address tech concerns and submit attendance during our first transition. I have found that having a student assist with these processes has really helped save time in rehearsal and has increased student compliance with our school tech rules. Secretaries also act as the “voice” of their choir. Students are able to submit any questions, concerns, or suggestions to their secretary who can bring up student comments during monthly choir board meetings. The information secretaries collect has helped all students speak up for themselves and make suggestions to further build up our choral program.

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Section leaders are student leaders that lead sectionals, are go-to peer mentors, and take other musical responsibilities as needed. Section Leaders complete an application and are selected only by the director. Students who are section leaders should be highly collaborative, be organized, and have a good level of musical independence. These students can also be utilized to run rehearsals in the event of a director absence.

As representatives of the program as a whole:

- **Choir President** - Helps run board meetings, has a speaking role in each concert, assists with recruitment
- **Vice-President** - Shares in the president's responsibilities and organizes choir social events
- **Musical Operations Coordinator** - Organizes sheet music and costumes and can act as a junior conductor if interested
- **Head of Communications** - Designs posts and flyers to be shared with the community and manages choir social media accounts

These roles have helped keep the entire program running smoothly. The student leaders have been able to develop fun social events to keep everyone engaged and help with a lot of the behind-the-scenes work to help me focus on other director tasks.

Thoughts to consider:
Be sure to think through and provide a detailed description of how your leadership system looks and operates and communicate that with your entire program and their parents and guardians.
Create a leadership program that works for you and the needs of your program. Provide some kind of in-person meeting schedule or training day to help your student leaders learn expectations, build their leadership skillset, and have a place for everyone to share and contribute to current events. Overall, having a leadership program in place has contributed tremendously to an excellent choir culture and has improved student experience tenfold.



Check out IL-ACDA's
Favorite Choral Works on pages 11 and 12!

No One to Cover the Gap

Cory Boulton
College/University Choirs
Bradley University

We are more tired than we've ever been, and it isn't what you'd think.

In most professions, when someone doesn't do their part, somebody else picks up the slack: a coworker is out, so another person covers their calls. A colleague misses a deadline, so the rest of the team absorbs the work, and no one knows any different. Most jobs and professions survive uneven effort by someone else filling in the gap.

Ensembles don't work that way, and most people outside our field have no idea what that's like. An ensemble isn't a stack of individual contributions you can redistribute when one singer is absent or isn't prepared. And while we do adapt, adaptation should not be the new expectation. An ensemble is a single entity, and when one of the elements isn't present-in every sense of the word-it cannot thrive. No one can conduct hard enough to make sound exist that was never created (but I imagine that's why we all struggle with tension). There is no slack to pick up, because the material itself simply isn't there to work with.

So instead of picking up the slack, we do something stranger and far more exhausting: we manufacture, ourselves, what should have already existed in the ensemble. We use bigger gestures, louder instructions, and more gimmicks to keep engagement while we travel back in skill-building. When a section shows up underprepared, we don't get to redistribute their work to someone else. We build it, in real time, with everyone watching, out of our own energy, clarity and repetition...and usually in a fraction of the rehearsal time it should require. We are publicly, and simultaneously, doing their preparation and ours, working two or three times as hard to pull the ensemble to the baseline that used to be the starting point, not the goal.

The gap between what an ensemble needs to have already done and what it decides to bring has become our real job. And it's invisible to almost everyone but us, because from the outside, a good concert still sounds like a good concert. No one in the audience knows how much of that sound was built out of our own reserves instead of the ensemble's preparation. I think it's part of why this conversation stays hushed, because if we say it out loud it might sound like we don't love our students or like we have failed. But I don't think we've failed; we've just absorbed the extra weight of unpreparedness and carried it as ours to stay successful in a time when commitment is scarce and accountability is rare. We have gotten incredibly good at doing the work of a thousand men. But skill isn't the same thing as sustainability, and that shouldn't have to be the baseline for our profession.

Right now, the only place this gets said honestly is in a side hallway at a convention or a text thread with our safe person. We've been treating our own exhaustion like something to manage secretly the same way we manage everything else that goes wrong in a rehearsal. But this isn't a private failure so it shouldn't be a private fix.

Let's name it, out loud and on the record, that this is real and a shared condition of the job right now. It is not evidence that we have lost our edge.

Maybe once it's out, our conversations will change from trading war stories in a hallway to trading the small ways we are teaching readiness back into an ensemble, instead of assuming it will show up on its own like it used to. We play the long game. We are born builders; we've just never had to build this design before.

I don't know if the pendulum swings back on its own. In fact, I'm not sure it ever has, for anything that mattered. But I do know it doesn't swing back when we hide. It moves because enough of us decide the long game is worth playing out loud, together.

A Look Behind Us and a Look Ahead

Jake Stouffer
Historian
Dundee-Crown High School

Hello, ACDA members! My name is Jake Stouffer, and I am the new historian for the Illinois Chapter of ACDA! I currently teach choir and music theory at Dundee-Crown High School, and have previously taught at Jacobs and Richmond-Burton High Schools. I have been tasked with a few tasks within our organization, and I have been working to bring our archives and records up to date.

One of the most important things that any organization can do is be aware of its history. ACDA was founded in 1959, and in the years since Illinois ACDA began keeping records, we have had an amazing history of quality conductors, clinicians, repertoire lists, and board members who have helped to steward along an incredible organization. Our organization has brought William Dawson, Doreen Rao, Mary Hoffman, Weston Noble, Rene Clausen, John Rutter, Moses Hogan, Andre Thomas, Laura Farnell, and many other choral luminaries to Illinois to serve as headliners and teachers for our annual Re-Treats. Our current and past board members have provided carefully curated repertoire selections for our various reading sessions at IMEC in January and over the summer, helping bring countless new ideas to the educators that we serve. And, our members continue to seek out our history so that we can make our classrooms better for our students and our performances more meaningful for our communities.

Delving into the past to explore these resources always gives me an appreciation for the time, energy, and passion that the folks who came before us have had for this organization. Coordinating conferences around the state while being amazing educators in their own right is something that is admirable and not at all easy to accomplish. Service in the support of your profession is noble, and IL-ACDA has certainly had its share of challenges and triumphs along the way. Our role as the professional organization geared specifically toward Choral Music Education and the performance of the artform is important.

I will continue to work on compiling these resources and I am always available for any questions or suggestions that you might have. I will be providing updated lists for the website throughout the course of the next year, and my goal is to have as comprehensive a snapshot of our organization's history as possible. Thank you for being an ACDA member and for supporting the work of such an important area as Choral Education!

Not my Tempo: Working with a Combo

Jess Heinrich
Vocal Jazz
Geneva Community High School

As a vocal jazz director, you may feel comfortable with swing, you may feel comfortable with vocal jazzers, but sometimes the most daunting aspect of vocal jazz can be working with a combo. In the vocal profession, we are masters of the craft of singing, and 95% of the time we know as much, or more about singing than our singers do. Something we don't often deal with, that our instrumental ensemble teachers deal with all the time, is not being a master of every instrument in the ensemble. Band teachers have their primary instrument, let's say it is trumpet, that they would feel comfortable teaching private lessons on. If you asked them to go teach flute lessons, they would be able to tell them the basics, but they would not feel comfortable teaching advanced players how to do specific flute technique. This is exactly the case for a combo. Learn the basics of drum set and bass and you are set to walk into a rehearsal with a combo. It is the individual combo players job to know their instrument, it is your job to be able to verbalize basic instructions. Here are some basic ways to go about working with a vocal jazz combo.

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Drum set: Your most important part when it comes to drumset is to understand the basic tempo and roughly how the beat should sound. First, look at the tempo marking. For example, Guter's arrangement of Waters of March (Found at Anchor Music), calls for Laid back, Easy Bossa with the quarter note equalling 122. Immediately, I go to Youtube and type in Drum Groove Bossa Nova to learn about what kind of feel I should be going for. Then I can say things like "can you please switch to a brush on the snare drum" or "I need the bass to sound more like a heart beat".
Beyond the feel of the tempo marking, your second most important part is going through the music and finding the places you want "hits". Now, some publishers provide an exact drum score. Others provide a starting measure, then a ton of repeats throughout the score with a measure here or there outlining specific rests or hits. Comb through your score to find the places you specifically want the drums to rest, or places you want a big crash sound. If you don't have any opinions on this yet, that is fine! Just follow the scores in front of you and over time you may start to have more opinions about what is written. Unlike vocal scores, drum set scores are mainly just outlines.

Bass: It is not your job to instruct them on how to use their instrument. It is your job to get them speaking the language of "jazz". Time to go back to studying your chordal analysis! You will have two types of scores available for bass. One is a note-by-note written score. Usually this score has a walking bass line written out for your new-to-jazz bassists. Then, there is a score with just chord symbols, and the occasional hits or rests written in. If you are given the latter score but still have a new player, have them stick with the root notes in each measure, either doing quarter notes, or just a whole note per measure. From there you want to start to teach them how to go from one chord to the next. Have them experiment coming at the next chord from one note above or below it. For example, if you have a G chord, and then an F chord with a 4/4 time signature, have them play three quarter notes of G, then walk it down by doing Gb on the fourth beat, and then landing on the next root of F. They will start to develop an ear for when their choice sounds odd or not.

Piano: This may be the easiest one for many of us, as this is often most choral musician's secondary or primary instrument. However, this is often the instrument that makes or breaks the ensemble. Your singers rely on the piano due to their choral background. So if the piano is not grooving, your singers will not either. Again, there are two types of scores that are provided, one is a written out accompaniment, the other is just chord symbols with hits and rests. Either is fine based on your pianist's preference. The bass is providing the root notes, the drummer is providing the rhythm, and your pianists should be providing the "sprinkles". Less is more. They should let the bass and drums lead while providing extra color for the vocalists and leaning back on the beat rather than staying right on top of it. This is often the largest pitfall when it comes to converting your classical pianist to the jazz world. They want to stay right on top of the beat, but they need to lean back and let others lead. This is also, often, present in pop music if they want to have a non-jazz example to try this with.
Conducting: Last but not least, is your job as the conductor of this combo. You are only important for cues. You should not be conducting every beat like you would a choral ensemble. Count them in, which you can do verbally and not with gesture. Then after that, crescendos, decrescendos, accents, rests and large hits are your job to cue. You don't even necessarily have to keep standing in front of the ensemble, because they are using more of their ear than their eyes in jazz. This goes for your vocalists as well.

There you have it, some tips and tricks of the combo trade. Also, don't forget, jazz is a largely improvisatory field, so if mistakes are made, or things don't always go 100% right, in the words of Louis Armstrong and Bing Crosby "and that's jazz".

More Than Pronunciation: How Singing in Many Languages Builds Young Musicians, Leaders, and Community

Marianna Kosaya
Children's Choirs
Campenella Center

Over the years, I have discovered that singing in many languages shapes children in ways I never expected. It develops confident learners, encourages leadership, strengthens collaboration, and transforms the choir into a true learning community.

Elementary-aged children are naturally curious. They approach unfamiliar sounds with openness and enthusiasm rather than fear. When they sing in different languages from an early age, they learn that making mistakes is simply part of the learning process. Instead of feeling intimidated by words they cannot pronounce, they become excited by the challenge.

One of the most rewarding outcomes has appeared outside the choir room. I have noticed that many of my singers are eager to enroll in foreign language classes when they reach middle school and high school. Learning another language no longer feels intimidating because they have already experienced the joy of exploring different languages through music. They have learned that unfamiliar sounds eventually become familiar and that persistence leads to success.

Perhaps the most unexpected tradition in our choir developed completely naturally.

Almost every year, one or more children happen to study a language represented in our repertoire. Some are taking Spanish, French, or German at school. Others are learning Italian, Mandarin, or another language outside of school. Rather than simply asking me every pronunciation question, these students become our "language experts."

When we begin learning a new piece, these singers help demonstrate pronunciation, explain difficult sounds, and answer questions from their peers. Very quickly, they become mentors within the rehearsal.

Their role extends even further. Whenever students are preparing solo repertoire in one of these languages, I encourage them to seek out our language experts for help. Instead of relying solely on the conductor, they learn from one another. Watching these interactions has become one of my favorite parts of the rehearsal process.

The rehearsal room transforms into what I like to call a creative language laboratory.

Students gather in small groups to compare vowel sounds, repeat challenging phrases, ask questions, and encourage one another. They laugh at mistakes, celebrate improvements, and work together toward a common goal. Learning becomes collaborative rather than teacher-directed.

This experience benefits everyone involved.

The language experts discover that their knowledge has real value. Children who might never have considered themselves leaders suddenly become teachers and mentors. They gain confidence, communication skills, and a sense of responsibility for the success of the ensemble.

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At the same time, the rest of the choir experiences something equally important. They learn that every member has unique strengths to contribute. One student may have beautiful tone, another may be a strong sight-reader, another may have excellent rhythmic skills, and another may bring knowledge of a language.

Together, these individual gifts create something much greater than any one singer could accomplish alone.

One season, this spirit of collaboration inspired an unforgettable act of initiative.

One of our choir members volunteered to create pronunciation recordings for every foreign-language piece we were preparing. She carefully recorded each text so that her fellow singers could practice independently at home. What began as a thoughtful gesture quickly became an invaluable rehearsal resource for the entire choir.

No one asked her to do it.

She recognized a need, found a way to help, and strengthened the learning of the entire ensemble.

Moments like these remind me that the greatest lessons children learn are often the ones we never planned to teach. When students begin taking ownership of each other's learning, the rehearsal becomes much more than music instruction—it becomes a shared educational experience.

Singing in different languages strengthens musicianship through listening, diction, vocal flexibility, and expressive singing, while also opening a window into other cultures. Most importantly, it teaches children to learn together. As they share knowledge, help one another, and celebrate each other's success, they develop confidence, leadership, empathy, and a genuine sense of community.

As conductors, we teach notes, rhythms, vowels, and pronunciation. But we also have the opportunity to create an environment where children learn from one another and discover that every voice has something valuable to contribute. When that happens, the choir becomes more than an ensemble—it becomes a community built on curiosity, collaboration, and mutual respect.

Between the Notes: Building Culture in Show Choir

Sean Hoffman
Show Choirs
Manteno High School

I was a junior in high school, standing in the warm-up room at the Sullivan Show Choir Invitational at Sullivan High School. Forty students were getting ready for a Finals performance. The energy in the room was unmatched. We were all striving for greatness, hoping to put the best performance we could on the stage and come out on top.

But what I remember most was not the competition. I remember the feeling in that room. The excitement. The nerves. The anticipation. A group of people completely connected in one moment, working toward the same goal and loving what we were about to do. That feeling never left me. In many ways, it became the reason I chose to become a music educator.

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Twenty years later, I found myself in that exact warm-up room. The goal was the same: prepare for Finals, walk onto the stage, and give everything we had. But this time, I wasn't a student. I was the director. As I looked around the room, I saw the same energy I remembered from two decades earlier. I saw bright faces filled with excitement and anticipation. I watched students encourage each other, laugh together, focus together, and look each other in the eyes with a sense of trust, love, and hope. And in that moment, I realized something. The most important thing happening in that room had nothing to do with the competition. This room was built on love. Love for the music. Love for the experience. Love for the people standing beside you. And most importantly, a love for being part of something bigger than yourself.

Perhaps the most important thing I have learned in my years as a director is that the best performances are built long before students ever step onto the stage. They are built through relationships, trust, and a sense of belonging. Long before the first note is sung at a competition, something much more important is being built: culture.

As show choir directors, we spend countless hours thinking about music, choreography, staging, costumes, rehearsal schedules, and all the other details that go into putting a show together. Those things matter. They matter a lot. But when the season is over and the trophies are put away, what students remember most often has little to do with their placement. They remember how they felt.

They remember the people who stood beside them. They remember the rehearsal where everyone finally got it. They remember laughing until they could barely sing, encouraging a someone who was struggling, or experiencing that moment when an entire ensemble finally became one. Those are the moments that build a program.

For me, building that culture starts with answering a simple question: **Why are we doing this together?**

Students need to know that they are not simply members of a performing group. They are part of a community. They have a responsibility to one another. What they do affects the people standing next to them. When students understand that their contribution matters, they begin to take ownership. That ownership is powerful.

Student leadership can be much more than choosing section leaders. Give students opportunities to mentor younger members, lead parts of rehearsal, welcome new students, solve problems, and share ideas. When students feel trusted, they begin to take responsibility for the culture of the group.

Culture is also built through the little things: doing in team-building activities, celebrating improvement, recognizing effort, and giving students opportunities to simply enjoy being together. These are things that do not show up on the score sheet. Those moments can seem insignificant during a busy rehearsal week, but over time, they become the heart of the ensemble.

Now, competition will always be part of show choir. Preparation matters. Scores matter. Excellence matters. But competition should be the product of the culture, not the culture itself. The ultimate measure of a successful show choir program may not be how many trophies sit in a classroom. It should be when students come back years later and still talk about the people, the music, the laughter, the hard rehearsals, and the experiences they shared.

Our job as directors is not simply to create better performers, but to create an environment where students learn to trust one another, work for something bigger than themselves, and discover what they are capable of accomplishing together.

Twenty years ago, I was one of those students standing in a warm-up room, looking around at my friends and feeling like we were capable of anything. Today, I get to help create that feeling for students. And that, more than any trophy, is what I hope students carry with them long after the final competition of the season.

Collegiate Choirs (submitted by Cory Boulton):
I'm Gonna Sing 'til the Spirit Moves in My Heart
arr. Moses Hogan

Community Choirs (submitted by Jennifer Whiting):
Title: Ticket to Ride
Composers/Authors: John Lennon and Paul McCartney
Arranger: Paul Langford
Voicing: SATB (limited divisi)
Instrumentation: Piano and optional cello (Cello part included)
Demo recording:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZ5Z5y3N5l0
Publisher: Hal Leonard
https://www.halleonard.com/product-family/PC23261/ticket-to-ride
Catalogue number: #HL 00323345

From acclaimed composer and arranger Paul Langford comes a sophisticated setting of Lennon and McCartney's "Ticket to Ride." Marked "wistful, melancholy, steady," Langford offers expressive reharmonization that surprises the ear but still honors the Beatles' original. Classy, accessible, good writing.

Tenor-Bass Choirs (submitted by John P. Rakes):
Not While I'm Around
TTBB
Steven Sondheim
Arr. Robert Page
From the musical Sweeney Todd Hinshaw Music
HMC1661

This is a masterful and lyrical arrangement of this standout song from Sondheim's dark musical Sweeny Todd. The arrangement by the legendary choral conductor Robert Page features a variety of textures for your tenor-bass choir to enjoy. Every part has an essentially melodic role to play in delivering an enduring text that will be a great sentimental addition to any program. The piano part is supportive while adding independent harmonic color and interest. A great piece to teach an expressive legato style with great sensitivity.

Show Choir (submitted by Sean Hoffman):
Ain't No Love in Oklahoma
By Luke Combs
arr. Cristi Cary Miller
SATB, SAB, or two part
Hal Leonard
Medium Easy
Pop

A super fun, catchy pop tune your students will love. It's a well voiced, accessible piece for middle or high school choirs that give a great mixture of rock and country vibes to your students.

Diversity Selections (submitted by Nythia Martinez):
Arroz Con Leche (Sweet Rice with Milk)
from Canciones Populares Argentinas
arr. by Carlos Guastavino - Fugue in 4 parts

Series: Latin American Choral Series
Publisher: Neil A. Kjos Music Company

Format: SATB
Octavo Level/Grade: 3
UPC: 8402701200 Edition Number: 8910
Run Time: 3:00
Page Count: 16 Pages
Publication Date: 02/23/2000

Sheet Music Link:
https://kjos.com/arroz-con-leche.html

Performance Recording:
https://youtu.be/3ARMV8Y_T6c?is=JgB3f8xJ_gOJLlUH

Lyrics and Translation:
Spanish:
Arroz con leche, me quiero casar
con una señorita de San Nicolás.
Que sepa coser, que sepa bordar,
que sepa abrir la puerta para ir a jugar. Yo soy la viudita del barrio del rey,
me quiero casar y no sé con quién. Con ésta sí, con ésta no,
con esta señorita me caso yo.

English Translation:
Rice with milk, I want to get married
with a young lady from San Nicolás.
Who knows how to sew, who knows how to embroider, who knows how to open the door to go play.
I am the little widow from the king's neighborhood,
I want to get married and I don't know with whom. With this one yes, with this one no,
with this young lady I will marry.

Vocal Jazz (submitted by Jess Heinrich):
Waters of March (SATB)
arr. Gerhard Guter
Anchor Music

A Cappella (submitted by Travis Erikson):
The End of Love
Florence Welch and Tobias Jesso
with Earth Song by Frank Ticheli
Arranged by Elliott von Wendt and Shams Ahmed Published by Divisi Digital Sheet Music
Available at Sheet Music Plus:
https://www.sheetmusicplus.com/en/product/the-end-of-love-23097325.html

Two-Year College Choirs (submitted by Patrick O'Shea):

For those who know and love Morten Lauridsen's rich and moving setting of "O magnum mysterium," but who find the divisi daunting (and perhaps who don't have basses who can honk out that pedal low D), a wonderful alternative with less extremes of range is his quite beautiful "O nata lux" (1997, Peermusic Classical 61908- 121). The lovely, chant-like melodies present a flowing and sensitive setting for this tenth-century Latin text. It was originally used at the service of Lauds on the Feast of the Transfiguration, but it speaks well also to the Nativity, and thus fits easily into Christmas programming. Lauridsen wrote this as part of his choral suite Lux Aeterna, but it certainly works effectively as a stand-alone work, and it is exactly the same text Thomas Tallis set in 1575. The English translation is as follows:

O Light born of Light,
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
Mercifully deign to accept
The praises and prayers of your suppliants.

O you who once deigned to be hidden in flesh For the sake of the lost,
Grant us to be made members
Of your blessed body.

This is not "O magnum mysterium 'light'" - plenty of challenge for college-level or advanced high school choirs, but it will be more accessible for choirs without the extreme range capabilities that Lauridsen's "O magnum mysterium" requires.

UPCOMING EVENTS

IL-ACDA leads and sponsors events to support all aspects of the advancement of choral arts in the state of Illinois. Please refer to our website (www.il-acda.org/events and www.il-acda.org/awards) for more information on the events and award opportunities listed below:

Join Voices, Chicago!
November 6, 2026
8:30am- 2:00pm
Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois

2026 All State Show Choir Festival
October 8th-10th, 2026
Waubonsie Valley High School, Aurora, Illinois

Extracurricular Sing and Share
October 23rd, 2026
9:00am-2:00pm
Waubonsee Community College, Sugar Grove, Illinois
Coordinator: Jess Heinrich, Vocal Jazz Chair

Music in Worship Festival
November 7th, 2026
8:30am-5:30pm
Pilgrim Congregational Church, Oak Park, Illinois
Coordinators: Sean J. M. Newman, Podium Editor and Keith Hampton, Music in Worship Chair

Illinois Music Education Conference
January 28th-29th, 2027
Peoria, Illinois

Central Illinois Treble Festival
February 11th, 2027
Five Points, Washington, Illinois

North Treble Festival
February 11, 2027
College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, Illinois

Two-Year College Festival
February 21st, 2027

High School SATB Festival (9-10 and 11-12 choirs)
March 6th, 2027

ACDA National Conference
March 7th-10th, 2027
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Illinois ACDA Summer Re-Treat 2027
June 23rd-24th, 2027
Normal, Illinois

Please look for additional events and opportunities on our website (www.il-acda.org) and in future editions of the Podium.