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ANTIPHON

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From the President:



Ted Gibson
AzACDA President
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My dear colleagues and fellow AzACDA members,

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! This is the time of year that (regrettably or not) we all reflect on the past. If your life has been anything like mine, we probably shared a sense of “just hold on for dear life” as we navigated through 2021. White knuckles gripping the wheel firmly at 10 and 2 as you do everything you can just to stay on the road and keep moving forward! It’s a pertinent analogy, of course, but it reminds me of an experience I recently had.

Over winter break I took my family to Williams, AZ so we could take the kids on the “Polar Express.” For those of you with young kids it’s an absolute blast... and there’s a sing-along! But I digress... on our return trip to our home in Mesa, we took the usual route along I-40 into Flagstaff and then south on I-17. Having lived in Flagstaff for two years, I’m very familiar with these highways and I know exactly how treacherous they can be especially when it snows. What did we awake to on the morning of our return? You guessed it, snow! It was not the worst blizzard I have ever driven in, but there were a few times that we were crawling along on the interstate at less than half the speed limit. My wife and my daughter were having a conversation about something that I was oblivious to, and my wife asked for my input. I drew a blank. It was like the entire conversation had been white noise. I had been so hyper-focused on the road that I was completely unaware of what they were talking about. I must have had a pretty clueless look on my face because they both started laughing. My ignorance was forgiven, of course, but it made me think. When we’re hyper-focused on the here and now, what are we missing? When we’re just trying to put one foot in front of the other, or just trying to get through another rehearsal with a number of our singers quarantined, is there “white noise” going unnoticed?

So, as you spend some time reflecting, I encourage you to look for the positive experiences from 2021 that might have slipped by in the moment. That student who was aloof or absent during virtual learning who now greets you every day with a smile. That church choir anthem that got an “Amen!” from the congregation and maybe even a few comments from the livestream worshipers. Just the simple experience of hearing voices in harmony reverberating in the same space together. All of us missed these things deeply, and many of us were finally able to cherish them again this year. Most importantly, remember to cherish the people. Choirs are people. Hurting, happy, scared, excited, broken, and complicated people. But isn’t that what we do? Create a space where people can experience each other and help them cherish that experience through the beautiful craft of singing together. That’s what I did in 2021. I may have been too busy keeping my eyes on the road to have noticed it happening, but I’m glad that music brought people together, even in spite of me.

So lift a glass... or a baton, or a Hydro Flask... whatever! Here’s to creating the time and space to cherish the beautiful people in our lives and in our choirs as we venture into this new year! 🎵

Sincerely,

Ted Gibson
President, Arizona Choral Directors Association
Gilbert Classical Academy
University Presbyterian Church



FROM THE

EDITOR



W. Aaron Rice

*AzACDA Antiphon
Editor*

*UArizona Graduate
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*Beautiful Savior
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Hello, AzACDA members, you lovely choral people!

My name is Aaron Rice, and I have taken on the role of Editor for this esteemed publication. I am so glad to be able to share with you the insight and expertise that is offered in each edition of the Antiphon newsletter. I am grateful to our AzACDA President Ted Gibson and the former editor Angelica Dunsavage for offering me the chance to develop this document and speak with all of you here, and I am proud to take on the task of developing our letter and advancing our readership.

This season, we're looking forward to the long-anticipated Western Regional ACDA conference that is taking place LIVE, in person, at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, California! I hope to see you there this March (2-5), where we can enjoy performances by eighteen established choirs from around the region as well as Honor Choirs and the All-Conference Sing led by Dr. Charlene Archibeque, Dr. Jo-Michael Scheibe, and our very own Dr. Edie Copley! Interest sessions include opportunities to learn about developing your choral programs, improving your singers' technique, increasing your commitment to diversity and inclusion, and including choral works both very old and brand new. We'll have new commissioned works to share, the new composer track to workshop and connect with choral composers, and a keynote address from Eric Whitacre!

In this Winter edition of the Antiphon, we get to read about some of the musical traditions of Chase Moore's home state of Kentucky, and you can join our guest writer Gideon Burrows in reevaluating your rehearsal pedagogy. Katherine Rosenfeld tells us all about the exciting ACDA Student Symposium held in Tucson this year, and our President-Elect Katie Gerrish offers some useful tools for reintroducing the ever-important sense of familial unity in your programs. We also hope you'll enjoy reading about the exciting new repertoire that our esteemed contributors Aimee Stewart, Mandy Lamberth, Lindsay Decoste, and Sinámar Respicio have reviewed for us, covering material for children's choirs through collegiate ensembles. There is much to be found, and I hope you will enjoy reading all about it!

In addition to absorbing what is offered in this issue, I also hope you will feel encouraged to contribute to the discourse by submitting your own stories, sharing your insights, and celebrating your successes! Please feel free to share photos from your events, insights you have found worth considering, or reviews of concerts and repertoire that you think our readers should know more about. Also, if you would like to advertise a concert or other choral event in a future edition of Antiphon, please get in touch! Reach out to me by emailing antiphon@azacda.org to discuss your submissions or advertising. ☰

Long days and pleasant nights,

W. Aaron Rice
AzACDA Antiphon Editor
UArizona Graduate ACDA President
Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Tucson
Green Valley Community Chorus

Annual Student Symposium Report



*Katherine Rosenfeld
Rhodes Junior High School
Phoenix Chorale*

Written by Katherine Rosenfeld

This past October, the University of Arizona hosted the annual undergraduate Student Symposium. Every year, the student ACDA chapters at University of Arizona, Arizona State University, and Northern Arizona University alternate hosting a weekend-long event for future music educators focused on the skills they need to be successful when they first begin their teaching journey. This year's symposium was a huge success as we transitioned back to a sense of normalcy with an in-person event.



Students attending the Symposium.

The 2021 symposium was planned and hosted by U of A Chapter President Oliva Bustos, Dr. Betsy Schauer, and the U of A undergraduate ACDA student chapter. The 2-day event consisted of 8 sessions and a concert that highlighted local groups from the Tucson Girls Chorus to school choirs to the U of A Symphonic Choir. Presenters from across the state shared valuable insight with the nearly 30 attendees about topics such as classroom management (Nathan Myers, ASU), assigning voice parts (Dr. Ryan Holder, NAU), making the most of student teaching (Julia Higgins, Esperero Canyon Middle School), and more! Students were challenged to conduct in front of their peers, provide feedback on blend and balance between singers within a section, practice selecting and justifying religious text for the secular classroom, and complete other exercises that can be directly applied in their choral classrooms someday!

Bustos reports that 27 undergraduate students and 2 local Tucson teachers attended the symposium. She shared, "sessions that left the biggest impressions on students... were Dr. Cossley's session on choosing repertoire [and] Dr. Durocher's session on [teaching/using] solfege".

NAU choral education sophomore Logan Willson shared, with regards to Dr. Schauer's conducting master class, "I thought it was really great going to the conducting workshop, and then immediately turning around to watch the director conduct [the U of A Symphonic Choir]. It put a lot of what we learned about into context".

A huge thank you to the U of A ACDA student chapter, their president Oliva Bustos, Dr. Schauer, St. Mark's United Methodist Church, the presenters, participating choirs, and our undergraduate participants from across the state for making this AzACDA tradition a success once again! 🎵

The Desire to Belong: Helping Students Reacclimate to the Choral Community

Written by Katie Gerrich

Say it with me: virtual learning was THE WOOORST. (*Insert voice of Jean Ralphio from Parks and Rec here*) I know as I sat in front of a screen of a sea of faces (or circles with letters), it felt surreal and definitely unfulfilling. At times, it felt like doing a really bad stand-up routine. At best, I would get some funny comments in the chat and forced smiles as kids were likely playing "Among Us" on a different tab. We all just wanted to be together - where we belong. If we as teachers were missing that community, you know our students were missing it even more. Not to mention the new students in our programs who didn't even know how great it was to belong to the amazing choir families we know and love. We knew a return was imminent, but it felt for some of us like it was miles away. When would we get back to where we belong?

Aaaand we're back!

Our return to the choir room was such an amazing feeling! We finally got to see - and HEAR- each other in the same space. However, the relationships that typically develop so authentically as a result of daily rehearsals were not there. Some members returned to their routines immediately. They remembered they were wanted, needed and accepted - and that they belonged in the choral community. However, others never got their true introduction in the same meaningful way. They never got to sit by the older choir member who lived and breathed choir and showed them the ropes. They never got to be the unsure new member who worried about how this choir program would compare to their previous program. This sense of belonging that we all took for granted now needs to be on the forefront of each rehearsal. Now, more than ever, what we do in the choir room is so much more than preparing for each new concert or festival. Students need to learn how to be a student again, and a huge part of that is relationship building. This is where we, as choral educators, absolutely shine and have the incredible opportunity to rise to the task of helping our students regain their confidence and sense of belonging. I offer to you three different approaches I have used to help my students through this crazy transition.

Glad Moments

One monumental task of rebuilding students' sense of belonging is focusing on gratitude. Rather than focusing on all the negatives, talking about what we are grateful for can start to shift the mind-set and remind us that there is still good. One way we have done this in my choir room is to intermittently have "Glad Moments". This is a part of the rehearsal where singers can share anything positive in their world with the group. They are invited to raise their hands to share anything on their heart. The responses range from "I got an A on my Biology quiz!" to "I had Chipotle for lunch and it was awesome!". I have noticed this practice enables members to share the good in their life with people who will listen and respond with support and encouragement. Some never participate - and I am still working on how to encourage that - but some want to share every single time. This is a practice that could be embedded any day of the week, with all grade levels, community choirs or church choirs. A spin on this - you could also have singers write down their Glad Moments and pull a few out each rehearsal.

Lifts

Another way my choir members and I have implemented a grateful mind-set is by doing weekly "Lifts". Singers raise their hand to share something wonderful about another choir member (ex. "I would like to Lift Nathan because he always says "hi" to me when I come to choir" or "I would like to Lift Emily because when I was absent last week, she texted me to check in and that meant a lot"). When the speaker is done, the ensemble does three snaps to acknowledge that statement. I would guess that many of us do a similar activity in our rooms - "Shout Outs", "Snap Cup", "Put Ups" - these are all wonderful ways to encourage young singers to think beyond themselves and to verbalize



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Director of Choirs,
McClintock High School
President-Elect, AzACDA*

their appreciation for each other. It is also a wonderful way to help them accept compliments, too! I also encourage students to Lift themselves - ex. "I want to Lift myself because I raised my English grade from a D to a B!". Recently, I have had my choir council members facilitate this activity - and they really enjoy that! I never force someone to give a Lift - and, just like Glad Moments, some never participate. But some can't wait until Wednesdays when we do Lifts - and they call me out if I forget! An extension of this activity could be writing down Lifts and reading them as bell ringers or closures. I have found much more success with my beginning treble choir when we write them down - as they are a very shy group. A fun twist to this activity is using the Wheel of Names (wheelofnames.com) to select the speaker!

Check-In Form

We all want our choir members to know that we care about them. We are truly invested in their lives and want them to know that they matter. We can say this until we are blue in the face, but it is crucial that we show each individual that we are here for them - and that they have a place in our choir family no matter what. Borrowed from my friend and colleague Katie Hixon, I have implemented a Weekly Check-In Google Form. Questions such as "How is your physical health?", "How is your stress level?", and "Would you like a personal email check-in from Mrs. G?" make weekly appearances. Before holiday breaks, I would also inquire if they needed help accessing enough food for their family. Then I would pass those requests on to our amazing counseling department and Care 7 Youth Specialist who were best equipped to address these needs. I began doing these check-ins during virtual learning as I was truly missing those casual pre- and post-rehearsal conversations and the choir room full of vibrant conversation at lunch. I had no idea how they were dealing with the pandemic, and I wanted to be sure to give them a space to share their feelings. Now that we are back to in-person learning, I have continued to use this tool to stay connected with each student. I have seen the benefits of this form when I read through the responses and follow up with the students. Some are truly taken back that I read their thoughts and asked about them. It is in these moments our singers start to open their eyes to the notion that we truly care and want to listen.

As we look to 2022, we have so much on our plates - both choir members and directors. I would offer, though, that we also have a very unique and important role in continuing to instill that sense of belonging in our students. Each day can bring about the time where the shy kid finally wants to share a Glad Moment, or the jokester shares in the Check-In how much they love the choir community and it feels like home. We matter, our kids matter and the music matters. Each day is a new opportunity to help people find their way and feel like they truly belong - and that is everything. 🍷

Music From Appalachia



Chase Moore

*AzACDA Repertoire
and Resources Chair
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Eastern Arizona College

Written by Chase Moore

Introduction

All of us have a "our choral story". The story of how we got started in the profession that we love and how we evolved into what we are today or are evolving to. We have had or do have influential choristers and educators in our lives that have cultivated our love for singing and singing with others. And for so many of us, where we grew up plays a major factor in our choral story. I was born and raised in south central Kentucky. A rural part of the state that focuses on lake and house boating tourism, Friday night games, and if you could sing...there was a seat for in you in the loft on Sunday. I won't share all my "choral story", but I will share with you some of the choral traditions that I grew up with. Mostly, because of the recent tragedy in Kentucky, I wanted to write this article in celebration of my home state and some of its great choral traditions, composers, and their compositions.

Shape Note Tradition

While the shape note tradition did not start in the Bluegrass, it is an integral part of music education and congregational singing. A musical notation system introduced in the late 18th Century England, is designed for congregational and social singing. Round note heads are replaced with shapes that represent certain pitches within the major and minor scale. Shape note music is mostly used in sacred music and experiencing a renaissance in the southern region of the United States. Shape note systems have varied throughout time. From a four-shape scale used mostly in the 17th and 18th century to the seven-shape system that is still commonly used in hymnals today. Studies have been used in the classroom with the teaching of shape notes (mostly Elementary) and have proven effective.



Composers

Jean Ruth Ritchie was born in Viper, KY in 1922. Regarded as the “Mother of Folk”, Ritchie was a singer, songwriter, and Appalachian dulcimer player. Ritchie learned Appalachian music like many other children of her time, from her parents and community. Appalachian music was passed down orally from generation-to-generation, and Ritchie is credited with bringing national and international attention to the Appalachian dulcimer. The Appalachian dulcimer or mountain dulcimer is a small, fretted string instrument from the zither family.

John Jacob Niles born in Louisville, KY in 1892, Niles is regarded as one of the pioneers in the great revival of American folk music. Learning music theory from his mother at an early age, Niles began transcribing Appalachian folk music while living in eastern Kentucky from 1910-1917. Niles studied music at various institutions including Schola Cantorum de Paris, and the University of Cincinnati – Conservatory of Music.

Compositions

Now is the Cool of the Day (Ritchie/Erb) – an original composition, but most definitely in the style of Appalachia. *Now is the Cool of the Day* is a call and response setting for chorus and soloists with the message conserving the earth. Dr. James Erb’s arrangement of this piece will be a favorite amongst your singers.

What is Beauty? (Niles/Leavitt) – also an original composition, but more of a celebration of a lesser-known work by Niles. A great piece for competition or growth, the lush harmonies support a soaring melody and features an involved accompaniment. A great piece to show off the ability of your ensemble and pianist!

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Summer Programs for Shape Note Tradition

Below is a list of summer programs that teach the seven-shape note system. These schools offer group singing, private lessons in piano and voice, music theory classes, etc. I am proud alum of the Stamps-Baxter School of Music where I attended from 2007-2011 and served on faculty from 2013-2016.

Stamps-Baxter School of Music

www.stampsbaxterschool.com

July 10-23, 2022; Middle Tennessee State University; Murfreesboro, TN.

North Georgia School of Gospel Music

<https://www.facebook.com/northgeorgiaschoolofgospelmusic/>

Alabama School of Gospel Music

<https://www.alabamagospel.com>

Choral traditions look different in every state. I was lucky enough to move across country to learn about the choral culture of the southwest. I hope that with this article, it sparks some interest in a choral tradition that otherwise may have never been discovered by our readers here in Arizona and on. If you have any questions about how to use this in the classroom or getting in contact with the summer programs, please feel free to reach out to me.

Chase Moore is an Associate Professor of Music and Director of Musical Theatre at Eastern Arizona College in Thatcher, AZ. His email is chase.moore@eac.edu.



“A Tradition of Purpose: An Invitation to Reexamine Rehearsal Pedagogy”



*Gideon Burrows, DMA
Professor of Music,
Director of Choral Music
Eastern Arizona College*

Written by Gideon Burrows, DMA

I remember freezing in front of my ensemble, not knowing what to say or do. I cannot recall exactly what happened or even what song we were rehearsing, but I remember feeling confused. I was in my second year of teaching high school and was falling evermore in love with my job. However, in that moment, all I could think about was the almost forty pairs of eyes staring at me as my bag of tricks seemed to fail. My students strived to follow every instruction I gave to them. Despite their best efforts, everything I tried seemed to distance us more from our intended goal. To avoid a disparaging end to the rehearsal, I muttered something about coming back to that section the next day and moved on to the next piece.

As I reflected upon this experience throughout the rest of that year and the many years since, I came to realize that I employed many rehearsal strategies out of a sense of tradition rather than an awareness of the specific demands of the moment. This is not to say that I was completely ignorant of my students needs or that I could not assess technical ills. I did, however, discover limitations to my own pedagogy. I trusted valid techniques as I would mathematical formulas, not entirely comprehending why certain methods were more appropriate in a given setting or how I could adapt them to address the data I had. As I sought a specific aural product, I failed to see what my students understood and whether they were developing the ability to hear for themselves. I felt that I was failing to even grasp what problem I was trying to solve.

The helplessness I experienced then was uncomfortable. Thankfully, that discomfort provided the catalyst for my continued growth as a conductor and teacher. What I thought choir directors should do got in the way of what I needed to do. In my career since, I have attempted to adhere to a different tradition—one that focuses on purposeful pedagogy.

Traditions v. Best Practices

Good singing is good singing. Efficient, healthy, and beautiful phonation is not dependent upon the style, language, or culture of a given selection of repertoire. Rather, it results from deliberate practice, often enacted under the guidance of a competent instructor. The best choral conductors and vocal pedagogues seek out effective and economical methods for building a chorister's skill. When referencing singing, I love quoting Blanche Marchesi, an early voice teacher and operatic singer. In her view, there were only two methods for teaching voice: "the good one and the bad."¹ Her mother, Mathilda Marchesi, further delineated "good" singing methods as those that generate the "best results."² Though taken somewhat out of context, these statements provide a simple road map for our efforts: reinforce good singing. The path to seek the best results for us and our ensembles must be purposeful. Like singing, development of efficient teaching ability follows intentional preparation.

Many of our perceived choral rehearsal traditions originated with respected conductors who consciously addressed their singers' needs. Some came about as efforts to provide quick fixes while others resulted from survival techniques. As with any skill, we often begin our development as ensemble directors and teachers by mimicking our teachers and other accomplished conductors. However, as these approaches transfer from conductor to singer and teacher to student, the possibility persists that younger generations of choral leaders may confuse these tactics for professional best practices regardless of their realized efficacy. This ritualistic transmission may allow some methods to persist even when they contradict contemporary needs and understanding. Even sound methods may lose their significance should rehearsal customs divorce them from their intended context and purpose. Choral traditions become such simply due to their transference and repetition. Their prevalence does not necessarily denote efficiency or proper pedagogy. On the other hand, best practices for our (or any) profession have been proven to garner consistent results in a variety of settings when utilized for their targeted purpose.

Recent research indicates that not all of our choral practices encourage the type of singing and development we desire. Ward Jamison noted that choral educators may inappropriately require students to engage in activities and with repertoire selections beyond their technical abilities. Such instruction imposes unrealistic expectations upon singers' and their vocal development, distorts their perceptions and understanding, and encourages students to exceed healthy boundaries in their singing.³ Specifically concerning teaching adolescent singers, Bridget Sweet declared that the "lack of understanding that many choral teachers have about the physiological function of the voice" can lead to misleading instruction, further hindering singers from fully comprehending how their voices operate.⁴ One of the most concerning observations comes from Patrick Freer's interviews of young male singers who withdrew from choral participation. He quoted one young man from England who shared:

If boys were taught to use their voice instead of just saying "get louder, sing higher, get quieter, do this, do that," it would help a lot. Most boys who quit choir were never taught how to do that stuff and they'll probably never sing again. Sometimes, it's like the performance is more important than the person.⁵

Finally, in their study on collegiate education and teaching methods, Halpern and Hakel observed:

Experience alone is a poor teacher. There are countless examples that illustrate that what people learn from experience can be systematically wrong.⁶

These statements support a reality that individual teaching traditions may not be as effective as we perceive.

As opposed to relying upon traditions, I advocate that we assess the purpose for our individual methods. I doubt that any one of us entered this profession with a significant amount of bad knowledge. I also do not believe that any of us have a perfect and complete knowledge of our craft. Service as conductors implies a duty to our singers to continuously improve our pedagogy. We risk hindering our individual growth and limiting our singers and students if we continue to follow a pattern of instruction simply because it was how we were taught—or worse, because it is what we think we should be doing without a more directed purpose. As such, I invite each of us assess our personal practices and seek to dedicate time for continued development, study vocal science and pedagogy, and engage in regular personal assessment.

Dedicate Time to Improve and Focus on Development

Set goals for personal practice and improvement. I remember the very first state music educator in-service conference I attended as a full-time public school teacher. In one session, Dr. Michael Murphy, then the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Idaho, gave a session on conducting technique. Instead of providing what I hoped would be a revelation of great artistry, he engaged participants in Malko exercises and other means to refine and simplify movement. At one point he rhetorically asked, "Why should you stop practicing conducting just because you're a conductor?" Though not a revelation in the way I had anticipated, his comments did help me realize that purposeful practice is requisite for great artistry at all career stages. My growth did not end just because I had completed my degree and teacher certification. My continued development also did not necessarily depend on a grand event such as a return to graduate school. I had the power to better myself.

Make an honest assessment about your strengths and weaknesses and then move to intentionally build understanding and skill. We are surrounded by many adequate development opportunities and resources. However, as you consider each opportunity, avoid the pitfall of the one-and-done development trap. Conference sessions, workshops, videos of rehearsals and master classes, and even literature can be good sources to gain awareness and initiate progress, but they remain ineffective for any meaningful growth. For true development, you will need to plan multiple opportunities to engage with a topic, practice a skill, and relate expanded understanding. Contemporary researchers suggest that all significant development in a given area must occur frequently across time, one even suggesting that a year of continuous practice was necessary to teach new concepts and skills to others.⁷ All improvement requires time. Implement a practice of continually addressing some means of personal development.

Understanding Voice Science and Its Pedagogical Applications

Next, dive into the physiology of the voice and the science behind its function and efficient use. In her own vocal method book, Mathilde Marchesi stated that "scientific knowledge is indispensable to teachers of singing, because it enables them to treat the vocal instrument in a natural and rational manner and with greater certainty . . ."⁸ To be of use to our ensembles, our knowledge of the voice must go beyond identifying laryngeal muscles or knowing that the vocal folds must adduct for phonation. Efficient conductors understand how vocal function relates to singing in the choral setting and to the selected repertoire, and they incorporate that knowledge into their rehearsal planning and practices.

The more I teach the more I am convinced that many of the challenges I face in rehearsal actually stem from impaired vocal function rather than an incomplete understanding of a musical or artistic concept. For example, very rarely do I find that intonation issues result from improper perceptions of the pitch. Hearing whether-or-not sung pitches are in tune is a necessary skill. However, most instances of sour tuning within a choral ensemble result from insufficient or improper airflow, muscular tension in the vocal tract, or mismatched vowel resonance. Addressing the vocal deficiency improves intonation better and

more quickly than targeting the issue with pitch alone. Furthermore, attempts to tackle only pitch when poor intonation results from a vocal issue could encourage singers to improperly manipulate their voices. Singers often pull off the breath or introduce muscular tension to control pitch and blend. Such practices, though they may fix the intonation itself, risk vocal health and inhibit the singer from developing appropriate and vocal control and skill. This approach almost always introduces more problems in the long run and limits vocal ability. Work to identify vocal function and ensure that your rehearsals support proper vocal production.

Along with your study of the voice, evaluate your practices and identify the origin of your pedagogy. Do you act out of imitation or tradition? Do you engage in warm-ups at the beginning of rehearsal because of habit or do you connect vocalises to a section of repertoire to target specific skill building? Is a certain activity based in your experience or in established research? What is the purpose for each approach? How effectively do these methods help you and your singers achieve your rehearsal goals? In all that you do, seek to ensure that your instruction helps build a genuine and accurate understanding of the voice, its function, and its application to the repertoire.

Self-Assess and Engage with a Community of Choral Peers

Finally, establish means to assess your own processes and garner honest feedback. This is often the most difficult step. It requires vulnerability and acceptance of your genuine self. Sometimes, we associate part of our identity with the traditions we employ or, like I did early in my career (and hopefully not as much anymore), depend so much on an activity or approach that you lose the ability to objectively analyze rehearsal challenges. Egos must be placed aside in order to construct an accurate evaluation of our individual methods.

Video recording provides an easy method to review your own work. Just a couple of years ago, as I was working with one of our undergraduate conductors, I realized that it had been some time since I last recorded and watched one of my own rehearsals. As I was explaining to this student that it was an indispensable way to improve, I realized that my students had never seen me go through the process—they had never witnessed me walking the talk. The very next day, I set up a camera in the back of the room for my own rehearsal. Just as it did during my formal education, recording my own rehearsals has permitted me to take a more objective look at my methods and processes, and has even allowed me to pick up on things I did not necessarily see or hear in the rehearsal itself.

Set a regular time to record your rehearsals and watch them without distractions (once a month, once a week, every time the tenors thought they really sang that “b,” etc.). There is a reason recording has been a staple of choral methods, student teaching, and conducting courses. Keep a notebook or tablet by you to record your thoughts and impressions. Our participation in best practices for improvement should not end with the completion of a course or degree. Beyond personal development, I also find this practice to act as a great aid to rehearsal planning.

Most importantly, engage with other individuals for personal improvement. One of the best resources for development is other choral directors. I have been blessed by my associations with other conductors and by their willingness to engage with me concerning our craft. More so, I have benefited from accepting honest and trusting feedback from experienced and competent peers. This process is not always easy and does require a certain amount of trust. However, nothing has proven more beneficial than continual contact, discussion, and criticism with peer musicians. Ask to visit other rehearsals and add techniques to your own toolbox. Arrange for other conductors to watch your rehearsals and solicit feedback.

Conclusion

This time of goal-setting for the year provides a great opportunity to reevaluate what may seem to be long-standing practices. Review your rehearsal strategies and identify the purpose for each of your activities. Be willing to help other conductors, solicit feedback, and make a resolution to engage in regular self-assessment. Consider whether-or-not the choral traditions we embrace truly encompass best practices and support proper vocal development. Make a concerted effort to study proper vocal technique. Establishing a pattern of genuine reflection will not only aid your development as a conductor, but also increase the efficiency of your rehearsals and boost the ability of your singers. Furthermore, it will cultivate a tradition of evermore meaningful and beautiful singing.

¹ Blanche Marchesi, *Singer's Pilgrimage* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1923), (Reprint edition, New York: Da Capo Press, 1978), 13; quoted in James Stark, *A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 1999), 226.

² Mathilde Marchesi, *Vocal Method*, Op. 31, p. 6, accessed January 3, 2022, http://www.belcantoitaliano.com/BELCANTO_LIBRARY_FILES/Marchesi_Mathilde_-_Theoretical_and_Practical_Vocal_Method_Op.31.pdf

³ Ward Jamison, “Some Practical Consideration When Evaluating the Exceptional Adolescent Singing Voice,” *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools* 27, no. 3 (1996): 294-298.

⁴ Bridget Sweet, "Teaching Adolescents with a Holistic Perspective," *Choral Journal* 57, no. 3 (2016): 10.

⁵ Patrick Freer, "Perspectives of European Boys about their voice change and school choral singing: developing the possible selves of adolescent male singers," *British Journal of Music Education* 32, no. 1 (2015): 95.

⁶ Diane Halpern and Milton Hakel, "Applying the Science of Learning to the University and Beyond: Teaching for Long-Term Retention and Transfer," *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 35, no. 4 (2003): 38.

⁷ Lene V. Nordheim, Malene W. Gundersen, Birgitte Espehaug, Øystein Guttersrud and Signe Flottorp. "Effects of School-Based Educational Interventions for Enhancing Adolescents Abilities in Critical Appraisal of Health Claims: A Systematic Review," *PLoS ONE* 11, no. 8. (2016): 2, accessed September 13, 2017, <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0161485&type=printable>; Halpern and Hakel, 38.

⁸ Mathilde Marchesi, 10.

Choral Reviews

Children's Choir Repertoire Review



Written by Aimee Stewart
AzACDA Past-President
Chandler Children's Choir
Tempe Preparatory Academy

When it comes finding quality children's repertoire for your young choirs, there are some challenges. Without recommendations or research, you could get stuck with generic, boring, overly-familiar songs, or worse, program music that is too difficult and everyone ends up frustrated. How to engage children and stretch them, but stay relevant to their age, abilities, and life experiences? With the right music, you can help your young musicians can really fall in love with choir. Here are my picks for engaging and age-appropriate children's choir repertoire:

Come Out to Play

Traditional Street Cry, arr. Douglas Beam
2-part with Recorder and Piano Accompaniment
Colle Voce 24-96520

In a lilting 6/8 time, the simple melody is as simple as calling your friends out to play. For very beginning choirs, this song is an excellent introduction to part singing. The first verse is melody only, introducing the theme. The second verse gives part of the choir a chance to learn an ostinato with the melody. The third verse switches parts so everyone gets a chance to try the ostinato. Finally, the last verse includes a canon, simplified so that there is less overlapping of the

parts. An optional recorder part is included. The melody and ostinato use so much of the "sol-mi" motif, that it is a quick learn note-wise which also encourages head voice. To really make a performance of this piece really engaging, I held auditions for "outside players" and we had roller skates, jump rope, and even a bicycle riding around on stage during parts of this song. Such a fun way to introduce choral music to young people, while also encouraging them to be active and get outside!

Blustery Day (The Challenge)

Victoria Ebel-Sabo
Unison Treble Voices & Piano
Boosey & Hawkes M-051-46856-0

Vacillating between 3/4 and 6/8, this energetic song whips around like the wind it describes. For any child who has ever wrestled with the wind when they want to play outside, this song is very relevant. Lessons in contrast of dynamics, tempo, legato and marcato, crisp diction, and unusual rhythm abound in this piece. Rehearsing outside during a windy day makes for unforgettable memories with your choir, especially if you bring a red hat, described in the lyrics. A sharp pianist and very clear conducting are required to lead young choirs to success with this favorite song!

Tarantella

2-pt Chorus and Piano
Traditional Neapolitan
arr. Victor Bobetsky
Boosey & Hawkes OCTB6915

A short but exciting song that can serve to introduce your young singers to Italian and bel canto singing. The song form is verse-chorus-verse, with the verse in 2-part and the chorus in unison. The catchy melody will ring familiar with some, and the harmony is repetitive and simple. What isn't simple is the Italian! There are lots of fast words, but luckily, the verse is the same at the beginning and at the end. I found the best way to teach the Italian was plain old repetition. But to keep it interesting and to emphasize the strong beat, we partnered up and bounced balls on the downbeat. We also sang the chorus in every style imaginable, from opera to country, with exaggerated dynamics and expression. This song also offers the chance

to study parallel major-minor keys, since the verses are in E minor and the chorus is in E major. Very exciting and fun!

Animal Verses of Ogden Nash

Unison with Piano accompaniment

By Marion Verhaalen

Santa Barbara Music Publishing SBMP 721

Ogden Nash, American, 1902-1971, was the Dr. Seuss of his time. He wrote punny poetry, and his animal poems are often read before *Carnival of the Animals* by Saint Saëns.

This unison song cycle includes 9 short poems about animals, and they are each clever, funny, and artsy. Don't let the unison voicing fool you, though, this is not simple music for the choir or the pianist, due to the unexpected intervals and rhythms. Proper performance requires lots of expression and diction. We chose to have Readers recite the poem before each song, which helped the audience to get the "jokes" with full effect. My favorite line is from "The Firefly": "I can think of nothing eerier than flying around with an unidentified glow on a person's posterior."

Choral Reviews for Junior High/Middle School



Written by Mandy Lamberth
Payne Junior High School
AzACDA Junior High/Middle School
R & R Chair

"The Sally Gardens"

Irish Tune, arr. Benjamin Britten

Unison Treble with piano

This soothing song is a great addition to any concert. Accompaniment is simple yet sophisticated. While unison pieces aren't typically programmed for junior high, this song is just right for beginning junior high choirs. It provides the opportunity to slow down instruction and focus on the basics: breathing, phrasing, tone, vowels and consonants. This piece is for treble voices but has the perfect range for male changing voices to sing an octave below. Range for treble voices is D4-E5. This is a great piece to insert in the middle of a concert set.

"Stand Upon the Rock!"

by Rollo Dilworth

SSA with piano

This song is gospel in style while incorporating the spiritual "O Rocks, Don't Fall on Me." To quote Rollo Dilworth, this piece is a "modern-day anthem for peace, equality, and social justice." The verses of this song speak to issues such as taking a stand against hate and respecting people for who they are. A great opportunity to teach form, as the verses are call and response. This song works well as a closer for a concert. Students and audiences will be inspired by this piece.

"This Is Me"

Benj Pasek and Justin Paul,

arr. Mac Huff

2-Part with piano or ShowTrax CD

From the musical *The Greatest Showman*, "This Is Me" is a real show-stopper. The positive message of this piece is perfect for junior high students; be yourself and be proud of who you are. This song empowers students to be brave, confident individuals. Consider adding choreography to enhance this piece. This song serves as a great closer for a Pops concert. Your students will absolutely love performing this piece.

Vocal Jazz Lit Review



Written by Lindsay Decoste
Vocal Jazz R & R Chair
Choir and Drama Teacher - Desert
Wind Middle School/Maricopa High
School at Maricopa Unified School
District

Goodbye Yellow Brick Road

arr. by Kerry Marsh

<https://kerrymarshvocaljazz.myshopify.com/>

SSATB with piano

Bluesy ballad

Based on the solo piano/vocal version by Sara Bareilles, this Elton John classic has been arranged by Kerry Marsh for largely 4 parts, with a few 5 part splits. Reflective and full of emotion, the chart starts simply and builds to an epic climax before coming back down again. Great choice for an intermediate to advanced group, especially if the ability to rehearse with a combo is limited. Only piano is needed.

You Don't Love Me Like You Used To

arr. by Michele Weir

www.michmusic.com

SATB with combo

Samba

This chart by Michele Weir makes for an exciting opener or closer, featuring an a cappella opening and moving to a fast paced samba. Great for an intermediate to advanced high school group, with some more difficult close voicings in the middle but a lot of repetition as well. Solos throughout and a great build up at the end.

It's You I Like (from Mister Rogers' Neighborhood)

arr. by Paris Rutherford

Hal Leonard

SSA (and SATB) with combo

Medium swing

Now available for treble voices, this charming tune from the classic TV show has a great message and a nice swing feel. It has a good use of unison singing throughout and could be appropriate for a jazz or traditional ensemble. Fun choice for a beginning or intermediate group looking to start singing jazz, or a simple learn for a more advanced group.

Choral Reviews for College and University Mixed Choir Featuring SE Asian Music



Written by Sinamar Pascua Respicio

*AzACDA World Music and Culture
Chair*

*University of Arizona Graduate ACDA
Vice President*

*Christ Church United Methodist, Choir
Director*

Tucson, Arizona

Cikala le pong pong (Imitating the sound of the drum)

SATB divisi & Soprano Solo, a cappella

arr. Ken Steven (b. 1993)

Earthsongs

S-461

A *Pakpanese* folk song from North Sumatra, Indonesia. This song is commonly performed at wedding festivities and cultural events in the country itself. It's also accompanied by traditional dance. The text of the song talks about parents who are encouraging their daughters to behave well. One particular line, which has no meaning, is also written as a rhyme. The arranger who is born and raised in North Sumatra captures the tradition in his arrangement, he used extreme vocal ranges and percussion effects to create an energetic and light-hearted atmosphere, to sum up, the idea of the song. The open-voiced chest voice is also used to capture the color of the tribal folk sound. This song will appeal to young singers and serve as

an energetic addition to a performance program. It can be challenging but worthy to learn. An interesting piece of music to better understand the culture of one part of Indonesia. This score is also available for TTBB Chorus, unaccompanied.

Rasa Sayang (Feeling of Love)

SATB divisi, a cappella

arr. TOH Ban Sheng (b. 1970)

Earthsongs

S-391

This music is part of TOH Ban Sheng Choral Series that he arranged himself. The music is a combined "*Rasa Sayang*" and "*Lenggang Kangkong*," two Malay folk songs that are commonly performed in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. The lyrics of these songs are derived from a four-line *pantun*. A *pantun* follows an ABAB two-line pattern. Its last two lines can appear irrelevant to the message of the other two lines. It's easy to understand the score and teach to your singers. Since the pattern of the song is not as complicated and not rhythmically challenging. It's a beautiful arrangement and the rehearsal sections in the score also help you figure out how to help your singers understand the idea of the music. It's short but captures the tradition of the song itself. TOH Ban Sheng also arranged a lot of singaporean.

Padayon (To continue)

SATB divisi and Harp

Music by Ily Matthew Maniano (b. 1988)

Text by Joey Vargas

Muziksea

This music is entitled "*Padayon*", from the Visayan language in the Philippines which means "to continue". It encapsulates what the idea of the work is. It's a song of encouragement and hope when life faces challenges. A beautiful work that only features four action words "*Lakad* (walk), *Layag* (sail), *Lipad* (fly), *Liyab* (blaze). According to the composer itself, the four words carries an illusion to the ancient elements of earth, water, air, and fire. It is accompanied by a harp which gives a fluid and still character to the music. The intertwining of each voice depicts the idea and the meaning of the words. There's a part where some voices do a spoken text of the four action words in a different language, which makes the music create an intensifying line that leads to the word "*Padayon*". It is a great addition to your repertoire since it depicts the current situation of our world. We need *Padayon* (to continue) and move forward.

Join the AzACDA
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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ARIZONA CHORAL MUSIC

The Arizona Music Educators Association is holding a “Going Back to the Future” In-Service Conference this month! The 2022 AMEA Conference will be back in-person at the Mesa Convention Center. It will be held January 28-29, 2022. See <https://azmea.org/conference/> for more information

Attention Junior High and Middle School Choir Teachers! After two years without our Junior High/Middle School Festival, we are pleased to announce that we will be holding a choral festival this May for 5th through 9th grade choirs. Our AzACDA Junior High/Middle School Festival will be held on Friday, May 6th at the First United Methodist Church of Mesa. We hope you and your choir will join us for this event. Clinicians for this event will be Katie Gerrich, Troy Meeker, Wendy Umbrianna, and Herbert Washington. Look for an email in January to register for this event. Please email Junior High R & R Chair, Mandy Lamberth with any questions at lamberth.mandy@cusd80.com. Registration fee is \$150 per choir. See <https://www.azacda.org/events/junior-high-middle-school-festival/> for details!

AzACDA's 2022 Summer Conference will help you recharge and invigorate your choral craft!

The 2022 event will be at the Mesa Community College Performing Arts Center and is scheduled for July 6-8. Information about sessions, presenters, registration, conference hotel, and more will be published on our website - <https://www.azacda.org/summer2022/> - as it becomes available and also sent out via our occasional email newsletters.



After a virtual conference in 2020 and a down-sized “workshop” in 2021, we’re looking forward to a more full-fledged event, with lots of great content for Arizona’s choral leaders.

The State High School Festival is set to return this summer to Higley Performing Arts Center in Gilbert, Arizona! The current date is set for March 29th with more details to come. Check our website - <https://www.azacda.org/events/state-high-school-festival/> - for more information as it develops!

2022 Jazz Madrigal Festival

The annual Northern Arizona University Vocal Jazz Madrigal Festival, one of the largest festivals of its kind in the United States, features special guest clinicians and over 140 high school ensembles from Arizona and nearby states. The two-day festival includes a host concert in which choirs from NAU and professional groups of national and international stature appear.

This event will be held in-person on the NAU campus in Flagstaff from Thursday, February 10th through Saturday, February 12th, 2020. Ensembles of all ability levels are invited to participate in this rated, but non-competitive festival.

Guest performance by Grammy nominated vocal supergroup säje (rhymes with “beige”). Check them out at <https://sajevoices.com/> to learn more, and see <https://nau.edu/music/performance-areas/choral-studies/jazz-madrigal-festival/> for festival details!



2022 D-BACKS CHOIR NIGHT



**ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS
VS
NEW YORK METS**

**FRIDAY
APRIL 22
6:40PM**

The Arizona American Choral Directors Association and the Arizona Diamondbacks invite you to the D-backs Choir Night!

All participating choirs will perform the Star Spangled Banner on the field before the game and will be led by an honorary conductor chosen by the AzACDA. The performance will be highlighted on the Chase Field scoreboard.

D-backs Choir Night is sure to sell out fast! Performance spots are limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information or to reserve your spot, contact Derek Gensburg at 602.462.4108 or dgensburg@dbacks.com.

\$47 - Lower Level, Baseline Box (Sections 112-114 & 130-132)
\$37 - Lower Level, Baseline Reserve (Sections 109-111 & 133-135)
\$25 - Lower Level, Bleachers (Sections 101-105 & 139-144)

*Participants can use this as a fundraising opportunity for their choir. Ask for more details.

Plus a newly established...

COMPOSER TRACK

Featuring a reading session of submitted works and a composer lounge

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ERIKS EŠENVALDS
ACDA District Commissioner/Composer
Performed by the BPC Singers



RAYMOND WISE
Regional ACDA Consortium/Commission
Performed by the Gospel SATB Women Choir



LIV GRACE
Commissioned by National Concerts
Performed by the High School DMAA Honor Choir



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Eric Whitacre

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2
7:30PM

ALL-CONFERENCE SING



DR. CHARLENE ARCHIBEQUE
Professor Emerita,
San Jose State University
Howard Swan Award Recipient, CCDA



DR. JO-MICHAEL SCHEIBE
Professor, Thornton School of Music,
University of Southern California
National ACDA Past President



DR. EDIE COPLEY
Newly Retired,
Northern Arizona University
National ACDA President-Elect Delegate

GUEST CHOIRS

GUEST CHOIRS





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