

PODIUM

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PAUL LAPRADE

Dear Friends,

It is with joy that I am writing to you as the new President of Illinois-ACDA. I am the most recent holder of a position that has witnessed a succession of wonderful leader-musicians, and I hope to bring my voice and perspective to an organization that has meant a great deal to me both personally and professionally. I intend to be a cheerleader for our members as well as a critical voice that moves us to self-examination and action, and I have already begun that process with a special board meeting that was held in August. My leadership style is collaborative, and I have already witnessed and experienced the honor of working on a leadership team with such devoted, perceptive, and intelligent musicians, all of whom care deeply and work with dedication to further choral music in Illinois.

In a special meeting in August, members of the IL-ACDA board reexamined our ByLaws, probed issues that could benefit from changes, and effected a majority vote to accept those alternations we thought would increase access to

governance, among other items. In addition, three IL-ACDA past-Presidents, Robyn Hilger (ACDA's Executive Director), and Arreon Harley-Emerson (National Chair, ACDA, for Diversity), and I have worked together to craft a new procedure to solicit our membership for the role of IL-ACDA President.

By the time the Podium is published, you are likely to have seen this invitation; it is our hope that candidates who have not normally thought of a leadership role on our Board may be encouraged to do so through invitations such as this one. The ByLaw changes, along with the ballot for President-Elect, will be brought to a vote within the next few weeks. All these wonderful people have already done a great deal of work for our state chapter, and I hope that you will support these initiatives.

Although it is impossible to list the many accomplishments and accolades that should be shared in this column, we should acknowledge and celebrate some of the things that IL-ACDA's membership is doing and has recently done. First, we enjoyed a very successful summer ReTreat. Planned by Dr. Lisa Fredenburg, it featured Emily Ellsworth and Andrew Magill.

IL ACDA BOARD continued..

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More recently, two of our board members were recognized for their work in the choral field. Brian Winnie's WIU Singers have been selected to perform at the upcoming regional conference.

Cristian Larios has been selected to be one of five composers chosen for ACDA's New Canon Project Composers.

Finally, Laura Coster, with Andrea Solya, has planned an engaging and exciting Fall Conference this October at the University of Illinois campus.

André Thomas and Cheryl Frazes Hill are the headliners for this event; performances include an Honor Choir (led by directors Fernando Malvar-Ruiz and Belford Hernandez) and presentations by a superb variety of choirs from throughout the state.

Thank you for supporting IL-ACDA.

We are rebuilding, reflecting, and revisioning our path as an organization. Please contact me at paullapradeACDA@gmail.com should you have any suggestions or ideas that could benefit our organization and membership, or if you would have any interest in helping us serve Illinois more generously.

In peace,
Paul Laprade



Sing with Dr. Julia Davids, Stephen J. Hendrickson Professor of Music, Director of Choral Activities, and Co-Author of the book *Vocal Technique: A Guide to Classical and Contemporary Styles for Conductors, Teachers, and Singers*.

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IL-ACDA

October 27-28, 2023

Fall Conference

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Headliners

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Honor Choir Directors

Fernando Malvar-Ruiz
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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

Removing Aesthetic Bias to Encourage Individual Participation in the Choral Rehearsal

Brian J. Winnie, D.M.A.

University Choirs Chair
Western Illinois University

What is a choral director? A literal definition might be “a person who directs a choir.” The title choral director, however, does not capture the many intricate components within our job responsibilities. Another common title, “choral teacher,” only places emphasis on the teaching of a choir or choral music, yet we do much more than teach choral repertoire. It might be more appropriate to define a choral teacher as a person that creates a safe, collaborative environment for individuals to engage with and perform a variety of notated and oral vocal musics within a group setting. The all-important aspect is that of the individual learners that make our ensemble a community.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many things upon our profession, many of which were quite challenging. It did, however, bring one question to the foreground: “How can we better prepare, teach, and assess the individuals within our ensembles without meeting in person?” Individual assessment in ensembles is certainly not a novel objective, but research suggests that it might be more elusive than we think. When comparing choral ensemble and individual

performance achievement there was no significant relationship found between ensemble and individual sight-singing or expressivity achievement scores.[1] In other words, ensembles might achieve a composite score of “outstanding” in sight-singing and expressive performance, but when the individuals within that ensemble were assessed, their scores were not all “outstanding.” How can we narrow the gap between ensemble and individual achievement scores? After all, what is more important, the ensemble achievement or the individual growth of each student? These do not have to be mutually exclusive, but I think teachers can benefit from encouraging more individual growth within the ensemble setting by placing emphasis on “teaching through the individual.”

This topic is too large for this short article, but I wanted to share some introductory ideas that can encourage individual exploration and coaching in the choral rehearsal. These include:

1. Removing the words “good/bad” and “right/wrong” from our descriptive vocabulary when teaching voice qualities.
2. Creating an active-learning environment throughout the choral rehearsal.

[1] For research examining ensemble and individual sight-singing or expressivity achievement scores see Paul Broomhead, “Individual Expressive Performance: Its Relationship to Ensemble Achievement, Technical Achievement, and Musical Background,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 49, no. 1 (2001): 71-84; and Michelle Henry and Steven M. Demorest, “Individual Sight-singing Achievement in Successful Choral Ensembles: A Preliminary Study,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 13, no. 1 (1994): 4-8.

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Prior to beginning any individually based work, it is important to get to know your students and their learning and social tendencies. This includes, but is not limited to, a student's self-efficacy, social engagement, and anxiety triggers and stressors. A student's mental, emotional, and physical well-being should always be considered when engaging in new curricular objectives, but there are several safe ways to begin this journey with your students. In my experience, even the shyest student can be a positive model and help others grow and learn.

The first step is to create a learning environment that encourages the learning of all types of vocal sounds and qualities by removing "good/bad" and "right/wrong" from our descriptors of vocal quality. It seems easy, but this can be the most difficult to change to our teaching. We must instead improve our knowledge of the infinite voice quality possibilities and how they are created. Students should, therefore, be encouraged to come as they are and bring all their sounds to the so-called "vocal table." Then we can use anatomical and physiological terms with our students to label these sounds, which can help students remove judgement from their sound and slowly disassociate a voice quality from their self-worth. It can also encourage students to let sounds be just that, "sounds;" rather than a representation of oneself. This is what I refer to as "sounding" instead of "singing," which can help override the natural tendency to sing in a habitual, desired voice quality instead of sustaining a new sound ideal.

All sounds can be reproduced by each student because we share the same anatomy and physiology. Of course, this is different for individuals with physical limitations or for those who might have unique physiological characteristics. The beauty of this approach, however, is that it equalizes all students as they focus on the same specific sound. For example, a twangy sound might be annoying to some, but when we ask all students to produce that sound, describe that sound, and sing it for each other, we are encouraging all sounds to have importance. And we are encouraging students to associate sounds with how they are produced instead of the person producing them. This can have a positive impact on the classroom environment because students are no longer associating a sound as "wrong" or inappropriate for the repertoire. We are instead helping students to define the sound and understand how it is useful in certain vocal recipes or genres of music.

It's important for students to know that "all sounds can teach us about the voice, but not all sounds are sustainable." Some sounds can cause us to feel a "scratch" or "tickle" and that means those sounds might not be sustainable or healthy, or it might mean the student has not achieved the sound in isolation of a specific vocal structure. That does not mean it is wrong. If a sound scratches, students can learn that it might be caused by pushing breath while phonating, over adducting the True Vocal Folds, or constricting the False Vocal Folds. This labeling provides knowledge of what is causing the scratch, rather than a student thinking everything about the sound

Nominate Your Students for the 2023
IL-ACDA High School Honor Choir
with Conductor Fernando Malvar-Ruiz!



Friday & Saturday, October 27th–28th
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

- **Nomination:** teachers nominate balanced quartets–SATB with up to 12 students. See the registration form for all-guy or all-girl schools, or if you have extra tenors / basses!
- **Performance:** Concert will take place at 3 pm at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts
- **Cost:** \$50 per student, includes 2 lunches & t-shirt
- **Registration:** Click the registration button above to complete the form. Registrations due by **September 25**

Removing Aesthetic Bias to Encourage Individual Participation in the Choral Rehearsal Continued

was “bad” or that they are a “bad” singer. It also helps students understand that one aspect to a vocal recipe does not mean the entire recipe is wrong.

It's quite difficult to integrate these ideals without also creating an active-learning environment for exploration and discussion, and it's important that this is not associated with a grade. Research suggests that active-learning environments can increase self-awareness and improve self-efficacy, [2] and it gives more opportunities for individualized feedback. This environment can encourage small group discussion, exploration, and active participation in each part of the learning process. For example, during the warm-up/tech-up students might be asked to split into small groups and make three distinct voice qualities or sounds and bring those back to the larger group to discuss. Once a common vocabulary is developed, students can engage in even more active description of what might be occurring to make a specific sound.

To summarize, allowing individuals to explore sounds with one another and encourage the

understanding of those sounds anatomically, acoustically, and perceptually, while eliminating aesthetic bias or judgment of those sounds, can allow for new possibilities in the choral rehearsal. From here, teachers can build voice qualities and engage in more in-depth work with individuals in the rehearsal process. As the individual becomes a focus in the choral rehearsal, students can also learn from their peer models and better engage in the learning process during independent practice because of the knowledge achieved in class. This in turn benefits the overall ensemble because the individuals within that ensemble gain more individual attention and knowledge.

As you begin the process, first take time to reflect on how this can be successfully incorporated into your existing philosophy. Start out with small steps such as complimenting a student on their alignment or eye contact. These small individual moments of praise can make a big difference in creating a safe environment for individualized modeling and feedback.

[2] Sarah L. Eddy and Kelly A. Hogan, “Getting Under the Hood: How and For Whom Does Increasing Course Structure Work?” *CBE—Life Sciences Education* 13, no. 3 (2014): 453–468. Cissy J. Ballen et al, “Enhancing Diversity in Undergraduate Science: Self-efficacy Drives Performance Gains with Active Learning. *CBE—Life Sciences Education* 16, no. 4 (2017b): 1–6.

Nurturing Emotional Intelligence through Choral Education: Mindfulness and Somatics in the Classroom

Lynda Marshall

Youth & Student Activities Chair

As we gear up for another exciting academic year, I challenge you to work on holistic development with your choir. In the choral rehearsal, where voices harmonize to create beautiful music, there lies a unique opportunity to nurture emotional well-being, mindfulness, and somatic awareness.

The Significance of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence, or EI, is an educational approach that hones emotional awareness, empathy, interpersonal skills, and effective communication.

These skills equip singers to navigate their emotions, build strong relationships, and thrive in various life situations. In the choral environment, EI plays a pivotal role in channeling the emotive power of music to foster personal growth and vulnerability.

Embracing Mindfulness in Choral Education

Mindfulness, a cornerstone of EI, involves being fully present in the moment without judgment. Within the choral rehearsal, mindfulness can help singers immerse themselves in the music, their breath, and the synergy of voices. In a choral setting, singers naturally become attuned to their emotional fluctuations and those of their peers. Choral educators can integrate mindfulness exercises into

their lessons, fostering active listening, sustained attention, and emotional regulation. This practice promotes qualities such as patience, focus, and a sense of interconnectedness – skills that are not only valuable within the choral context but also essential for life beyond the rehearsal room.

Somatics: The Embodiment of Expression

Somatic awareness centers on understanding the body's sensations and responses. In the choral sphere, where the voice is an extension of the body, somatic awareness becomes a powerful tool for enhancing vocal technique and authentically conveying emotions. Introducing somatics in the choral rehearsal can involve activities like breath awareness, gentle stretches, and body scans. These exercises contribute to vocal health and efficiency and deepen singers' connection to their physical selves. By promoting a positive relationship between the body and the act of singing, choral educators empower singers to express themselves confidently and convey emotions through their musical endeavors.

Cultivating Empathy and Connection

The choral rehearsal thrives on collaboration, necessitating singers to work together to create music. This collaborative spirit provides a perfect platform for cultivating empathy, effective communication, and teamwork – all vital components of EI. Choral instructors can foster EI by facilitating group awareness about the emotional dimensions of different musical pieces. Encouraging singers to share their interpretations and connect on a deeper level nurtures an understanding and appreciation for diverse perspectives. By delving into the emotional essence of the music, singers develop the ability to empathize and respect each other's viewpoints, fostering a sense of empathy that extends beyond the choral environment.

As the new school year unfolds, our classrooms and community groups present a remarkable space for emotional exploration and growth. Emotional intelligence, coupled with mindfulness and somatics, equips singers with tools that go beyond musical skill, empowering them to navigate the intricate

realm of human emotions and relationships with authenticity. By fostering these skills, choral educators create an environment where harmonies are not just sung; they are felt, comprehended, and shared, enriching lives both within and beyond the stage.

Getting Back to the Swing of School_____

Dan Gregerman

Vocal Jazz Chair

Glenbrook South/Retired Niles North

Hello everyone and welcome back to school. For those of you that do not know me, I am your new IL-ACDA Jazz Choir Chair. I am looking forward to the future on the board and for ways to grow vocal jazz in the state of Illinois. I retired from Niles North High School in 2021 after thirty years there where I had a vocal jazz program with three vocal jazz ensembles. I am currently director of vocal jazz at Glenbrook South High School. In the future there are plans to design an ACDA sponsored vocal jazz program and/or festival. Recently I was part of a team that authored a book entitled, "Rehearsing the Vocal Jazz Ensemble". It is published by Meredith Music Publications which is a division of GIA Publications. This book is part of a series that is designed to help all levels from elementary school through Collegiate, and beginner to pro. Each chapter is written by a different author. However, each author answers the same questions. The authors are: Andrew Dahan (HS), Roger Emerson (Pro), Daniel Gregerman (HS), Greg Jasperse (College), Connaitre Miller (College), Kate Reid (College), John Stafford II (Community College), Janice Vlachos (HS), Gaw Vang Williams (College & HS), and Natalie Wilson (Elementary).

The topics covered are:

Philosophy (Rehearsal, Overall, and Ensemble Size)
Audition Process
Rehearsal Preparation and Warm-Ups
Vocal Technique/Production/Pedagogy
Improvisation
Style/Interpretation
Rhythm/Time/Feel
Leadership

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WITH CLINICIAN
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- **REGISTRATION:** CLICK THE REGISTRATION BUTTON ABOVE TO COMPLETE THE FORM
- **COST:** \$25 PER STUDENT
- **DEADLINE:** REGISTRATION MUST BE COMPLETE BY SEPTEMBER 25TH.

Getting Back in the Swing of School continued.....

Sound Systems
Professional Development/Lifelong Learning
Literature for Listening
Literature for Performance

The literature list in this book by itself is an incredible resource. As we move forward this year, I would like to make myself available in any ways that

I can be of service to you. Feel free to reach out to me at dangregerman@gmail.com. Please feel free to send question or suggestions of what you would like to see for vocal jazz in IL-ACDA. I look forward to seeing you at some of the local ILMEA festivals as well as the IL-ACDA Fall Conference, and of course IMEC.

Keep Swinging,
Dan Gregerman

The Concert is Not the Final Exam

Nythia Martinez

District 1

Walter Payton College Preparatory High School

The charge of supporting individual student growth while ensuring the synchronized readiness of a choir for concert or contest is a dichotomy that is unique and essential to music education. Difficult to execute, I've felt repeatedly imbalanced with these seemingly contradictory evaluative tasks. I have questioned, experimented, given up, and reset my processes for ensuring student preparation in the ensemble in different ways every year of my twenty-year career. I have been plagued with a general dissatisfaction that I haven't quite figured out how to design assessments that are consistently equitable, well-targeted, simple, and sustainable. I've worried that I grade too much/not enough, if my feedback is digestible, if my less-experienced students are gaining confidence, and if my more-experienced students are feeling challenged. All the while, the concert happens, we score well at a contest, we feel proud, and still, I'm sure some basic skills have slipped through the fingers of even my most enthusiastic singers.

In my unrequited quest for the perfect rubric, I've chastised myself for facilitating formative assessments to which I didn't know how to attach a fair numerical/letter grade - so I often didn't. I've lived for years with "grading guilt". And to neutralize the impact of grades that didn't feel fully representative of student growth, I've added participation grades that do not communicate mastery of skill. I've justified my decisions as to not

penalize students with a system I haven't yet perfected. So my gradebook hasn't always been a clear tool for communication, often looking like an abstract Bingo board of numbers that rewarded students for weeks of good rehearsal rather than meeting and exceeding learning standards.

As I prepare for the start of this school year, I am determined to refine this part of my craft, to design assessment tasks that allow me and my students to monitor progress more accurately, and to construct a manageable grading system that tells true stories of student growth. My summer reading focused primarily on the book, *Music Assessment for Better Ensembles*, by Brian P. Shaw, within which the author acknowledges the challenge of individual student monitoring and presents both philosophical ideas that validated my concerns and classroom approaches, while deconstructing the mammoth of assessment into categories of form and function, easily applicable to the choral classroom. There is no way to fully honor the wealth of practical information and revolutionary teacher mindsets in the book here, but I will highlight a few ideas that will inform my teaching this year and beyond.

Extracting the most essential elements of the book for the purposes of starting the school year, I was thrilled to read that Dr. Shaw and I shared some controversial ideas about grading in ensemble settings. My "grading guilt" was certainly generated by traditional expectations of a filled gradebook. My instinct not to grade formative assessments was validated under the idea that "if we are working to encourage standards-based mastery,

we are to grade product, not process.” It always felt wrong to mathematically penalize a student for being in an early stage of musical development. Rubrics, checklists, feedback forms, etc. provided in the book answer three essential questions around true assessment for learning: “Where am I going? (addressing the prescribed learning target), “Where am I now? (assessing the current state), and “How do I get there” (providing important next steps for growth). With this three-pronged structure, students are aware of their small, specific learning target, are encouraged to grapple honestly with their progress, and are empowered to practice disaggregated musical concepts, which as we know, are mostly complex and interrelated. Most importantly, assessment practices that avoid penalization of process support growth mindset and help to destroy ideas that music is an aptitude-only-based content area.

As choral directors, it is common to value part accuracy as a demonstration of musical mastery over all other forms of assessment. Chosen repertoire, however, may not always contain opportunities for students to meet all of the fundamental learning targets of basic musicianship. The book reminds us that “as music educators, we have a responsibility to teach principles, not pieces.” Dr. Shaw provides important structures that help teachers diversify our assessments and ensure musicianship is built from multiple modalities. He places learning targets into the following categories:

- KNOWLEDGE (factual information)
- REASONING (critical thinking)
- SKILL (doing)
- PRODUCT (a finished result)

- DISPOSITION (attitudes of learning/engagement that impact learning)

Additionally, he outlines seven assessment methods from which teachers can select after they identify and classify their learning target:

- SELECTED RESPONSE: multiple choice with carefully-constructed distractor choices
- WRITTEN RESPONSE: for which writing deficits can be addressed but not included in the content scoring
- VERBAL RESPONSE: ideas for systems of randomization provided
- PERFORMANCE: for which teachers should ask for few learning targets for short passages (for grading clarity)
- PERSONAL COMMUNICATION: journaling and conversation to build rapport
- PORTFOLIO: students collect artifacts to show either process or product
- QUICK FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES: prompting all students to answer

There are many considerations that go into planning for assessment. The specific learning target category should align with the assessment method. Teachers should also think about how the results of the assessment will be used (diagnostic, formative, or summative), and whether the task will be formal and structured or informal and woven into the lesson. Because of all of these complexities, it may be advantageous to organize your assessment plans in a table (pictured below) within which, after you identify your target, you can insert the assessments you believe will lead to mastery of that target over time. Consider including a quick description of your task in the table with your identified methods for clarity:

LEARNING TARGET ASSESSMENT PLANNER

LARGE CONCEPT	SPECIFIC LEARNING TARGET	TARGET CATEGORY	DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT BASELINE DATA		FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT GROWING DATA		SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT END-OF-TERM DATA	
			Formal (PLANNED/EXPECTED / PRECISE DATA)	Informal (DURING LESSON ROUTINE)	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal
			Insert Assessment Method Abbreviation and Task Description in the appropriate cells below: SR: Selected Response WR: Written Response VR: Verbal Response PERF: Performance PC: Personal Communication PORT: Portfolio QFAT: Quick Formative Assessment Techniques					
		K (Knowledge)						
		R (Reasoning)						
		S (Skill)						
		P (Product)						
		D (Disposition)						

The Concert is Not the Final Exam continued.....

The reality of the profession is that grades for transcripts and colleges are required in a gradebook. A most invaluable component to the book, **Dr. Shaw provides an extensive number of approaches to translating assessment information into fair and accurate letter grades.** Philosophies of grading that I intend to implement include limiting the number of assessment levels for clarity and simplicity (Proficient/Developing/Beginning, for example), using category weights for each large-scale class standard as they are prioritized in the curriculum, inserting formative data as zero weight, and giving assessments that occur later in the year more weight, as not to penalize process.

In Chapter 1, Dr. Shaw states, as directors, “[we] **fall into the convenience of assessing groups rather than harnessing the power of assessing individuals, and into addressing symptoms (what we’re hearing in rehearsals) rather than causes (individual knowledge and fundamentals).**”

As I embark upon this new school year, I am seeking the peace of mind that comes from illustrating clear goals, collecting accurate student data, and providing inspired feedback that is beneficial to the individual, and consequently, to the ensemble. I hope to transform my grading from mundane to meaningful. With the multiple assessment approaches and grading models Dr. Shaw provides, choral directors will feel their confidence unlocked and their practices both validated and enhanced. As Dr. Shaw explains, the concert is more a reflection of our program and our resources (or lack thereof) rather than the opportunity for each student to demonstrate their mastery. If we assess appropriately throughout the year, we can erase the false narrative that the concert is the summative assessment and instead, allow it be the celebration of how far we all have come together.

Fostering Confidence in Small Ensembles

Abigail Risner

District 8

Stillman Valley HS & Meridian JHS

Over my two year teaching career in my rural school district, I have consistently had ensembles of a smaller size throughout my 6-12 program. One of the biggest challenges I continue to face is fostering a sense of confidence in an ensemble setting where there is not a feeling of “safety in numbers.” As we continue to work on this issue, here are a couple of things I have done with my groups to help them gain confidence in their singing.

Take the time to team-build! Students need to feel the community atmosphere in your ensemble in order to buy in and put themselves out there when sharing their voices. To start, mix some games into your rehearsal routine to help students get to know one another and join in with them so that they can get to know you! One game I like to use is “Categories.” “Categories” is played by having

students order themselves in a line according to a specific topic (for example, smallest to largest pet). This game gets them talking without the pressure of starting the conversation and fosters connection through commonalities. Goofy activities like this one gets students to relax, laugh, and have fun with their peers. From here, they are more inclined to feel comfortable to sing out and work with their peers. Then, you can take your students to the next step by having them complete activities that require them to work with a few others in the class toward a common goal. These activities can also be music related! One game I play with my students is a tonal skill relay. Students are split into four teams and go up against one another to see who can be the quickest to recognize the name of the skill and sing it correctly. The individuals who are trying to identify the skill on behalf of their team can choose to sing the skill on their own or with the rest of their team. If they sing on their own, their team makes an extra point. This game is a great memorization and review tool and gives students the

opportunity to sing solo in front of the class knowing their team is rooting for them. Team-building is a great way to start the year with a connection that will lead to unity within your ensembles.

Exposure is enlightening! One of the more successful attempts at building confidence I have used with both my junior high and high school students is participating in additional performances. Every time we perform, I notice my students becoming more comfortable and proud of what they're doing. Each experience teaches them something new, gets them more used to the feeling of performing, and can double as a great recruitment tool for your program! The performance that my students enjoyed the most this past year was a caroling tour around our district schools. They loved visiting with their old teachers and watching the reactions of the younger students who watched them perform. Extra performances are a nice way to connect with the community and can provide a less formal atmosphere for students to experience singing without the pressure a formal concert can bring. Additional events such as ACDA Honor Choirs and ILMEA District and All-State Festivals also provide amazing exposure for my students. My students' experiences at these events have helped them foster more confidence as they get to work with other choristers and directors across the state. The repertoire pushes them to new levels, the other students inspire them, and the directors who work with them help them think about singing in new ways. Take advantage of as many of the opportunities out there as possible!

Overall, it is important to realize that confidence is built over time and is continuously fluctuating. Our job as the leaders of our ensembles is to equip our singers with tools they can use to help build their sense of confidence. Everyone experiences singing in their ensemble through their own lens so it is important to pay attention to our singers who may be having a hard time and offer them additional support, especially in ensembles of a smaller size. This combined with patience, consistency, and additional opportunities can help foster a sense of confidence in small ensembles.

Fast 5 from our R&R Chairs

Liza Calisesi-Maidens

Collegiate R&R Chair

University of Illinois- Chicago

Hello IL-ACDA Colleagues and Friends,

As I approach my third year as Director of Choral Activities at the University of Illinois-Chicago, I'm feeling very grateful not only for that particular community, but also the greater choral community in Illinois. Many of you have reached out with a warm welcome, digitally or in-person, and I'm truly appreciative. It's been a wonderful two years and I look forward to many more.

As we begin a new academic year, I want to (re)introduce you to some of your R&R Chairs and to provide the ways you can connect with us. Let us know what you're programming, where you're performing, and how we can help. We'd love to hear from you.

Thank you to our R&R Representatives for compiling our reading session list for our 2023 Summer ReTreat. [Click here to view the repertoire list from MusicSpoke.](#)

<https://musicspoke.substack.com/p/reading-session-illinois-acda-2023>

Additionally, there are vacancies for the following positions.

- Children's Choir
- Senior HS Choirs
- Youth and Student Activities
- Lifelong Choir Coordinator
- Repertoire Specific R&R Chair
- Show Choirs
- District 3
- District 6
- District 9

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

Fast 5 continued.....

Liza Calisesi Maidens

College/University Chair
Director of Choral Activities
University of Illinois-Chicago

FAST 5

- Favorite piece of repertoire from last year?
 - Soon I Will Be Done, arr. Marques Garrett
- Recent concert you loved?
 - Alyssa Allgood and the Chris Madsen Quartet at Winter's Jazz Club
- Top summer book or podcast?
 - Poetry Unbound - podcast with Pádraig Ó Tuama
- What are you looking forward to at the IL-ACDA Fall Conference?
 - Performing with the UIC Chamber Choir! We are so excited.
- How can we connect?
 - Email: liza@uic.edu
 - [Instagram](#)
 - [Facebook](#)
 - [Website](#)

Jacqueline Larry

Music in Worship Chair
Student Programs Manager
All-City Performing Arts Choir Director
Chicago Public Schools Department of Arts

FAST 5

- Favorite piece of repertoire from last year or this upcoming season?
 - “Nothing is Gonna Stop Me” Pinkzebra
- Recent concert you loved?
 - The Kingdom Choir @ Harris Theatre
- Top summer book or podcast?
 - “Atlas of the Heart” by Dr. Brené Brown
- What are you looking forward to at the IL-ACDA Fall Conference?
 - Connecting with other choral professionals.
- How can we connect?
 - Email: jacqueline.larry@gmail.com
 - [Instagram](#)
 - [Facebook](#)
 - [Website](#)

Carol Munn

Youth Chair
Choir Director
McHenry Middle School

FAST 5

- Favorite piece of repertoire from last year or this upcoming season?
 - My students and I have two favorite pieces we performed last year with great success: “Stand Up” arr. Rollo Dilworth and “I Believe” by Mark A. Miller.
- Recent concert you loved?
 - I really enjoyed a spring concert performed by the “Chicagoland Voices” choir in Cary, Illinois. It’s nice to know there is such an abundance of local talent making great music!
- Top summer book or podcast?
 - I would like to give a shout out to Christopher M. Munce and his podcast “Choralosophy”. He does a great job tackling current issues in choral directing as well as hosting guest speakers that provide helpful insights and advice in the field of choral conducting.
- What are you looking forward to at the IL-ACDA Fall Conference?
 - I am looking forward to showcasing middle school talent from around the state at the IL ACDA Junior Honor Chorus performance directed by Belford Hernandez! Please consider nominating your 7th and 8th grade singers to participate.
- How can we connect?
 - Email: cmunn@d15.org
 - [Website](#)



Omaha, NE February 7-10, 2024

2024 MWACDA Conference Honor Choirs
Information

Singers in grades 4-12 will be eligible to audition for the 2024 MWACDA Conference Honor Choirs this fall. The audition form (which will be completed through Submittable) will be available on August 30, 2023, and the deadline is September 27, 2023, at 6 PM CDT. Auditioning singers must be members in good standing of their sponsoring musical organizations and must be sponsored by a current ACDA member.

Please follow the link below to learn more about each ensemble's audition process and access the audition materials.

Any questions can be addressed to Stephen Dean or Jordan Dollins, MWACDA Honor Choir Coordinators.

[Audition Information Here](#)

- Vocal Artists of Iowa (David Haas)
- VocalEssence (G. Phillip Shoultz, III)
- Wartburg College: St. Elizabeth Chorale (Nicki Toliver)
- Western Illinois University: University Singers (Brian Winnie)

The Midwestern Region of ACDA is thrilled to announce the choirs selected for the Regional Conference in Omaha February 7-10, 2024!

Congratulations to these programs that epitomize the high level of choral music-making across our region.

2024 MWACDA Conference Choirs

- Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs: Cantanti Singers (Philip Brown)
- Ankeny High School: Concert Choir (Ben Walters)
- Bowling Green State University: Volaré (Emily Pence Brown)
- Iowa State University: Cantamus (Jennifer Rodgers)
- Johnston High School: Cantus (Hannah Ryan)
- Linn-Mar High School: Chamber Singers (Trent Buglewicz)
- Morningside University: Morningside Choir (Ryan Person)
- Pleasant Valley High School: Leading Tones (Meg Byrne)
- Purdue University: Varsity Glee Club (William Griffel)
- St. Michael-Albertville High School: Concert Choir (Joe Osowski)
- University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire: Concert Choir (Frank A. Watkins)