

ANTIPHON



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LEADERSHIP

2 **AzACDA Leadership**

LETTERS

4 **From the President**

5 **From the Editor**

ARTICLES

6 **Strange and Beautiful: The Choral Music of Peter Warlock**
Dana Carten

8 **Lifting Up the Littles**
Jess Edelbrock

15 **Bob Cole Conservatory Choirs Concert Review**
W. Aaron Rice

15 **Sonoran Desert Chorale Welcomes New Music Director**

19 **In Memoriam**
David Ashcraft

CHORAL REVIEWS

16 **Music in Worship**
Dave Stertzbach

17 **Junior High/Middle School**
Mandy Lamberth

18 **Community Choirs**
Matthew Fable

ADVERTISERS INDEX

5 **Orpheus Male Chorus of Phoenix**

20 **Robert Ashbaugh Digital Design & Imaging**

From the President:



Ted Gibson
AzACDA President
Gilbert Classical
Academy
University Presbyterian
Church
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Hello Choral Colleagues!

Happy New Year! I hope your choirs are making great music and your lives are filled with the joy that can only come from singing together. This year I would challenge you to get back to the “why.” Sometimes it’s so easy to focus on what your choirs are singing or what incorrect rhythms or pitches you hear in a rehearsal rather than why your choir is singing in the first place.

I’m reminded of Greg Gilpin’s popular anthem “Why We Sing.” Any of you who conduct children’s choirs or middle school chorus know this song I’m sure. It’s such a simple song but powerful in its message. We sing because it brings us together in a way that nothing else can. We make harmony because it forces us to listen to each other in a world so divided that we often silence our own friends or family. I don’t know about you but I’m convinced that we need choir now more than ever!

And that’s exactly why ACDA is so important. We aren’t just a group

of people who share a mutual occupation. We aren’t just an organization that provides performance opportunities or workshops and conferences. We’re a collective of people who can advocate for this art form that allows us all to feel our humanity in a visceral way. Our art is a craft that has deep impacts. Choral music affects everyone it comes in contact with. It’s not just for the choristers who sing in our choirs. It’s for the audiences and the communities who support us.

Choral music is for the parents who see a change in their child who sings in a choir. It’s therapy and it’s family and it’s hard work and it’s so rewarding. I hope you remember your “why” this year. And I hope you sing it from the mountain tops! 🏔️

Sincerely,

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

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FROM THE EDITOR



W. Aaron Rice

AzACDA Antiphon
Editor

Director of Music
Ministries - First
Presbyterian Church of
Granada Hills

antiphon@azacda.org

Dear Antiphon readers,

I am proud to bring you the Winter edition of *Antiphon*! Be sure to check out Dane Carten's article on the Choral Music of Peter Warlock, and Jess Edelbrock's classroom philosophy will help you lift up your littlest singers for the good of your program. We've got a record number of repertoire reviews for you this season, and we hope that you find them useful as you're preparing new programs for this year and next. I've also included a brief review of a concert by our upcoming Summer Conference headliner, Dr. Jon Talberg of the CSULB Bob Cole Conservatory of Music. He's a magnificent artist who is sure to inspire and inform conference attendees!

If you or a colleague would like to share your choral or classroom insights, please reach out to me at Antiphon@azacda.org about publishing an article! We would love to see our membership represented in print and to learn from your musical experiences.

There are so many choral happenings in Arizona, and we would like to share yours with the readership of *Antiphon*. If you send us details via our Google Form at this address - <https://forms.gle/tfnW36afaejX5Ecp8> - then we'll share them in future editions of the *Antiphon*. Keep us in the loop!

Thank you for being a part of choral Arizona and continuing to inspire one another and the next generation of Arizona musicians. We hope you like what you read here in the Winter *Antiphon*, and we hope to hear back from you soon! 🎵

W. Aaron Rice

Director of Music Ministries - First Presbyterian Church of Granada Hills



72 SOLD®

Orpheus
MALE CHORUS
OF PHOENIX

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The Orpheus Male Chorus of Phoenix is proud to present an afternoon of male chorus music to benefit the 100 Club of Phoenix on Sunday, March 26, 2023, at 3 PM in the Ikeda Theater at the Mesa Arts Center, 1 East 1st St, Mesa, AZ. Tickets at orpheus.org

Strange and Beautiful:

The Choral Music of Peter Warlock



Dane Carten

*Artistic Director/
Founder - Neoteric
Chamber Choir*

*Chancel Choir Director
- Lord of Grace Lutheran
Church*

*Assistant Director -
Helios Ensemble*

Written by Dane Carten

When we examine the choral canon hailing from early 20th century Britain, composers like Ralph Vaughn Williams and Benjamin Britten often lead the forefront of our programming. There are, however, several figures during this time whose music often goes unheard by modern audiences. One such individual is Peter Warlock (born Phillip Heseltine), a member of the “doomed generation” living in the shadow of conservatory-trained composers. The troubled Englishman left behind an oeuvre rife with broodingly unique part-songs, haunting melodies, and highly chromatic counterpoint. This article aims to explore the life of Peter Warlock, his salient compositional style, a survey of some of his part-songs, and finally a conductor’s guide to working with this often Machiavellian and “edgy” repertoire.

Born in 1894 to a family of stockbrokers and art connoisseurs, Phillip Heseltine’s earliest life was beset by trouble as his overbearing mother, for whom he would rely on financially for the rest of his life, impressed upon the boy after the death of her husband. Her zealous religious tendencies caused a great deal of religious guilt in Philip, who never took much of a liking to the church. The young composer spent his formative years in piano lessons and finding public concerts to attend, which helped foster a love of music. Phillip attended Oxford University in 1913 to study literature but soon after rejected his original studies to pursue music.

Around this time, Heseltine attained work editing and rearranging medieval music from the British Museum and contributed a sizable amount of scholarly work. Importantly, he became infatuated with John Dowland’s music, who he cited as being a master of melodic writing and for whom he would emulate in his own writing later. He, alongside friendships he fostered in Cecil Grey and Bernard Van Dieren, began a counter-cultural movement to “regenerate” English music that, in their opinion, had become disingenuous by the composers who worked from the conservatories.

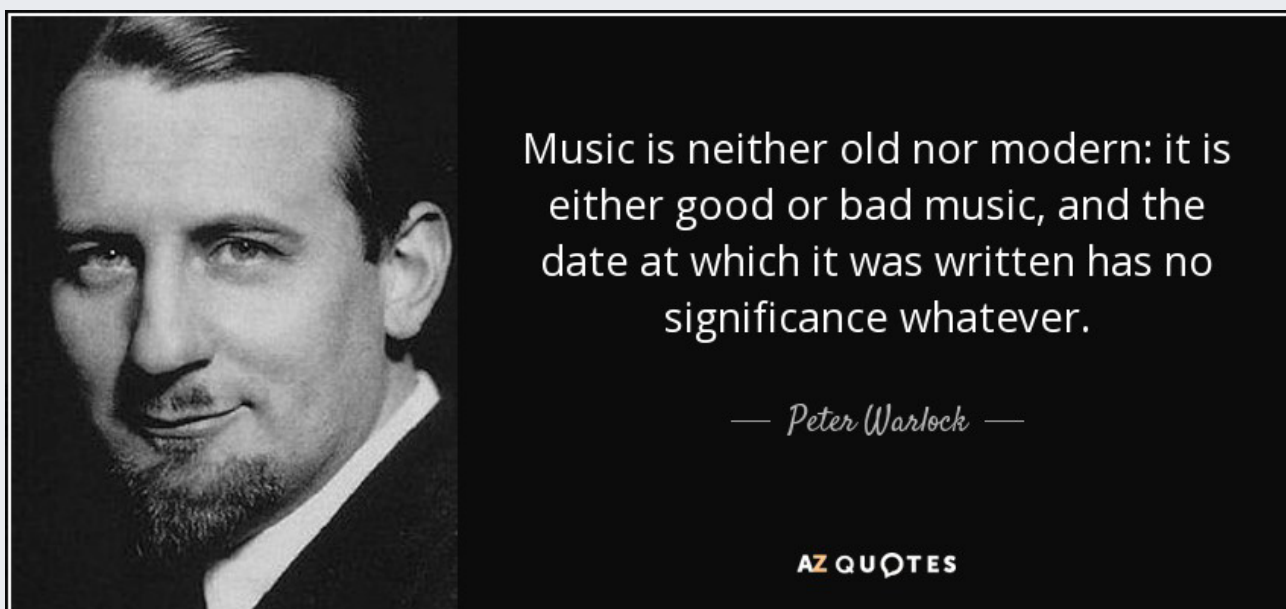
In 1917 Heseltine fled to Ireland (dodging the WWI draft), and his life took a dramatic turn. The composer found residence in a castle with a polyamorous cohort and began to dabble in the occult: he attempted to learn Gaelic, studied tarot, and indulged in the writings of Cornelius Agrippa. Cecil Gray later said about Phillip’s time in Ireland that he: “...undoubtedly suffered certain psychological injuries from which, in my opinion, (he) never entirely recovered”. Peter composed many of his most known works during this period and, with his newfound mysticism, penned them under the name Peter Warlock (warlock being a synonym for wizard, or sorcerer). The final 13 years of Warlock’s life were met with poverty and active composition, with the Englishman having on several occasions written pieces merely so he and his friends could afford a pint at the local pub.

Warlock’s musical characteristics are an eclectic mix of early 20th century harmony, medieval-inspired melodic lines, unexpected cadences, and frequent metrical shifts. Due to never having been formally trained as a musician, Warlock’s approach to form and musical ideas were considered “amateurish” at the time, though we may examine these idiosyncrasies as merely unorthodox. Critics of the day lambasted his music for being “over-harmonized”; a key characteristic of his style. The Englishman rarely employs triadic harmony in earnest – often utilizing chains of 7th and 9th chords that resolve in unexpected ways. Warlock’s melodies are the cells from which his compositions originate, and thus act as standalone concepts within the larger framework of his choral compositions. One common melodic motif is the “wailing” motive, which is made up locked consonance between two voices planning diatonically above a pedal point. Another common use in his melodic writing is the employment of a flattened seventh approached from below by leap, which is then resolved through a chain of alternating rising and falling thirds or tenths. He rarely employs polyphony, instead approaching text with declamatory homophony, or enlivening the texture at dramatic moments.

Of the 26 known choral works from Peter Warlock, nearly half of them are sacred and specifically, Christmas-oriented. Despite his resignation from organized religion, Warlock found meager

employment composing for churches around London. Of this subject, some of the most programmable works are *Bethlehem Down*, *Where Riches is Everlastingly*, and *I Saw a Fair Maiden*, all of which are unaccompanied with a hymn-like texture and form and feature sparing but colorful use of chromatic harmony and gorgeous melodic lines. For more experienced ensembles, *Benedicamus Domino*, *Corpus Christi*, and *Cornish Christmas Carol* utilize divisi, highly chromatic language (“over-harmonizing”), and are through composed. Of his hardest (but most satisfying) output meant only for highly experienced choral ensembles, works like *The Full Heart*, and the 3 *Dirges of Webster* are hauntingly dark, chromatic, and rewarding to conquer as a musical challenge. Any of these last four works would find a home on a Halloween/Fall concert for your highly experienced choir, and the depth of emotion Warlock explores through intense dissonance, chord extensions, and unexpected cadences will be refreshing for audiences.

From the conductor’s standpoint, Warlock’s least challenging works pose only a small issue for most choirs. Strophic works are easy to teach and pieces like *I Saw A Fair Maiden* are best approached refrain-first and with special attention to the melodic line (often in the soprano and/or tenor). Take care, though, that balance is achieved - as Warlock’s voicings can be rather top-heavy at times. One should always work to maintain the “pyramid of sound” and not allow the sopranos to overpower all the other sections, even if given the melody. The more difficult works require special attention to chromaticism – a great approach might be to have your ensemble practice chromatic, octatonic, and whole tone scales on solfege, and find where those chromatics lie in his works. Considering the lack of polyphony and propensity for English and Latin text, most American choirs should not struggle with his works linguistically. Be aware, though, that many works contain archaic pronunciations of English words with added syllables, such as in *I Saw a Fair Maiden* with the line “Of alle lordis he is lord, of alle kinges king”. Overall, Warlock’s carols are an excellent addition to any holiday concert where some diversion in the standard tunes might be warranted, and his more challenging works can be a great to build skills in your upper choir on navigating chromatic, non-functional harmony while maintaining a rewarding and healthy challenge. 🎵



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Lifting Up the Littles

Highlighting your youngest singers through commissioned works, effective rehearsal, and performance opportunities



Jess Edelbrock
Director of Operations
& Associate Conductor,
Tucson Girls Chorus

Written by Jess Edelbrock

INTRODUCTION

Our youngest singers can do amazing things. They are keenly connected to their inner sense of musicality, they want to be challenged and uplifted, and they deserve opportunities to shine just as much as our oldest choirs who sing the most complex repertoire.

These are some of the sentiments I hoped to communicate when the Tucson Girls Chorus' Bumblebee Singers performed at this January's ACDA National Children's & Community Youth Choir Conductors' Retreat. The "Bees" are TGC's K/1 choir and the centerpiece of their set was "Now We Have Rivers", commissioned specifically for the Bumblebee Singers. The whole retreat concert was intended to showcase singers from all ages—from the Bees to the Cadet Choir from Phoenix Boys' Chorus (grades 2-3), to the middle school groups from Chandler Children's Choir and Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus, up through the high school singers from the TGC and Phoenix Children's Chorus. It was an honor to be a part of a concert that was so intentionally crafted to accurately demonstrate the actual work so many of us do every day. All of the conductors involved in this concert were so proud to showcase the depth of artistry that all ages are capable of, and we hope the multi-age structure can serve as a model for National conferences and other high-profile performances to come.

In this article we will explore ideas and practical applications for highlighting your youngest singers, setting them up for success, and showcasing their immense capabilities throughout your community.

First, a confession. I was incredibly nervous about bringing the Bees to the retreat and how they would be received. I was worried that the audience (other conductors in this case!) would see the performance as introductory or cutesy, simply due to the age of the choir and the developmentally appropriate repertoire and tone. The concept of "choral excellence" and its apparent definition throughout the profession was looming in my mind every rehearsal. However, I was also so sure of the importance of showcasing the Bees's work, and each week they reminded me how eager and able they were to dig into hard work and artistry.

After the performance, several conductors shared that the Bees' performance made them feel validated in what they do—the absolute best compliment I could have imagined. It is so easy to feel less important when you conduct the littles. I am here to tell you that your work is just as difficult, just as artistic, just as valuable as those who conduct the most prestigious groups in our field.

PART ONE: COLLABORATIVE COMMISSIONING

Commissioned works are usually reserved for the "top" groups, but what if our kindergartners have this opportunity? What if they get to feel the same excitement and sense of ownership that comes with performing something that was created for and with them?

In 2018, I was preparing for my Master's recital. At the time I conducted the Tucson Girls Chorus Bumblebee Singers (grades K-1) and Mariposa Singers (grades 6-8). For the Mariposas, I had a hard time narrowing down repertoire since there is so much age-appropriate, high quality, engaging music available for middle school treble choirs. I found the opposite problem for the Bumblebees. While there are many accessible pieces out there for our youngest singers, I personally found too many of them to be either formulaic, intentionally silly, or needed much adaptation to actually work for the group. There is nothing wrong with programming silly songs or pieces with similar forms (and I do program these things!); for this situation I was looking for something that would engage the Bees on a different level.

Depending on your situation, you may need to advocate for a commission. In my case, the TGC Director (Dr. Marcela Molina) was fully open to the idea from the start. If your administration or director needs some convincing, you can emphasize the huge potential and unique skills that younger singers possess—their imagination, energy, openness, big hearts, and much more. These qualities will certainly shine through a musical project and highlight the organization or school as a whole. Additionally, younger singers are the future older singers, and experiencing the sense of ownership and validation that comes with a collaborative commission project helps with retention for singers and parents. A commission for elementary singers also provides an opportunity for growth and impact beyond the particular ensemble; you are adding a much needed piece to the repertoire that can be utilized in any young choir.

One of my colleagues in my Master’s program, Matt Carlson, happened to be a great composer who was interested in writing exactly that—accessible music for less-available voicings that was still just as crafted as the most complex SATB divisi piece. Matt’s skills and aesthetic were just as much an impetus for this project as the need for a great Bumblebee piece.

If you don’t already have a colleague in mind as a composer for your commissioning project, reach out to other children’s choirs, your state ACDA board, or a local college or University. (You could also reach out to Matt!) Chances are somebody knows somebody who would be a good fit. Be sure to listen to some of the composer’s previous works to get a feel for their style.

For “Now We Have Rivers”, Matt and I were both open to each other’s input throughout the process. He was the expert in composition; I was the expert in exactly what my choir needed to be successful. We also agreed that this piece must be well-crafted and provide a vehicle for the Bees to tap into their fullest potential. Most importantly, we agreed that the project would be a collaboration between each other and the singers.

Including your young singers in the composition process can be daunting, but if we position ourselves as facilitators and allow our students to have a voice, truly beautiful things can emerge.

The first step was settling on a topic. Start with what you know! For the Bees, we decided to write about something unique to our home in Southern Arizona: the monsoon. Each summer, it is scorching hot for a couple months and then this glorious series of storms rolls in and gives us rain, cooler weather, and familiar scents of the earth.

Having the singers write or contribute to the text is an accessible and powerful way to involve them in the process. After spending some time talking about the monsoon and some of the ways it looks, sounds, smells, and feels, we asked the singers to write a haiku about the monsoon with the help of their parents. We opened this portion up to all K-8 TGC singers. This was for both the practical reason of gathering many options from students of various language skills and for the social/emotional aspect of collaborating across choirs.

Matt and I worked together to combine the haikus into what would become the song lyrics. Instead of using full haikus from one singer, we pieced lines together into 3 sections: before, during, and after the storm.

I	
streets baked like clay pots	Elsa, Ladybug (2nd grade)
thunder is like distant drums	Amelia, Bumblebee (1st grade)
clouds build humid hot	Waimea, Bumblebee (1st grade)
II	
dark skies, whipping wind	Chloe, Ladybug (3rd grade)
lightning flash, crackling thunder	
slashing monsoon rains	
III	
watching through windows	Elsa, Ladybug (2nd grade)
as it rains on thirsty soil	Amelia, Mariposa (7th grade)
now we have rivers	Elsa, Ladybug (2nd grade)

Once the lyrics were finalized, Matt began composing the music. In the spirit of collaboration, I'm thrilled to include Matt's insight on his compositional process:

Writing for the Bees was such a joy! I felt honored to write music that created a sophisticated choral performance opportunity for our youngest singers. The text that TGC created for this piece was full of vivid, tactile imagery that lent itself beautifully to being set to music. I chose to take each of these haikus and turn them into "mini-movements" of about one minute each. Short sections with quick transitions and lots of variety keeps these young singers engaged in the piece, especially when these sections combine into a continuous narrative. They can be storytellers in addition to performers, which is a lot of fun for the choir.

Much consideration was put into writing the vocal parts. I wanted the sound of this piece to be something that was more elevated than typical songs for five- and six-year-old singers. At the same time, however, I wanted to be sure that they could feel successful while performing, and avoid asking them to do things that were not developmentally appropriate. I placed the vocal lines in a limited range that provided many opportunities to access their head voice. Melodies make frequent use of descending minor thirds, borrowing from the most common interval used in children's songs. The rhythmic writing is kept mostly to quarter and eighth notes, which was designed to be both age-appropriate and provide opportunities to introduce these rhythmic elements to the singers.

Within these guidelines, however, there is still plenty of high-level music making to be had! This piece is chock full of dynamic contrast, varied articulations, tempo changes, and unvoiced sound effects to sound like the monsoon winds and rains. As opposed to simple block chords that one might expect from music for beginning choirs, the piano and percussion accompaniment adds layers of complexity that does not take away from the vocal line. It complements and challenges the singers while painting the imagery of the text.

It was also important to me to use this piece as an introduction to part singing. Kids can sing in parts at this early age, and they were excited to use these techniques to further paint images from the text; the clouds building on the horizon, lightning flashing in the distance, the flurry of monsoon rains coming at the audience from all angles. These moments of part singing are always first introduced as a unison motive, which is then repeated in two parts shortly afterwards. Starting with unison and immediately building to parts is an excellent way to introduce more advanced choral skills to our youngest singers.

6

35

The musical score is written for three parts: two vocal staves (Soprano and Alto) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins at measure 35. The vocal parts start with a unison melody: 'sla - shing mon - soon rains'. The piano accompaniment provides a harmonic foundation with chords in the right hand and a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the left hand. The score shows the unison motive developing into a 2-part texture.

sla - shing mon - soon rains

sla - shing mon - soon rains

pp

Example of a unison motive developing into a 2-part texture.

Example of a unison motive developing into a 2-part texture continued.

37

sla - shing mon - soon rains

sla - shing mon - soon rains

pp

ff

39

rains sla - shing mon-soon rains sla - shing mon-soon

sla - shing mon-soon rains sla - shing mon-soon rains

ff

f

mute head

To Glock.

hold fermata as long as it takes for the decay to decrescendo

pp

Flowing
♩=80

46

Now we have ri - vers

Now we have ri - vers

p

Example of a simple echo that creates a 3-part harmony (the Bumblebees omitted the G-sharp, the open 5th was enough of a challenge for this group).

So now you are ready to commission a piece for your elementary-age group! As you work with the composer, you can specify or have conversations about the following:

- Vocal range
- Special musical elements (adding body percussion, highlighting an instrumentalist from one of your groups, etc)
- Musical concepts to focus on
- Voicing strategies for successful 2 or 3 part singing
- Accompaniment style
- Flexibility—what options are there to simplify the piece further if needed?

And some ideas for involving your singers in the process:

- Writing lyrics through individual submissions or as a group project
- Choosing what the piece is about
- Choosing specific musical elements, like which percussion instruments to include
- Composing the first line of the melody for the composer to draw from
- Choosing the overall form of the piece

Part Two: Singer-friendly rehearsals

Movement

Many of us utilize movement in the rehearsal to attain and reinforce musical concepts, to increase student engagement, and to help unlock healthy sounds through connection with the body. These movements are often dropped for the performance or turned into “choralography” that has less to do with the desired musical effect.

However, creating movement that both aids the singer *and* works for the stage is essential for nearly every piece the Bees rehearse and perform. This approach serves many purposes: harnessing the group’s energy, increasing focus, allowing space for singer input and creativity, and providing consistency between rehearsal and performance spaces.

Specific movements within “Now We Have Rivers” were developed to encourage specific tone, articulation, rhythm, and dynamics. They are not written into the score, rather they emerged organically throughout the score study and rehearsal process.

The first step to creating intentional movement as a conductor is to know the score well. Sing through every part multiple times and notice the many layers within each phrase (dynamics, rhythm, cut-offs, text, vocal technique challenges, etc). Choose a phrase and focus on one musical detail (perhaps dynamics first), loosen up and let yourself move in a way that helps you physically emphasize that concept. Sing through again, focusing on a different musical detail and a different movement. Now—is there a way to combine those movements to help your singers with both goals through kinesthetic connection?

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Now We Have Rivers". It consists of four staves. The top two staves are for vocal parts: "Part 1" and "Part 2". Both parts begin at measure 11. Part 1 has a rest for two measures, then enters with a half note on G4, followed by a half note on A4, and a half note on B4. The lyrics "Clouds" and "build" are written below these notes. Part 2 enters at measure 13 with a half note on G4, followed by a half note on A4, and a half note on B4. The lyrics "Clouds" and "build" are written below these notes. The bottom two staves are for piano accompaniment. The right hand (treble clef) starts with a whole note chord of G4 and B4, then moves to a half note chord of A4 and B4, and finally to a half note chord of B4 and C5. The left hand (bass clef) starts with a whole note chord of G2 and B2, then moves to a half note chord of A2 and B2, and finally to a half note chord of B2 and C3. The piano part includes various musical notations such as triplets, dynamics (p, pp, mf), and articulation marks.

PART THREE: LIFTING THEM UP

All of our singers deserve exciting and meaningful performance opportunities. When a prestigious or highly visible opportunity comes up, organizations and school programs often send their top or oldest group. There is nothing wrong with giving top ensembles wonderful opportunities, but our youngest and least experienced singers should also be considered. In doing this it is essential to set our young singers up for success through appropriate repertoire, effective and engaging rehearsal, and high expectations enforced with kindness and encouragement.

As conductors of our young ones, we have the opportunity to educate not only singers, but audiences. When you think of a typical outstanding choral performance, what comes to mind? Polished performances, professional stage presence, impeccable transitions? While these things have their place, it may be time to redefine success on the stage in order to be truly representative of the work we do as educators, singers, and human beings.

To do this, you must be brave. You must be proud of your non-conducting because your singers may not need a beautiful legato $\frac{3}{4}$ pattern, they may need you to do the movements with them. You must not apologize for the singer who is going to wave to their mom between pieces or literally sit down in the middle of a song (both of these things happened on stage at the National Retreat!). You must embrace mistakes while urging improvement. You must be proud of performing a set of just 2 or 3 pieces because they are high-quality, challenging, and well done. You must name the fact that what the kids are doing is also art. You must spell it out for the audience and then you must let your singers show them what you mean.

Our singers know when we believe in them and when we are truly proud to show them off to the world. They will rise to the occasion, they will give you their whole hearts, and they will surprise you in the most meaningful ways. We simply need to give them the space to do it.

Your work as conductors of the littles is so important. You are building the foundation for their musicality, their openness to new experiences, their sense of self-worth and teamwork, and their idea of what choir can be and who it's for. You already know that they can do amazing things—let's show the world! 🎵



2021-2022 Tucson Girls Chorus Bumblebee Singers
Jess Edelbrock, Conductor
Nicky Manlove, Accompanist
Rosemarie Spece, Rehearsal Assistant

Bob Cole Conservatory Choirs Concert Review



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Written by W. Aaron Rice

Recently, I had the great privilege of hearing a concert directed by our upcoming State Summer Conference Headliner the CSULB University Choir and the Bob Cole Chamber Choir in concert together under the direction of Dr. Jonathan Talberg. Their concert titled "Choral : Art - A Concert of Extraordinary Choral Music Paired with the Visual Arts," shook me to my core and left me inspired.

Firstly, the collaboration between choral and visual art forms brought imagery into the concert hall both by projection and through QR codes in the program linking each listener directly to the image online. Images of angels, landscapes, and forges accompanied Talberg's turbulent programming. Text and translations alternated with the imagery on the projector, helping the audience settle into the experience. The program cover itself was a line-art interpretation of the subject of Jean-Honoré Fragonard's "The Swing," a delightfully light juxtaposition against the opening notes of the first piece.

The first work, "Fire" from Katerina Gimon's *Elements* series of choral works, quite literally started the concert with a "bang!" that shook many concert-goers in their seats. This rousing piece, sung by the choristers all around the room, set the tone well. Paired with Veljo Tormis's "Curse Upon Iron," the concert rang as a cry out against horrors of war with literal screams echoing across the sanctuary of Los Altos United Methodist.

Additionally, Talberg championed *living* composers throughout the entire concert. Shavon Lloyd, the composer of "So Breaks the Sun," was born in 1997! Several other pieces were written by living composers - Katerina Gimon (b. 1993), Vicente Chavarria (b. 1984), Selga Mence (b. 1953), and Jocelyn Hagen (b. 1980). Sounder Choi (b. 1988) composed two pieces on the program ("Leron, Leron Sinta" and "A Journey of Your Own"), and Matthew Hazzard's (b. 1989) incredibly touching "Love Poetry" set a text by the conductor himself. With so much new music, it's hard to imagine this concert *not* resonating with modern audiences.

What I loved about this concert was that it seemed to be moving forward. It didn't languish in our return *togetherness* since Covid-choirs are singing together again. It wasn't focused on past programming mistakes by picking one under-represented group of composers to do homage to. Dr. Talberg built a program to shine a light on an ugly bit of our world and invite every listener to join him in trying to find something beautiful to make for tomorrow. And he did that with works by composers who represent both the old masters and the thriving cosmopolitan community that he lives in. ■■■

Sonoran Desert Chorale Welcomes New Music Director



Dr. Craig Peterson


Dr. Craig Peterson took the helm when rehearsals began in early August. Craig has an impressive and extensive biography of choral music experience to help bring moving and inspiring concert experiences this season!

He is the Director of Choral Activities and music department chair at Mesa Community College where he has directed two chamber choirs, a concert choir, a jazz choir and teaches choral music education classes.

He received his Bachelor of Music Degree from Concordia College where he studied with Paul J. Christiansen and he earned his Masters and Doctoral Degrees in Choral Conducting from Arizona State University where he studied with Douglas McEwan and Donald Bailey.

Craig has served in numerous leadership roles including AMEA all-state jazz chair, vocal jazz, and two-year college repertoire and standards chairs. He also served as president for AZ ACDA. Groups under Craig's direction have consistently received superior ratings at area festivals and have appeared at the AZ State ACDA Convention, the AZ Music Educators Convention, at three ACDA Western Division Conventions, and the National Convention of the Orff and Kodaly Music Teachers Association.

(Continued on page 16)

Dr. Peterson has prepared choirs for the Phoenix Symphony and the Boston Pops Orchestra. He has served as the assistant director of the Phoenix Chorale, an assistant conductor with the Phoenix Boys Choir and he continues to be in demand as a clinician and singer throughout Arizona and beyond. He has sung bass on several recordings with both the Phoenix Chorale and Conspire, and has also sung professionally with the Cincinnati Vocal Artists, the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, and True Concord. 

Choral Reviews

Music in Worship Repertoire Review



Written by Dave Stertzbach
AzACDA Music in Worship R&R Chair
Tri-City Baptist church, Music Pastor
International Baptist College &
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Classic Canons

Arr. Patrick Liebergen

Various composers and authors

Mixed voices, any combination

Jubilate Music Group (Alfred Publishing Co.),

1992 #4253

Last week I was asked to substitute teach at the last minute for group of 40 children ages 4-12 years old! We sang "Tallis' Canon" to the famous Thomas Ken (1637-1711) text known as "The Doxology." In one short rehearsal the children learned the pitches, worked on a beautiful singing tone, experienced the canon in both 2 and 4 parts, and learned a bit about the author and composer.

For both educational use and practical church performances, consider this slim collection (also, *Classic Canons II*, same publication information). "By first singing the melodies of the works in unison, singers can learn proper diction, placement of vowels, and rhythmic precision. When the voices are divided into parts, the participants can experience homophonic and polyphonic part singing" (from the editor). The 21 canons are often by well-known composers, providing opportunity for discussion of music history—Beethoven, Praetorius, Dufay, Billings, Tallis, Mozart, Boyce, Schubert, and more.

For church performances, these songs are highly flexible allowing for the variation we experience in church work: any number of singers on any given Sunday, huge disparity in musical training, wide difference in vocal experience and ability, etc. And, for the conductor with ingenuity and

imagination, the possibilities are endless. Any number of voices in any combination, of course. Instruments may either double the voices or replace one or more of the parts. Also, simple handbell and/or keyboard parts are provided with most of the canons. Variety in dynamics and articulation can add even more variety to these songs.

The texts range from specifically sacred in English or Latin to more generic "Alleluias" and "Amens."

In the church service, these songs can be used as processional, introit, benediction, or traditional choir anthem.

Prayers at the Cross

Lee Dengler and Susan Naus Dengler

SATB with optional violin and cello

Jubilate Music (Word Music), 2011

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Of the seven "last words" or phrases spoken by Jesus on the cross, the first, fourth, and final "words" were spoken to God, and were, in effect, prayers. Particularly appropriate for Holy Week, these three songs can be presented as individual anthems (at any time of year) or in its entirety as part of a worship service or sacred concert. Narration is provided, if desired. And, of course, a longer work can be created by inserting congregational hymns and/or Scripture readings.

"Father, Forgive" starts off as a homophonic ABA choir song. But quickly moves to a polyphonic section using the Latin *kyrie eleison* text. Each voice part gets a different melody as the tunes stack one on the other. The final time all the parts are sung together, a soprano descant recounts the "hymn" tune from the beginning with dramatic rhythmic augmentation at the cadence. The piece ends quietly restating the tune from the opening of the piece. Optional violin.

The soulful "My God, I Feel Forsaken" expresses the human condition of often feeling "distressed, a child so far from home" in the context of Christ's words from the cross. Although it does not sit in a lower tessitura, it has the feel of a sorrowful spiritual like "Wayfaring Stranger" or "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child." The optional cello part reinforces this mood. As so often happens in the Biblical Psalms, the feeling of sorrow is broken by expressions of hope:

"For I am hard-pressed, but never crushed.
I am perplexed, without despair;
And though abandoned, I'm not alone.
You are my God. I know You are there."

"Into Your Hands" (with optional violin and cello) is a serene

statement of peace. In a gentle 6/8, the song gives the choir a chance to express for themselves Christ's final prayer from the cross: "Into Your hands of love do I commit my spirit. Into your tender care do I commit my life."

Magnificat

By Mark Hayes

SATB divisi (optional full or chamber orchestra)

Roger Dean Publishing Co. (Lorenz), 2007 45/1147R

It doesn't hurt that there is a marvelous recording of this piece by the Kansas City Chorale with Charles Bruffy, director! (Available from The Lorenz Corporation, 2007, now distributed by GIA.) I have had good success performing this work with more than one volunteer ensemble—both school and church choirs. Typical of Hayes, the piece is successful with the piano alone being both playable and interesting. The melodies immediately capture the interest of the choir. However, the several *divisi* sections means careful voice division and part assigning will be necessary. And perhaps a larger ensemble will be necessary for success. And some of the work is not typical church choir fare that will require extra commitment from the singers to learn.

Using the traditional "Mary's Song" from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 1, Hayes has given us the opportunity to allow the choir to experience the purity of singing the Latin text as a restatement of the English. "Hopefully this provides the best of both worlds and bridges the glorious traditions of the past with a vibrant hearing of the text today" (from the composer's notes).

After the dynamic fanfare opening, the sopranos introduce a lovely, dance-like melody that is restated by the other voice parts using the English text "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." This melody is repeated later in the song with different text, though the voice parts enter in a different order the second time. This variety on a familiar musical theme is perfect for a volunteer choir. "The holies" (as my choir called it) is one of the more challenging sections. The music sounds like the angels in Isaiah, chapter 6 crying to one another back and forth, "Holy, holy, holy." Hayes uses *divisi* SA and *divisi* TB antiphonally to great effect. The next musical idea is the exciting, rhythmic "*vivace* section." *Divisi* TB chant a syncopated rhythm in Latin underneath the SA melody: "He has shown strength with His arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts." The ethereal extended chords of "He has exalted the humble" are used later in the piece to paint the text "forever and ever."

After restating the delightful opening melody to the text, "The hungry He has filled with good things," the choir gets to experience a short, fugal idea to end the entire work using the traditional trinitarian doxological text: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world

without end." Instead of continuing the formal fugue structure, after the exposition of the fugue subject, Hayes alludes to *stretto* by echoing the opening fanfare on top of layers of the fugue theme to bring the work to its dramatic closing "Amen."

Choral Reviews for Junior High/Middle School



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

"Swingin' Saint Nick!"

arr. Greg Gilpin

SSA with piano or SoundTrax

In "Swingin' Saint Nick!", Greg Gilpin takes the familiar Christmas song "Jolly Old Saint Nicholas" and really jazzes it up. This song is filled with challenging, yet attainable harmonies as well as several unison phrases. A great opportunity to teach syncopation, your students won't be able to stand still while performing this song. Also available in SATB and SAB, this song acts as a great closer to a holiday set.

"A Hanukkah Wish"

by Andy Beck

3-Part Mixed with piano

If you are looking for a heartwarming song for a holiday concert, you need not look any further than "A Hanukkah Wish" by Andy Beck. With beautiful text about family gatherings and traditions, this song is a real treasure. It begins with an optional solo, followed by 2-part harmony, and then builds to 3-part harmony. This song also incorporates "Maoz Tzur", a Hebrew melody meaning "Strong Rock." Also available in SATB and 2-part, this song works well in the middle of a holiday set.

"A Million Dreams"

Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, arr. Mac Huff

2-Part with piano or ShowTrax CD

From the musical *The Greatest Showman*, "A Million Dreams" is a beautiful addition to any Broadway or movie themed concert. This is a great song for beginning middle school students as the harmonies are quite simple with several unison sections.

This song provides opportunities to focus on tone and space as the range is a bit higher than other music of this genre. There are also several opportunities to highlight soloists. Also available in SATB and SAB. With inspiring text, your students will really enjoy performing this piece.

Community Choir Review



*Written by Matthew Frable
Vocal Jazz R & R Chair
Artistic Director – Fountain Hills
Community Chorus*

"Soli Deo Gloria"

Traditional Latin Text
Music by John Purifoy
SATB with piano
Also available SAB, SSA
Publisher: Hal Leonard # 08750109
Published 2009

"Soli Deo Gloria" translates as "Glory to God alone"; a phrase used by J. S. Bach at the end of all of his compositions. The text for this piece is all in Latin, but there is quite a bit of repetition of the words, so it would serve as a good introduction to Latin for your choir. The music is flowing and easy to learn/sing and encourages work on breath control and phrase interpretation. Vocal ranges are somewhat limited and there is some divisi. This piece would function nicely as a calm addition to a concert program.

"Come Travel With Me"

Text inspired by Walt Whitman's *Song of the Open Road*
Music by Scott Farthing
SATB with piano
Also available SAB, SSA, TTB
Publisher: Walton Music #WLG107
Published 2002

The text of this selection encourages a free spirit of travel and exploration. The energetic nature of this song is fully supported by the rhythmically driven accompaniment. Vocal ranges are somewhat limited, but lean toward the higher end of the range. The piece is homophonic throughout, but not all four parts sing all the time. Vocal rhythm is fairly simple—triplet quarter notes are used frequently, but are easy to learn. Your singers will enjoy learning this piece.

"Aurora Borealis (A Song of Alaska)"

Words and Music by Amy F. Bernon
SATB with piano
Also available SAB, SSA, TTB
Accompaniment CD available
Publisher: Heritage Music Press # 15/3062H
Published 2007

This piece provides the image of a night-time train ride through Alaska and the sights that are seen. Beginning with a couple optional solos, the flowing piece has two verses, a more energetic section in the middle, and then returns to the original tempo for the last chorus. If you need to program a piece about Alaska, stars, or light, this piece is a great option and is fairly simple to learn.

"The Call of Music"

Words and Music by Joseph M. Martin
SATB with piano
Publisher: Hal Leonard # 00152014
Published 2015

"Answer the glorious call of music" is the text which begins this selection. The text continues to encourage singers to "rejoice" and "lift up your voice" in jubilant celebration. The energetic primary theme is in 7/8 meter, repeats multiple times, and is often in unison. There are multiple other sections that offer a variety of tempos and meters as well as changes in mood and color. Although the frequent divisi and meter changes may require a little more time to learn, it is worth the effort.

"Let There Be Music"

Anonymous text
Music by Joel Raney
SATB with piano
Accompaniment CD available
Publisher: Heritage Music Press # 15/2867H
Published 2012

This flowing piece asks that there be music at all times, with all of creation, beyond all time and space. Vocal ranges are somewhat limited and there are frequent unison spots. The piece builds to a fortissimo key change and then pulls back to a pianissimo ending.

"Fly With Me"

Words and Music by Mark Hayes
SATB with piano
Instrumental parts available, Accompaniment CD available
Publisher: Shawnee Press # A 2115
Published 2000

A slow and soft instrumental introduction continues at a slightly faster tempo when the voices join, gradually building to a spirited tempo for the remainder of the piece. The text encourages you to explore your place in the world, discover yourself, and then spread your wings and fly. There is a brief section in the middle that has the singers whisper and speak in repetition between SA and TB. The positive message of self-discovery is appropriately supported musically by the voices and accompaniment in classic Mark Hayes style. ■■■

In Memoriam

Written by David Ashcraft

The Arizona choral music community lost three iconic choral directors who passed away in close succession last December.

Ed Moore taught choral music in Tucson at Naylor Junior High School, Sahuaro High School and Palo Verde High School. Continuing a tradition of success under his direction, the Palo Verde Concert Choir performed at both Carnegie Hall and on the Today Show. Ed served the choral music profession as an AMEA Regional Governor, and as a past president of Arizona ACDA. He also served in church music ministry at several Tucson churches. A memorial gathering for Ed will be held on Sunday, March 5th at 1 PM in the Family Life Center at Tanque Verde Lutheran Church, 8625 E. Tanque Verde Road in Tucson.

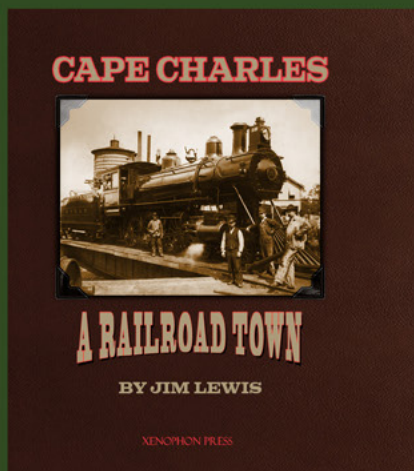


Loyd Wren served in various aspects of ministry in Tucson prior to transitioning into choral music as a profession. He became choral director at Flowing Wells High School where he maintained a solid choral music program for a number of years. During his time in the profession, he also dedicated himself to AMEA by holding several positions including AMEA Regional Governor. On several occasions, Loyd assisted in hosting the AMEA South Central Region High School Music Festival. To honor his tenure at Flowing Wells High School, the choral rehearsal room was named in his honor.

William Iveson served as the Founding Choral Director of Sahuaro High School in Tucson where he taught for five years, establishing one of the finest high school choral music programs in Arizona. Prior to Sahuaro, he taught choral music at Flowing Wells High School, Mansfeld Junior High School, and Palo Verde High School. Bill's choral music students achieved great success under his direction, and many went on to choral music careers at all academic levels. He consistently placed some of the highest numbers in the All-State Choir. Bill retired as a high school history teacher.



We remember these, and others, who have left a legacy of excellence for all to follow.



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