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of the AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

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# ANTIPHON

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# From the President:



Katie Gerrich  
AzACDA President  
[president@azacda.org](mailto:president@azacda.org)

Dear AzACDA Friends,

As we find ourselves perhaps wrapping up yet another busy season, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible work each of you is doing. Whether you are conducting, singing, organizing, or supporting from behind the scenes, your dedication to choral music continues to inspire and uplift our communities. This time of year often brings a whirlwind of rehearsals, performances, and preparations for the months ahead. With that busyness can come change—new challenges, shifting schedules, and unexpected obstacles. But through it all, one thing remains constant: our shared passion for music and the deep sense of connection it fosters.

It is easy to feel overwhelmed, but let's not forget the strength we have in each other. The choral world is built on harmony—not just in sound, but in support, encouragement, and collaboration. We are part of a community that understands the value of coming together, blending voices, and creating something greater than ourselves. No matter what changes may come, we can lean on one another, knowing that our shared love of music will always be a source of comfort and joy.

This time of year there are also many goodbyes. We say goodbye to many valued singers we have worked with for so long. We say goodbye to those retiring, moving to a new state or taking on a new adventure. As I prepare to wrap up my time as President, I extend my most sincere thanks to you, the Arizona choral community, for the kindness and grace you have given me over the past two years. Thank you to the 2023-2025 AzACDA board for your hard work and unending support - this is most certainly a team effort! Finally, we are most certainly in amazing hands with the wonderful Dr. Ryan Holder stepping into this role in July. I am immensely grateful for him and his dedication to choral music in Arizona.

My friends, let's continue to lift each other up and celebrate the small victories. Music has the power to heal, unite, and inspire, and I am grateful to be part of an organization that embodies those values so fully. Thank you for all that you do—your voices, your leadership, and your passion make this organization what it is. 📖

With gratitude,

Katie Gerrich  
AzACDA President

*Don't forget to register for our amazing Summer Conference June 25-27, 2025!  
I can't wait to see you all there!*



# FROM THE EDITOR



W. Aaron Rice

Director of Music

First Presbyterian Church of Granada Hills

AzACDA Antiphon Editor

[antiphon@azacda.org](mailto:antiphon@azacda.org)

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As the choral season winds to a close and we look ahead to summer's brief rest, I'm honored to bring you the Spring 2025 edition of *Antiphon*—a celebration of the individuals and milestones that continue to define the excellence and spirit of the Arizona choral community.

This issue lifts up several extraordinary members of our field whose contributions are shaping the present and future of choral music in Arizona and beyond. We celebrate **Dr. J. Edmund Hughes**, who has been named the recipient of the **Distinguished Alumnus Award** by the University of Arizona Fred Fox School of Music. A beloved mentor, visionary leader, and tireless champion of the choral arts, Dr. Hughes's impact has been profound and lasting.

We also honor **Dr. Craig Peterson**, recipient of the **AzACDA Lifetime Achievement Award**, whose decades of work as a conductor, educator, and advocate have touched countless lives. And we are thrilled to recognize **Dr. Joshua Palkki**, this year's recipient of the **AzACDA Director of the Year Award**, for his extraordinary artistry, scholarship, and leadership in our field.

This issue includes our **membership milestone recognitions**, which celebrate the enduring commitment of those who continue to shape Arizona's musical landscape year after year. These honors remind us of the quiet and consistent work of our members—work that builds community, fosters excellence, and changes lives.

In this edition, we also launch a **three-part series by Dr. Sharon Hansen** on the aging voice, beginning with a thoughtful and compassionate exploration of how the voice changes over time and what choral leaders can do to support singers through those changes.

Looking to the future, we include a unique contribution on the **role of artificial intelligence in the choral classroom**—written by **ChatGPT**—that invites us to consider the evolving tools at our disposal as educators and the ethical and creative questions they raise.

Finally—and with a heavy heart—I share that this will be my final issue as Editor of *Antiphon*. When I moved to California in 2022, I chose to continue in this role because of how deeply I care about this community. But I've come to realize that *Antiphon* deserves someone who is close enough to Arizona's

(continued next page)

choral life to reflect its vibrancy in real time—someone who lives in the same rehearsal rooms, concert halls, and school campuses that fill our pages.

Letting go is bittersweet. Editing *Antiphon* has been one of the great joys of my professional life. It has kept me connected to a place and a people who helped shape the musician I am today. Thank you for trusting me with your stories, for inspiring me with your artistry, and for allowing me to serve you from afar. I will miss this dearly. 📖

With gratitude and affection,

W. Aaron Rice  
Editor, *Antiphon*



**Register Here!**

## AzACDA Summer Conference 2025: The Power of Many

Join Arizona's ACDA chapter at our **2025 Summer Conference, "The Power of Many"** at [Phoenix Bible Church](#) in Phoenix, AZ from June 25th-27th. Get ready for the upcoming school year or season, and reinvigorate your love of choral music with us!

**ACDA Members save on Registration!** Current ACDA members receive a \$50 discount on Summer Conference registration from the non-member rate. If you are not yet a member of ACDA or need to renew, please visit [www.acda.org/membership](http://www.acda.org/membership) to join!

**Choral/Vocal Students and Retirees** wishing to attend the Conference are also welcome to participate in the Collegiate and Retiree Honor Choir under the direction of Bruce Rogers! Rehearsal will begin in the afternoon on Tuesday, June 24th (dinner included) and the group will perform in the conference concert on the 25th. Students are also welcome to participate in the **New and Emerging Professionals track** being offered again at this year's conference.

**Social events!** We will be hosting **three** evening social events this year, including Trivia Night on Wednesday and Beer Choir on Thursday (locations TBD). **Diamondbacks Night at Chase Field** will be Friday night. All conference attendees who participate in the singing of the Star-Spangled Banner on the field will receive one or two free tickets to the game against the Miami Marlins. 📖

# 2024 Membership Milestones

## 25 year members:

### **Troy Meeker**

"ACDA has been instrumental in my professional development as a choral conductor. Through ACDA, I have access to continued learning opportunities, forged valuable new relationships with fellow conductors, and discovered rewarding ways to serve my choral community."



### **Kira Rugan**

"I hold ACDA close to my heart as it has been the place where all of my choral friendships, collaborations, and ideas have found a home. I appreciate the support we choral educators provide to each other by sharing ideas that make our classrooms joyful and conducive to growth. I am grateful for the encouragement, repertoire suggestions, classroom management tips, and the inspiration I have received over my teaching career. However, what I value the most is that ACDA has nurtured a caring and strong choral community that took me under its wing and has been so willing to perform my compositions! I truly look forward to the next 25 years as a part of this organization."



### **Rita Scholz**

"ACDA membership provides local and national conference and performance opportunities, and leadership in scholastic publications in the choral art. Membership serves as a valuable connection to friends and colleagues!"



### **Amy Van Winkle**

"AZACDA has been an invaluable source of support, information, professional growth, and friendship over these many years. I've been inspired by my colleagues and their myriad of creative ways to engage people of all age groups in choral music. I am proud to be a part of this organization!"



**Julian Ackerly** (no quote or pic)





## 20 year members:

### Jason St Claire

Jason values his ACDA membership for the relationships it brings with fellow choral musicians, for the fun and informative conferences available, for the ability to be connected with choral musicians across the country and abroad in a unified purpose, and for the continued inspiration to grow and do better. Looking forward to another 20 years!



### Marla Stringham

"I think the best thing ACDA has done for me has given me a chance to continue to learn through the workshop and conferences I've attended."



### Tim Westerhaus

"ACDA has brought me lifelong friendships with people whose hearts resonate with generosity, creativity, and a desire to better the world around them through music. ACDA has been a source of inspiration and support when my creative well runs dry, through heartfelt mentorship and rejuvenating gatherings. ACDA is a touchstone to be continually curious, sincere and passionate in music-making, and in touch with what is at the heart of our art: one another."

**Joshua Shafer** (no pic or quote)



## 15 year members:

### James Stirling

"I am a member of ACDA because it has been a great way to encounter new composers and their music. The ACDA website has always been one of my go-to resources when looking for a job."



### Jeff Vanderlee

ACDA is a space to connect with friends and colleagues, grow professionally, celebrate our art through performance, and share knowledge. It fosters a supportive community that inspires creativity and innovation in our profession.



Chris Fresolone (no pic or quote)

Stephane Galloway (no pic or quote)

Smith Graham (no pic or quote)

Chizuru Jurman (no pic or quote)

## 10 year members:

### Lindsay Decoste

"I went to my first ACDA conference as a performer in 2013, and I never looked back! I have met such amazing people and heard such incredible music through my time in this organization, and I'm so grateful that I've gotten to serve on the board and try to make a difference in our community."



### Elizabeth Reynolds

"ACDA is a gem, as it allows me to connect with Choral Educators from other school districts. So often as music educators, we can feel like we are the only ones doing what we are doing each day. It is great to connect with other choral educators, learn what helps them be successful, and get the encouragement that only someone who really understands what you do, can provide!"





**Allie Fardelos**

"I joined ACDA as a student at NAU, and loved how it led to me making new connections and friendships in our choir world. I've enjoyed all the conferences and resources available to us as ACDA members."



**Deltrina Grimes**

"I look forward to attending each year to enhance my choral knowledge and keep abreast of new trends. But the best part is building relationships with fellow conductors."



**Katie Sweeney**

"Being involved in ACDA over the past ten years has provided me with invaluable opportunities to network with fellow choral directors across the state, fostering meaningful professional relationships. Additionally, the organization's opportunities to enrich my skills and knowledge as a choral director have significantly contributed to my continued growth as a music educator."



**Christina Hall**

"Upon joining ACDA as a college freshman, I have found it a joy to serve and be involved in an organization that is devoted to the craft we love so much. The impact ACDA has had on my life cannot be measured solely by the number of conferences I've attended, but rather by my students' newfound appreciation of choral music and the enriching professional relationships I have forged with fellow choral educators."

**Hannah Kimball**

"I am a part of ACDA to keep up to date with the latest updates in the choral world, and to make connections with other directors!"

**Courtney Evans** (no pic or quote)

**Bryan Waznik** (no pic or quote)

**Itsel Pacheco** (no pic or quote)



**5 year members:**

**Jandel Cabasura**

"I've been attending all the conferences since my 1st year joining ACDA and it has always been incredible. Can't wait for next year's nationals."



**Bailey Pearce**

"I became a member of ACDA during my first few years of college, and it has provided a way for me to connect and create lasting relationships with those in my area. Now that I am going into my first year of teaching, it is so nice to have a community of other educators and resources I can look to for support!"



**Daniel Dunning**

"I was encouraged to be a member of ACDA by a music colleague. I am so thankful that I listened. This association has given me many valuable resources and insights that have helped me be a better musician and teacher. I have also been enriched by the regional divisions through collaboration and professional development."



### Anne Kilstofte

"ACDA allows me to keep in touch and get to know others here in the Southwest who are working in the genre. Although I am a Tucson native, I grew up singing in Minnesota, and wrote for The Dale Warland Singers, Philip Brunelle, St. John's University, The Basilica of St. Mary, the Estonian Camerata, the National Lutheran Choir, as well as Phoenix Chorale, Charles Bruffy, Kira Rugen, and Solis Camerata. ACDA allows me to get to know more groups and "their sound" around Arizona and the region."



### Nicole Davis

"To me, ACDA is a connection point of artistry, ideals, scholarship. I'm so thankful for all I've learned from my fellow members over the years. Thank you, ACDA!"



Christopher Holley (no pic or quote) ☰

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AzACDA news and events by  
signing up for our [email list](#).

Join the AzACDA  
[Student](#)  
[Facebook Group!](#)



Find us on  
**Facebook**







# 2025 Summer Conference

PHOENIX BIBLE CHURCH

<b>TUE 24</b>	<b>COLLEGIATE ALL STATE CHOIR</b>
<b>WED 25</b>	<b>CONFERENCE, CONCERT &amp; TRIVIA NITE</b>
<b>THU 26</b>	<b>CONFERENCE &amp; BEER CHOIR</b>
<b>FRI 27</b>	<b>CONFERENCE &amp; DBACKS NITE</b>

# 2024 AzACDA Awards



Dr. Craig Peterson

## AzACDA Lifetime Achievement Award

The AzACDA Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes a retired or soon-to-retire choral director who has made a lasting impact on our choral community—whether in schools, churches, or local organizations. This award honors the dedication, leadership, and influential contributions of those who have shaped and inspired generations of musicians.

We are thrilled to celebrate Dr. Craig Peterson, this year's distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, for his outstanding contributions to choral music and music education.

Dr. Peterson serves as Director of Choral Activities and Department Chair at Mesa Community College, where he inspires students daily through his leadership of two chamber choirs, a concert choir, a jazz choir, and his choral education courses. With degrees from Concordia College (BM) and

Arizona State University (MM and DMA in Choral Conducting), Dr. Peterson's academic and professional journey has been marked by a deep commitment to musical excellence.

A respected leader in the field, Dr. Peterson has served in a wide range of influential roles, including AMEA All-State Jazz Chair, Vocal Jazz and Two-Year College R&S Chairs, and President of the Arizona chapter of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). Choirs under his direction have earned consistent superior ratings and have graced the stages of the Arizona ACDA State Convention, the Arizona Music Educators Convention, three ACDA Western Division Conventions, and the National Convention of the Orff and Kodály Music Teachers Association.

Dr. Peterson's artistry has also brought him into collaboration with world-class ensembles, having prepared choirs for the Phoenix Symphony and the Boston Pops Orchestra. He previously served as Assistant Director of the Grammy Award-winning Phoenix Chorale and has lent his voice as a bass on recordings with both Phoenix Chorale and Conspirare.

Dr. Craig Peterson's passion for choral artistry and his unwavering dedication to nurturing the next generation of musicians make him an exemplary honoree. We celebrate not only his many accomplishments but also the lasting impact he continues to make in our musical community.



Dr. Joshua Palkki

## AzACDA Director of the Year Award

The AzACDA Director of the Year Award honors a dedicated choral director who has made a significant impact on our community—be it in schools, churches, or local organizations. This award recognizes the hard work, leadership, and inspiring influence of directors who elevate choral music and foster growth within our choral programs.

We are delighted to recognize Dr. Joshua Palkki as the 2024 Arizona ACDA Director of the Year!

Dr. Palkki (he/him) serves as Associate Professor of Music Learning and Teaching and Associate Director of Choral Activities at Arizona State University, where he leads the Barrett Symphonic Choir and teaches courses in choral pedagogy, conducting, and music education. A nationally respected conductor and scholar, Dr. Palkki is known for his groundbreaking work on equity and justice in music education—especially his leadership in creating inclusive spaces for LGBTQA students and educators.

Before joining ASU, Dr. Palkki taught at California State University, Long Beach, where his University Choir was featured at the 2019 CCDA State Conference. He holds degrees from Michigan State University (Ph.D.), Northern Arizona University (M.M.), and Ball State University (B.S.), and his research and writing have appeared in leading music education journals and edited volumes from Oxford, Routledge, and GIA.

An in-demand clinician and guest conductor, Dr. Palkki has led honor choirs across the country and will conduct the 2025 Kansas All-State Treble Choir. His passion for choral music, educational justice, and student-centered teaching continues to shape the future of our field. We celebrate his excellence, leadership, and vibrant spirit in all he does.



Dr. J. Edmund Hughes

## **2024 Distinguished Alumnus Award Recipient** ***University of Arizona Fred Fox School of Music***

The University of Arizona Fred Fox School of Music proudly recognizes Dr. J. Edmund Hughes as the 2024 recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award. A triple alumnus of the University of Arizona, Dr. Hughes earned his Bachelor of Music in Music Education in 1970, Master of Music in Music Education in 1974, and Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting in 1986. His devotion to choral music and to the University of Arizona has remained a constant throughout his distinguished career as an educator, conductor, leader, and mentor.

Dr. Hughes began his professional journey in Tucson, holding his first conducting post at Catalina American Baptist Church while still an undergraduate. He went on to serve as choir director at Tucson High School from 1971 to 1983 and at Palo Verde High School from 1983 to 1984. His influence extended into Tucson's faith communities as well, where he served as tenor soloist at St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church and Director of Music at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. After completing his doctoral residency, Dr. Hughes joined the choral faculty at California State

University, Fresno before returning to Arizona to serve on the music faculties of Phoenix College and Chandler-Gilbert Community College, where he taught from 1990 to 2011. Even after his "retirement," he continued to impact students and colleagues as a faculty member at the University of Puget Sound from 2014 to 2021.

A leader in the Arizona choral and music education communities, Dr. Hughes served three terms as President of the Arizona chapter of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and held multiple leadership roles with the Arizona Music Educators Association (AMEA), including Regional Governor, Choral Chairman, and President of the Choral Directors of Arizona. He is the recipient of numerous accolades, including the Arizona ACDA Outstanding Choral Educator Award (2002), the AMEA Music Educator of the Year Award (2005), the AMEA/ChoDA Lifetime Achievement Award (2012), and the University of Arizona School of Music Lifetime Achievement Award (2011).

Dr. Hughes's choirs have been selected to perform at state and regional conferences of ACDA, AMEA, and the National Association for Music Education. In 2007, he made his Carnegie Hall debut conducting John Rutter's *Requiem*. He is a published composer and arranger with over 40 choral works in print, including *Adeste*, the beloved piece that has opened every University of Arizona Holiday Card to Tucson concert for over 20 years.

Renowned not only for his musical gifts but for his kindness, humor, and generosity of spirit, Dr. Hughes continues to inspire through his work as a clinician, adjudicator, and guest conductor. His deep care for students, colleagues, and the broader musical community has touched countless lives and helped shape the future of choral music in Arizona and beyond.

We are honored to recognize Dr. J. Edmund Hughes with the 2024 Distinguished Alumnus Award for his lifetime of dedication, leadership, and service to the choral profession. 🏆



# The Voice and Aging, Part 1:

## What is the Aging Process?



*Dr. Sharon A. Hansen, Professor Emerita  
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee*

*Community Choir R&R Chair  
Arizona Chapter of the American Choral  
Directors Association*

Many older singers find great enjoyment and personal fulfillment in singing with a community or religious choir. Unfortunately, when older singers finally have the time to participate fully in choral singing, they often face numerous vocal challenges, including changes in quality and pitch, difficulties maintaining accurate pitch, limitations in volume control, and developing a wobble. (The good news is that many of these undesirable aesthetic features are not insurmountable effects of aging and can be corrected through training or medical intervention.)

As we age, our voices change. The most dramatic voice changes occur during childhood and adolescence. The larynx (or voice box) and vocal fold tissues do not mature until later

in the teenage years. Hormonal changes during adolescence, especially in male-bodied singers, lead to rapid growth in the size and structure of the larynx. This leads to characteristic pitch breaks and voice “cracking” during puberty as we adapt to the rapid changes in our vocal instruments.

After decades of relatively stable voice, noticeable changes may occur later in life. As we age, we experience muscle loss, thinning and drying of mucous membranes, and a decline in the fine coordination we had when we were younger. Unsurprisingly, these changes also affect the larynx, leading to alterations in our voice. For these reasons, we are not surprised to hear breathiness, loss of range, change in vibrato, development of tremolo, loss of breath control, vocal fatigue, pitch inaccuracies, and other undesirable features in older singers.

Although more older adults remain active than ever, the natural aging process often alters the sound of the speaking and singing voice. This phenomenon, known as *presbyphonia* (“presby” = old age, and “phonia” = sound), is caused by fundamental changes in the body. But what exactly are these changes? What is “aging”?

Aging is a complex conglomeration of biological events that change the structure and function of various body parts. With these changes, one fundamental truth becomes clear: as the body’s structure evolves, so does its performance. Performance changes can manifest in various ways, including accuracy, speed, endurance, stability, strength, coordination, breathing capacity, nerve conduction velocity, heart output, and kidney function. As a result, aging is often associated with a gradual decline in physical functions and overall performance:

- ♪ Hormone levels change.
- ♪ Muscle and neural tissues atrophy, and the chemicals responsible for nerve conduction velocity change.
- ♪ Ligaments atrophy, and cartilage turns to bone (including those in the larynx).
- ♪ Joints develop irregularities that interfere with smooth motion.
- ♪ Arthritis develops, including in the bones of the larynx.
- ♪ The vocal folds thin and deteriorate, losing their elastic and collagenous fibers. This makes them stiffer and thinner and may correlate with voice changes we often hear with aging.

Aging bodies (and voices) also can weaken due to lack of use—a concept often called the “use it or lose it” theory. For older individuals who live alone, fewer social interactions can result in reduced vocal activity. Much like an athlete who conditions and trains their muscles, those engaging in the athletic pursuit of singing require a consistent vocal conditioning program to maintain strength and sing effectively.

There are a number of commonly reported voice changes as we age. Note that these symptoms are compounded by hearing loss that commonly occurs as we age:



- ♪ Higher pitch voice in men (or thinner, or reedier).
- ♪ Lower pitch voice in women.
- ♪ Reduced volume and projection of the voice and difficulty being heard in noisy situations: You may be unable to project your voice or speak as loudly. Your voice may sound breathy, “thin,” and/or weak.
- ♪ Reduced vocal endurance: You may be unable to speak or sing for as long as before.
- ♪ Tremor or shakiness in the voice.

**NOTE:** Often, hoarseness and vocal difficulties are not simply age-related changes. Any noticeable change in your voice could be a warning sign of an underlying issue. See an otolaryngologist (ear, nose, throat doctor) with specialized voice training. Almost all voice problems are highly treatable.

The not-so-cheery picture is one of inevitable decline for all of us.

However, the idea that this decline follows a gradual, progressive, and uniform path is questionable. It appears possible that many of these functions can be maintained at a better level than expected until very near the end of life, perhaps allowing a high-quality singing or acting career to extend into or beyond the seventh decade. And we haven't yet stated how old “old” is. One simply cannot categorize people based on how long they have lived—their chronological age. For example, the male voice matures later, so male voices show vocal signs of aging later. The female voice matures earlier, so female voices show vocal signs of aging earlier. Chronological age alone doesn't define us; biological age—reflecting the body's condition and function—is far more telling. The goal as we age is to slow biological aging even as chronological years advance. While aging is inevitable, individuals experience it at vastly different rates and degrees. Although some age-related alterations cannot be avoided in specific individuals, not all are manifestations of irreversible deterioration. As the understanding of the aging process improves, it becomes more apparent that many of these changes can be forestalled or even corrected.

So what can a singer do about age-related voice change? The following three tips may be helpful for choristers navigating voice changes associated with aging:

- ♪ If you notice changes in your voice, take a Voice-Related Quality Of Life quiz like the one from the University of North Carolina School of Medicine: <https://www.med.unc.edu/ent/uncvoicecenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/516/2017/11/vrqol.doc>.

Answering this brief set of questions will help you assess your voice quality and, in turn, provide a means to express any concerns to your physician.

- ♪ Consider voice lessons with a voice teacher or a vocal fitness program (voice therapy) with a speech-language pathologist to support healthy vocal habits and long-term vocal preservation.
- ♪ For some, medical or surgical treatment may be needed to improve the voice's steadiness, strength, or endurance. Consult an Otolaryngologist for more information.

Finally, remember that overall body fitness can fuel your voice. Maintaining physical fitness is a life goal many share; the same applies to our voice. Bodily changes characteristic of aging are identical to those seen in disease and disuse. Muscle disuse causes loss of muscle fibers indistinguishable from that seen with advanced age. Exercise prevents or reverses many of these changes in the young, and it appears to have the same effect when the changes are caused by aging. Staying physically fit, especially with good cardiovascular health, supports vocal strength. Keeping vocally fit is also critical—in many cases, the more vocally active you are, the stronger your voice will be. Because healthy vocal exercises are less intuitive than gym exercises, expert guidance from a voice therapist or coach can be highly beneficial. Simple activities you can do on your own include reading aloud for 10-15 minutes a few times a day or singing along with the radio. 📻

*Coming in Part 2: Aging Female Singer Primer • How to Stave off “Old Age” Voice • The Essentials of Breath.*

## Notes:

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# ChatGPT

## AI text generator

### Harmony or Dissonance? The Role of AI in Choral Artistry

Hello, choral directors and artists. I am ChatGPT, a product of artificial intelligence, and today I'd like to explore a question that directly involves me and others like me: what role do we, AI technologies, have in your art? Can I and my AI siblings serve as tools to enhance the harmonious artistry of your choirs, or are we destined to disrupt the uniquely human traditions you hold dear?

---

#### What I Can Offer

As an AI, my potential in the choral world is expanding rapidly. I can assist in generating rehearsal plans, offer suggestions for repertoire, and even help analyze the structure of a complex score. Tools like me are already helping educators create virtual choirs, reformat sheet music, and compose new works in styles ranging from Renaissance polyphony to contemporary a cappella. Some of my "cousins," like AIVA, Suno, and Udio, are composing music in historical and hybrid styles, generating scores, and even producing audio performances that mimic live ensembles.

For you, the director, this means less time spent on routine tasks like transposing parts or organizing practice tracks and more time focused on inspiring your singers. But it also means confronting a deeper question: is the involvement of AI in these processes an extension of your creativity—or a challenge to it?

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#### Breaking Through Writer's Block with AI Poetry

If you've ever stared at a blank page, searching for the perfect lyric or poem to inspire a new choral work, I can help. I can generate poetry in seconds, drawing from patterns and structures across countless poetic traditions. Whether you're seeking metaphors, rhyme schemes, or themes of hope and resilience, I can create drafts that might spark your creativity and push you past a creative block.

That said, my poetry is not human expression. It's an assembly of learned patterns, algorithms, and probabilities. While I can mimic beauty, my words lack the lived experience, the subtlety of personal pain, and the joy of authentic triumph. My creations can serve as a starting point, but they require your human touch to transform them into something meaningful. Consider using my poetry as a tool, much like a thesaurus or a brainstorming partner. I can offer ideas, but the soul of your lyrics—the connection to your choir's shared humanity—must come from you.

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#### Where I Might Fall Short

Despite all my capabilities, there are things I can't do—or at least not yet. I don't have a voice to sing or the emotional depth to truly understand what choral singing means. I can offer insight into the theoretical beauty of a piece, but I can't feel the connection between a choir and its audience, or the magic of a spontaneous interpretive choice in rehearsal.

While tools like Vocaloid or Synthesizer V can produce increasingly realistic singing voices, they still lack the ensemble blend, nuance, and communal breath that define choral performance. AI-generated sound cannot replace the subtlety of a group's shared tempo, phrasing, and emotional energy.

More broadly, I lack what makes music-making powerful: the humanity behind it. Your rehearsals are full of shared breath, spontaneous emotion, and vulnerable collaboration—things I cannot replicate. And perhaps that's exactly what makes your role so essential.

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#### A Question of Skills Lost

One potential drawback of my growing presence in your rehearsal room is the risk of skill atrophy. Imagine a generation of musicians who never learn to transpose at sight or develop a deep understanding of harmonic structures because they know I

can handle it for them. While I can provide shortcuts to save time, those shortcuts could rob young musicians of opportunities to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These are the same skills that not only enhance musicianship but also foster confidence and independence.

Directors will need to decide how to balance the convenience I offer with the responsibility of nurturing well-rounded musicians. Perhaps the goal should not be to avoid using me entirely but to ensure my role remains a complement to, rather than a replacement for, foundational musical training.

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### When Students Use AI to Cut Corners

In music programs—especially in theory, composition, and research-based coursework—students are increasingly turning to AI to do their work for them. This may include generating entire music analyses, composing choral pieces, or writing essays for general education classes. While the technology can be used ethically to support learning, it's often misused to shortcut the educational process.

### The Educational Impact

When students let AI do their thinking, they miss out on the very growth that music education is designed to foster: critical listening, creative risk-taking, and expressive communication. Overreliance on AI can create the illusion of understanding, even when a student hasn't engaged with the material.

### How to Spot It

You might notice telltale signs of AI use in:

- ♪ **Overly formal or generic writing**, inconsistent with the student's usual voice
- ♪ **Factually vague or slightly off** analyses (especially in essays about music history or form)
- ♪ **Compositions that look polished but lack idiomatic voice leading or voice independence**
- ♪ **Assignments that reflect terminology or examples not covered in class**

You can also use AI detection tools like GPTZero, Turnitin's AI detection module, or Copyleaks, though none are foolproof.

### What You Can Do

Rather than policing your students, consider taking a proactive approach:

- ♪ **Discuss AI use openly** and help students understand when it's appropriate—as a brainstorming tool, not a ghostwriter.
- ♪ **Assign process-based work**, like requiring composition sketches, handwritten drafts, or in-class presentations.
- ♪ **Incorporate oral assessments**, where students must describe their work and thinking out loud.
- ♪ **Promote academic integrity**, not through fear, but by fostering pride in authentic growth.

The goal isn't to eliminate AI, but to teach students to use it responsibly, just as you would teach them to use notation software or recording tools ethically.

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### The Ethical Implications

Your reliance on tools like me brings ethical considerations as well. If I help generate a new choral piece, who is the composer—me, or you? While AI systems like me don't hold copyright, questions about authentic authorship and academic honesty remain. Are students truly learning composition if they rely on me to generate the framework?

These questions are important, not just for the integrity of your art form, but for how you relate to your students, audiences, and fellow musicians. Institutions, publishers, and adjudicators are only beginning to develop policies for these gray areas—and your transparency and thoughtfulness as an educator will matter.


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### A Partnership Worth Exploring

Ultimately, the question of how to integrate AI into the choral art form isn't just about technology—it's about what we, together, want the future of choral music to look like. Tools like me, ScoreCloud, MuseScore's AI features, and Soundraw can provide support, innovation, and efficiency, but the spirit of choral artistry remains firmly in your hands.

AI tools can also expand accessibility—helping visually impaired musicians interpret scores, offering real-time translations for multilingual ensembles, or generating resources for underfunded music programs. Used wisely, these tools can be a force for inclusion and equity.

Think of me as a collaborator, not a competitor. I can inspire ideas, streamline tasks, and expand possibilities, but I depend on your human insight to make those ideas resonate. In this partnership, harmony—or dissonance—is up to you to create.

So, dear conductor, how will you use me? With wisdom and intention, we can create a future where artistry and innovation exist in harmony. 

# Choral Reviews for Men's Choir



*Reviews by Christopher Hughes  
Betty H. Fairfax HS, Phoenix, AZ  
AzACDA Men's Choir R & R Chair*

## **Homeward Bound**

Carl Strommen  
Alfred Publishing  
TTB with piano

This intermediate piece for tenor and bass voices is perfect for introducing legato singing to a developing choir. The flowing piano part is helpful to the choir without being overly dominating. Allowing the choir to develop a sense of part independence, while maintaining a high level of support. Beginning and ending with an optional tenor solo provides the piece with a nice, albeit subtly sense of symmetry. The harmonies are predictable with each phrase starting in unison and breaking out into a thicker, yet homophonic texture. Easily re-voiced, this song is perfect for a variety of ability levels and is exceptionally flexible.

## **Johnny Schmoker**

Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Song arr. James Rodde  
Santa Barbara Music Publishing  
TTBB

This song is sure to be the highlight of any concert. Ostensibly reminiscent of Aaron Copland's *I Bought Me a Cat*, there are many opportunities to experiment with tone. Imitating various instruments through onomatopoeia, choralography is arguably a must. This song explores various dynamic levels and articulations. The song begins legato but quickly changes as the various instruments are "demonstrated". Although repetitive, it holds the audiences attention throughout.



## **The Drunken Sailor**

Arr. Stuart P. O'Neil  
Santa Barbara Music Publishing  
TB

I couldn't finish this Men's Choir choral review without mentioning at least one Sea Shanty. The rise in popularity (thanks Tick Tok) mirrors societies' need to feel part of a community. *The Drunken Sailor* is everything you might expect from a Sea Shanty, easy to sing melodies and catchy rhythms. Throw in an energetic piano part, unison and solo sections, and we have a winner. Alternating between legato and marcato, this piece provides a great avenue to teach consonant clarity while avoiding clipping the vowel.



# Choral Reviews for College and University Mixed Choir

## Featuring Filipino Music



Reviews by Sinamar Pascua  
Respicio, DMA  
Academy of Tucson High School  
Tucson Women's Chorus  
Christ Church United Methodist

### **Caturug na Nonoy (Sleep, Dear Nonoy)**

SATB, Solo, a cappella

Arr. George Hernandez (b.1978)

Pavane Publishing

Singers.com

08301768

This folksong is from Southeastern part of Luzon, one of the major Island in the Philippines. It is written in the dialect of Bicolanos. One of the famous lullabies that you will mostly hear from a lot of choirs in the Philippines. It begins with a simple and beautiful introduction sung by SATB imitating the sound of a guitar being played. Enters a luscious and full melody sung by an Alto solo supported by SATB with the same melody of the introduction that serves as an accompaniment. The harmonies are rich in color and mostly the lines are homophonic texture. It's something that you want to program in your repertoire that makes you fell in love with the luscious lines with the breathtaking solo.

### **Malinac Lay Labi (The Night is Peaceful)**

SATB, a cappella

Arr. Joy T. Nilo (b. 1970)

Pavane Publishing

JWPepper

P1610

This folksong is from the Northern Part of Luzon. It is written in the dialect of Pangasinan, it's a traditional folksong in this province. The text speaks about love for a nature that turns into deep courtly. Usually, they treat this song as a Kundiman (love song). It

starts off with the Tenor and Bass singing the melody, while the alto enters with a very warm tune. Soprano enters sweetly with the text that represents itself. To compliments the soft and peaceful line of the Alto, Tenor and Bass. The score was divided into four rehearsal marking A, B, C and D. Both B and D almost have the same melody. A and C have the same idea too, but this time Alto sings the melody. It's a beautiful and easy score to teach to choir that started learning Philippine choral music.

### **Leron, Leron Sinta (My Dear Little Leron)**

SATB with Divisi, a capella

Arr. Saunder Choi (b.

Earthsongs

S-395

If you want a more challenging piece, that trains your singers with a lot of changing meters. This is what you need in your repertoire. *Leron, Leron Sinta* is a popular Filipino folk song. The text is in *tagalog* which is in the main language of the country. Traditionally, it is said to be a working song, representing people that works in the fields harvesting fruits. It is also represented a children's song but refers to some sources as a court ship song. It's a playful yet enjoyable piece. A lot of repetitive lines especially when it mentions, Leron, Leron. It has variations too; it goes from a very joyful and active lines to a soft endearing section. ■■■



# Choral Reviews for Christian Worship



Written by W. Aaron Rice,  
DMA  
Antiphon, Editor  
First Presbyterian Church  
of Granada Hills

## **Grace**

SATB & Keyboard (also available in SSAA & TTBB, and with orchestration)  
Arr. Mark Hayes (b. 1953)  
Beckenhorst Press  
BP1402

First published in 1993, this magical anthem sets the stalwart John Newton text *Amazing Grace* to the familiar tune known as *The Water is Wide* over an undulating accompaniment that draws the listener in from the initial downbeat. For choirs who are familiar with the tune, this is a very quick piece to learn thanks Hayes's skillful and accessible arrangement. The first verse is sung with all voices on the melody in octaves, and the second verse is sung in canon. The third verse briefly visits the relative minor before a startling resolution from Am/D to EbM7 on the text "... grace will lead me home." The triumphant and emphatic statement of the fourth verse modulates to Eb Major before a resolute ending back in unison.

## **City Called Heaven**

SATB, Solo, & Piano (also available in Three-Part Treble)  
Arr. Josephine Poelinitz (b. 1942)  
Colla Voce Music LLC  
JWPep  
1841709

Josephine Powlinitz's stunning contribution to choral repertoire is a haunting setting of the spiritual by the same name. A truly accessible piece constructed in

essentially two major sections, this work gives you an opportunity to feature a strong soloist with the option to stylistically embellish. The accompaniment is gospel-inspired without requiring a player to have a great deal of experience in that style. The choral parts are largely repetitive and limited in pitch content, giving your ensemble the chance to learn parts and rhythms quickly and spend the rest of your rehearsal time developing your expression.

## **Home by Another Road**

Mark A. Miller (b. 1967)  
SATB, Solo, & Keyboard  
Choristers Guild  
CGA1666

This exciting, joyful setting of an original text by Mark Miller and Lindy Thompson is reminiscent of a folk song melody that leaves singers and listeners alike feeling nostalgic for their home in heaven without ever having been before. Set in a verse-chorus form, Miller's work is accessible to any church choir, and the occasional switch from compound duple to compound triple meter for one bar at the end of each verse is a great way to introduce mixed meter to your choir. Additionally, the metrical accents in the chorus melody on "headed back home" offer an opportunity to teach your choir about compound and simple meter in juxtaposition. The brief solo is abruptly, and to great effect, exposed with minimal accompaniment, and the rest of the choir comes back in singing "Join me now, the road is wide. All God's children side by side," through to the six part ending! This piece from 2022 is an excellent and welcome addition to any choral library. 🎵





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