



VOICE of WCDA

Summer Issue—June 2016

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Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **June 10, 2016**
Applications for
Performing Ensembles
and Interest Sessions due
- **June 20-22, 2016**
Refresh! Summer
Workshop
- **June 30, 2016**
Registration Deadline for
NextDirection (Early
Registration June 15)
- **January 6-7, 2017**
WCDA State
Convention

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Wisconsin Choral Directors Association: Part of American Choral Directors Association

946 N Mill Road, Chilton, WI 53014

Email: wcda@wischoral.org / Website: WWW.WISCHORAL.ORG



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Letter from the President

Joy Paffenroth

Dear Colleagues -

It's JUNE! We made it! Congratulations on another successful school year, church year or performance season. I hope you find time to relax and rejuvenate this summer - hopefully at Refresh! 2016. Have you registered yet? There's still time to join us for a wonderful three days of learning, fellowship and this year, a celebration of WCDA's 55th Anniversary!

I'd like to take a moment to THANK all of the people that have chaired WCDA projects this past year. Did you know WCDA is an entirely volunteer organization? These dedicated folks have given of their time to support and advance choral singing in our great state. The project chairs for the 2015-2016 season were:

Sarah McVeigh - NextDirection
Kelly Ribbens - Singing in Wisconsin
Kathy Alan - All-State
Sue McAllister - Refresh!
Zachary Durlam - The Voice of WCDA



I'd also like to personally THANK all members of the executive board, the district representatives, the advisory board and the repertoire and resource chairs. These positions are a vital part of keeping our organization vibrant and successful.

As we move into the summer, I would like to share a couple pieces of important information with you all. First, as of August 1, we will be looking for a new technology chair/webmaster. I want to take this opportunity to share my sincere gratitude with Johnathan Turba for his time in this position. He will be missed and we wish him well in his new endeavor. If you are interested or if you know someone that would be fabulous at this position, please feel free to email me at jpaffenroth@wischoral.org.

Next, the board will be gathering this summer for our annual retreat and meeting. The retreat is a time for us to look more in depth at some of the initiatives, struggles and successes of WCDA. If you have any ideas or concerns you would like to share with the board, please feel free to email me at jpaffenroth@wischoral.org and I will share them with the board.

Last, the national office of ACDA has announced that membership dues for active members will be going up as of July 1, 2016 from \$95 to \$125. (All other membership types will remain as is.) Please see the following note from Tim Sharp, ACDA executive director:

"As the American Choral Directors Association continues to undertake a comprehensive study of our overall financial architecture, we face the ever-present issue of ongoing financial sustainability, and this has led us to the need for a dues increase. ACDA's capable and trusted financial advisors have made the strong case for a dues increase, and our executive leadership has responded appropriately by instituting a dues increase effective July 1, 2016. A decision such as this does not come lightly and reflects the vigilant care of those elected to protect the work and strength of our association."

If you'd like to read more from Tim, visit www.acda.org and find his blog post regarding this change.

My final thought is a THANK YOU to all of you that make our organization, our schools, our churches, our concert halls and our state such a great place to live, work and make music! I hope you have a restful and refreshing summer and I hope to see you along the way!

Joy Paffenroth
WCDA President



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Letter from the Editor

Zachary Durlam

In our musical leadership positions, many of us run into similar challenges year after year. We strive to create unique and interesting performances, keep singers engaged in rehearsal, recruit and retain men, raise money, and stretch what little money we have as far as possible. This issue of *The Voice of WCDA* is devoted to “outside the box” solutions to these recurring issues. Jerry Hui from UW-Stout shares ideas for creating unusual and innovative programs that break traditional concert expectations. Audric Buhr from Menomonie High School offers his secrets to successful male recruiting and retention. Marco Melendez of the Milwaukee Children’s Choir discusses effective fundraising strategies other than product sales. Richard Robbins from UW-Superior suggests creative ways to keep singers engaged in choral rehearsals, and Bob Gehrenbeck details how he was able to travel internationally with his UW-Whitewater choir for an astoundingly small amount of money. Three High Five articles highlight new and interesting literature and even an international publisher for us to explore. Finally, articles on NextDirection and Refresh offer outside-the-box experiences for both future and current choral professionals to grow and rejuvenate as musicians and educators.

We would love to hear from you! Our fall issue of *The Voice of WCDA* is entitled “Building Community,” and we welcome articles or reflections relating to this topic from any current WCDA members. Submissions are due by August 1 and will be reviewed by the WCDA editorial board. Please feel free to contact me at durlam@uwm.edu if you have any questions.

Successful choral directors are lifelong learners. I hope you enjoy this issue of *The Voice of WCDA* and find something to expand or change your own approach to choral leadership!

“It is well for people who think to change their minds occasionally in order to keep them clean.”

-American botanist Luther Burbank (1849-1926)

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Beyond Sit Down and Listen

Jerry Hui, University of Wisconsin–Stout

They have come to the auditorium, grabbed a copy of your program, and settled in their seats. Now they endure a series of waiting and clapping so they can get to the main goal of the day — the music is pretty, but they are more anxious to meet with their kids after the concert and continue with their family activities.

Let's break this mold of the passive audience! How can we grab their attention and help them get more out of the music that we and our singers have spent numerous hours preparing?

Thematic programming is one way to break the audience's expectation. Go beyond the comfortable and common "Works by [insert famous composer]." Even a traditional winter holiday concert can find new life if you look for a different angle: maybe use the star as a common imagery across all pieces? Themes that venture outside of music can be an exciting way to thwart expectations and can provide you with new directions as you search for music. To get your juices flowing, here are some of my past programs:

- "Casino Royale" — music from 17th-century Venice presented in a Commedia dell'arte skit, with a story about the establishment of the first public casino in Europe in 1638.
- "Music: The Miracle Medicine" — music about the four humors, ailments, and cure. You'd be surprised how many pieces contain "lungs", "spleens", and other body parts!
- "Heavy Metal and Machinery" — music about mining, metals, and machines. The program encompassed a wide array of pieces: from Whitacre's *Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine* to an a cappella cover of David Guetta's *Titanium*, and even Tom Lehrer's *Element Song*!
- "International Holidays" — a program of winter holiday music from all over the world, including England, United States, Spain, France, Germany, Estonia, and Mongolia.

While the theme can keep them curious, spoken introductions can help listeners further connect with the music. Take a minute and point out what they might hear musically, or share a fun fact you discovered about the piece. You and your singers have learned all about what makes these pieces interesting and relevant, so why not let your audience in on the fun?

The physical barrier between the stage and the seats may foster the audience's passive experience. Why not use the entire performance space? Have your singers surround the audience — say, sing a shape note piece in the traditional square position, with the audience in the middle — or even plant your singers amongst the audience for the opening number. You can program pieces that are appropriate for processional in between, so that the singers' movement between positions becomes part of the musical experience. For a concert with multiple choirs, situate the choirs in different spots of the venue, and have the music flow from one to the next. A quick change of physical location often refreshes the attention span of your audience, inviting them to listen actively.

Why stop there? Invite the audience to participate. If there are pieces sung in a foreign language, teach your audience to speak the most difficult word — they will appreciate your singers' performance of Dvořák even more after they try to pronounce the pesky "ř" in Czech themselves! Teach the audience a simple canon. Invite them to sing along on a piece or two — the Alma Mater (or fight song) of your institution, or holiday music in a winter concert.

Active learning has been proven to enhance learning compared to lecture-only teaching in the classroom. So why don't we start bringing in new ways to engage the audience, create an active space where they can further appreciate the music, and tempt them to come back for more?



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Refresh! 2016 Release! Rekindle! Rejuvenate! Celebrate!

WCDA's Summer Workshop – Refresh! – now in its 4th year – has always been billed as an opportunity for choir director/teachers to “*Release, Rekindle, and Rejuvenate*” after a long school year or performance season. This year, we add “*Celebrate*” to the list. That’s right. During Refresh! this summer, a celebration will take place honoring the 55th Anniversary of WCDA, and the event is included in the Refresh! schedule.

The WCDA 55th Anniversary Gala will include a Directors Choir – “Singing Our History” – which will include all Refresh! attendees and WCDA members who are coming to Green Bay for the sole purpose of being a part of the 55th Anniversary events. The choir will rehearse and perform repertoire that represents each decade of WCDA’s existence from the 1960s through the 2010s led by our esteemed colleagues Mark Aamot, Greg Carpenter, Gary Schwartzhoff, Rebecca Winnie, and James Kinchen. The choir will perform at the Gala Dinner on Tuesday evening at The Woods Country Club in Green Bay. (The dinner is included in your Refresh! fee.)

The Refresh! schedule is again packed with many informative sessions: Maximizing Your Warm-Up Time in Rehearsal; Alexander Technique; Can Singers Belt and Still Sing with Healthy Technique?; The Unique Needs and Cultures of Boy/Men Choirs and Girl/Women Choirs; The Best Idea I Ever Had (Grading and Assessment); the performance of the WSMA Treble Choir, presentations by the WSMA Honor Choir Directors - Dr. Scott MacPherson and Dr. Guy Forbes, an EdCamp experience, Sharing Circles, and more. Graduate credit is available.

This would be an outstanding year for you to attend Refresh!. Many folks attend each year and WCDA is very proud of the spirit and the quality of this event. Our attendees represent all levels and genres of choral music in Wisconsin from elementary through high school, college/university, church and community choirs from youth to adult. We encourage you to join your colleagues and be a part of the special culture of Refresh!

The cost of Refresh! 2016 is only \$55.00 and this includes the workshop, parking, and the 55th Anniversary Gala Banquet. More information regarding the sessions, housing, schedule, and registration is available on the WCDA website at wischoral.org.

Hope to see you at Refresh! 2016.



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Brothers Sing On

Audric Buhr, Menomonie High School

Establishing a core group of male singers at the high school level is a goal that has prompted many before me to share their thoughts and frustrations. I am sure you have heard many of these thoughts before. I don't claim to be an expert on this subject; I can only speak to what I have found works for me as I encourage men to be a part of the program I continue to develop. The structure of a high school choir is constantly shifting, so some years you may find an abundance of male participants only to find yourself wondering if you'll ever find a male to be involved in your program a short time later. The key to adding young men to your ensemble is creating a relationship with them at an early age. I have found a few strategies to be successful in building a core group of men.

Starting the high school experience with a Men's Chorus. I am a big believer in placing all 9th grade male vocal students into a male chorus. This chorus becomes a safe place to put upperclassmen who may fall in the categories of those roving to match pitch, those who are at a different level of maturity, as well as those who are still figuring out how to read music. The young male singer needs to be surrounded with like voices to help model the changing voice as well as celebrate with others who can relate to and have gone through this transition. Female teachers could find it useful to empower older male singers to be involved in this ensemble as vocal models. I don't mean to say that women can't teach a male voice. I myself learned important vocal skills from the three female vocal teachers I had the privilege of working with during my own vocal development. What I'm trying to say is it could be useful for the younger singer to be surrounded by people who sing the same pitch, as they find safety in numbers. Giving these young men an opportunity to sing a few "classic" men's pieces such as a sea chanty, barbershop tune, or a traditional men's chorus piece can help to build camaraderie and strengthen good choral tradition.

Find a sport or activity you enjoy and assist or lead it in some way. I get it; you are busy with all the demands of your job, your family, and life in general, but hear me out. Being on the sideline gives you a chance to see students involved in something outside of music. It allows you to establish a relationship with non-music students you might not see walking down your hallway on a daily basis by showing interest in something important to them. It will give you something to build a conversation from: "Great catch last night," or "You really had an incredible Rube Goldberg machine at the Science Olympiad competition last weekend," can encourage students to become a new addition to your choral program. Look for opportunities for involvement that do not require major time commitments. For example, I have been active within my school by being a statistician for the freshmen football team, an announcer for home basketball games, a student council advisor and a Kubb Club advisor. I have also made connections beyond the school doors by being a coach for Saturday morning recreational soccer and being an active member of the community in which I live and teach. Allowing the students the opportunity to see you in a variety of settings gives them a chance to realize you are more than an entity that resides at the school.

Establish a relationship with the men of the Middle School program and upper Elementary levels. Every time a transition of buildings and/or teachers occur you will lose some singers; it is bound to happen. When I've asked students why they aren't planning to continue singing in their transition to the high school, most say they are concerned they won't have the same relationship with the music teachers at the next building they will attend. It's true. We all connect differently with a different population of students in our midst. I have used a 5th grade choral festival to start bridging the gaps from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school for both vocal teachers to make connections and establish relationships with prospective students. I've led male singer sectionals at the middle school during 8th grade chorus to foster a connection with these singers as well; I have also been a guest director for the middle school chorus at their concert shortly before registration for 9th grade occurred.



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Brothers Sing On (cont.)

If you take your high school choir on a trip or tour, send some personally written postcards to 8th graders encouraging them to stick with the program, a trick I learned from Weston Noble. Any opportunity to personally connect and build a relationship with these incoming students is invaluable.

Every four years put on a musical that celebrates men singing. It's important to promote male singing as 'cool'. Break the stereotypical mold of male singers in a musical. Find titles that use large male choruses or strong male-featured pieces. Some shows that can accomplish this are: *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (*Brotherhood of Man*), *Grease* (*Greased Lightning*), *Seussical* (*Monkey Around*), *Miss Saigon* (*Bui Doi*), *Guys and Dolls* (*Luck be a Lady*), *Newsies* (*Seize The Day*), *South Pacific* (*There's Nothing Like a Dame*), *Dogfight* (?), etc.

Trips: Find a Men's Singing Festival even if it isn't close to your location and take ALL your men to it. This is a great option if you can't have a men's chorus as one of your course offerings. Any men's singing festival, even a short one, will reinforce that your students are not alone. They are a part of a brotherhood of like-minded people. Time on a bus or in a van on the way will give you the opportunity to have an honest, unconditional conversation. Get them talking about the music on the radio, about classes they're currently taking, activities or sports they're in, or their job. Taking interest in what they think and feel will enrich relationships with students. Even feigning interest can go a long way. Chances are you will learn things about your students you never knew or saw in the classroom setting. Take a selfie at the festival! Post it on Instagram or Twitter! Challenge yourself to create a 'selfie montage', taking selfies with each of your students, or even photobombing their selfies! Students document everything on their electronic devices, chances are they will document that trip; be a part of that captured memory.

Hopefully these strategies, while not groundbreaking or new, can be easy for you to implement into your teaching. If something doesn't work for you, try something else, or try it differently. We must challenge ourselves to break away from our norm and connect with these young men so they feel accepted, important, and a part of something greater than themselves.

Beyond Product Sales: Creative Ways to Fundraise for Your Choir

Marco Antonio Melendez, Artistic Director, Milwaukee Children's Choir

Fundraising can be an all too laborious and fatiguing process. This is something we all know! Choral directors often find themselves reaching far beyond the scope of their own collegiate music education to execute and administrate fundraisers that we all hope will be plentiful. More often than not, these fundraisers are based on product sales. There are several questions one must ask when going this route:

1. Can a customer purchase the product for a lesser cost at a local store?
2. Is the bang worth the buck? In other words, is the amount of work you and/or your students are doing worth the time you're putting into the fundraiser?
3. Is your program/seller receiving at least a 50% profit margin on this fundraiser?
4. Do the students reside in an area of the community where door to door fundraising will be effective?

These are just a few questions of the many which often raise red flags on a fundraising operation. What if your program and students could engage the community in other formats rather than just by selling products that will come three to four months after the customer has already paid!?



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Beyond Product Sales (cont.)

Milwaukee Children's Choir is a non-profit (501c3) company that is committed to providing children with exceptional choral music education and performance experiences that foster creativity, personal expression, and social growth. Since 1994, Milwaukee Children's Choir (MCC) has never turned a family away due to financial hardship. In order to maintain this tradition, MCC must raise funds to offset tuition and provide families with tuition and uniform assistance. While we do participate in some product sale based fundraisers, those programs are most often specifically for tour fundraising as opposed to fundraising for our general operating expenses. The following are some of the many ways in which MCC raises funds to support our program.

ALUMNI SUPPORT: Who better to ask for support than those who have been directly affected by your program? A fine-tuned, well developed alumni relations program can be the key to success for music groups of all sizes. Your own alumni are a perfect source for touching the heart strings of those who understand your program and why you do what you do. Alumni sometimes work for companies that will offer a "matching gift" option. Alumni could also be a wonderful source for gathering volunteers to assist in larger projects such as tour planning and execution, choir camps/retreats, etc.

SINGATHON: Singathon is a day-long, free community concert for which choir members raise pledges to support MCC. One of the most popular fundraising activities at Singathon is the "singing valentine," a serenade, performed live by the choir that audience members can purchase throughout the day for friends and loved ones. Proceeds support MCC general operating expenses and tour fundraising.

CORPORATE SUPPORT: Know your own members and their families! Often, you will find that a choir member's family owns a business or may be an executive of a local business. Corporations enjoy supporting local arts programs and there is much funding to go around. If you are seeking funding for supplies, field trips, etc., visit with your local business leaders. Offer them space to advertise in your program book and the opportunity to have their company's name said aloud at your concerts. The bigger and flashier the program, the more likely to receive interest from corporations who want to promote their brand/company.

GALA / AUCTIONS: Led by the MCC Board of Directors, the *MCC Medley* is a gala-style, evening fundraiser. This fundraiser includes a short choral performance, silent and live auctions of donated items, paddle raises, a live auctioneer, donated food and beverage, jewelry pull, etc. Other types of auctions can also be completed throughout the course of the year. Arranging this type of an event can be VERY time consuming. Again, gather the support from you parents, alumni, and even your students!

FOUNDATION SUPPORT: Seek out local, regional, and national foundations that will support your initiatives. There are bound to be foundations around your area that will support your program. It takes time to find these! If you need more music ("a choir textbook"), risers, acoustical shells, etc., rather than waiting for what in many cases can feel like an inevitable "no" from an administrator, put in the time to apply for grants through local foundations. Remember, support from local or regional foundations also means you have support from your community!! What better way to advocate your program to your administrator than to prove that arts education is desired by the local community and is necessary!

There can be many headaches involved with trying to raise funds for your program. I won't lie—it is hard work. It is busy work. However, would you rather look into the eyes of a student who has just been told that he/she can't go on the choir tour this year or in the eyes of a student who has always been held back due to their family's financial situation but now has the opportunity to travel? It is worth the time! It is worth the effort! Be the facilitator of change in your community and offer exciting new adventures through arts education! As T.S. Elliott once said, "For us there is only the trying. The rest is not our business." If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at mmelendez@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org.



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Next Direction 2016

Sarah McVeigh

What was the moment or series of moments that propelled you into the world of choral music? What inspired you to make teaching youth through music your life's calling? What types of experiences did you have that you hope that your students may have as well?

NextDirection gives music teachers an opportunity to spark the passion of choral leadership in the hearts of their students. It serves to bring together the brightest, most dynamic young people to consider a career in choral music. Every year, students (both high school and college) leave NextDirection inspired to be great leaders in their own programs and often years down the road.

What is NextDirection? NextDirection provides a unique three-day venue for high school juniors and seniors to think about the possibilities within the choral music profession. Students have the chance to make connections with like-minded students, to work with collegiate music education students, and to meet and work with outstanding conductors and teachers.

Why is it "Unique?" Unlike an All-State/Honor Choir experience, performance is not the main focus, although the singing standard is very high. In addition to singing in a high-achieving choir, students will also attend mini-sessions regarding issues in the music education world.

Who should attend? NextDirection is not just for students already considering careers in choral music, but also for the finest young choral musicians who may have never considered becoming choral directors.

When and where is this year's event and who is the clinician? This year's clinician is Beth Holmes from Millikin University. NextDirection will take place on September 9-11, 2016, at the Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, WI.

How do I register? What is the cost? Early registration (\$225) is due by June 15. The final registration deadline is June 30 (\$250 if after June 15). Go to <http://new.wischoral.org/nextdirection> to register.

Special note to collegiate directors: Do you have a current student who you feel is ready to take the next step in changing high school students' lives? Is there a music student at your school who will represent your college or university in a positive way? If so, serving as a chaperone for the NextDirection Conference is meant for that student! Collegiate students will get a chance to talk with kids about YOUR program, as well as collegiate life in general. They will also be able to work with great staff, sing in the conference choir under the direction of Beth Holmes and meet other college students that may become their future colleagues! Consider your best candidates for this incredible experience.

Now it is your turn to mentor and inspire your gifted young leaders. Give your students the opportunity of a lifetime – NextDirection!



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Engagement in the Choral Rehearsal

Richard Robbins, University of Wisconsin-Superior

I remember well my first semester of teaching choral music at an inner-city high school in Houston, Texas. I spent weeks slogging through a not-too-difficult arrangement of a Christmas carol with my students. Day after day, I implored, cajoled, and begged my students to sing things the way I thought they should be sung.

“Mark this down!” I would bellow. “Use your pencils! Sing it again! Try it on solfège! More support!”

Not much would change during rehearsals, so I would repeat the instructions more loudly.

The performance did not go well. I suppose they sang most of the right notes and rhythms, but I wouldn’t have called it...well, I wouldn’t have called it music, exactly. Curious to analyze what had gone wrong, I took a glance at my students’ scores when they handed them in at the end of the semester. And what did I find? Page after page of unmarked, pristine, barely-touched music. The choral octavos I got back were beautiful – unbesmirched and dazzling, like freshly-fallen snow.

I had said the right things during rehearsal, and I had given some clear musical feedback, but the singers had obviously not bought into the process. There was a lack of real, observable engagement from the singers, and assessment is difficult when you don’t know what to assess. I also wondered if my hectoring had alienated the singers. Does anyone really like to be told what to do? Did they see that a beautiful musical result was possible, in the midst of trying to fix notes? Did they feel like I valued their musical contributions? Would it matter?

I came to feel that all of these issues were actually problems with engagement. I now realize that singer-centered engagement can serve as a powerful tool in helping your choir to learn, allowing participants to feel invested in their own rehearsals and performances. They sense that they are valued because their musical contributions are considered and taken seriously. They are able to use multiple modes of expression freely. And, even while pitches and rhythms are being learned, the transcendent may be explored through singer-led poetic and musical analysis (keep in mind that the music itself can remain transcendent, even when the performance or rehearsal is not).

For singer-centered engagement strategies to work, they must be observable. In the case of my poorly-prepared first-semester choir, the lack of written musical reminders in the students’ scores showed a lack of engagement. But there are any number of indicators that prove a lack of engagement during a rehearsal: distraction, poor posture, little to no facial expression, and an inability to speak about the music among other things.

I also believe that multiple engagement strategies result in better music learning. PET imaging confirms that the graphical, musical, numeric, and verbal instructions required to comprehend written music (multiple modes of communication) require the use of a more widely distributed neural circuitry than standard verbal or musical listening tasks (cf. F. Clifford Rose in *Neurology of Music*, and other authors). It stands to reason that singers engaged through multiple modes of engagement in a choral rehearsal would enjoy similar benefits, resulting in more effective learning and retention.

In my own rehearsals and teaching, I find it helpful to think about four observable types of engagement strategies:

- 1) Singers can engage **musically**: through actual musical performance, or through guided listening
- 2) Singers can engage **physically**: through movement or dance, or through guided musical tasks like conducting
- 3) Singers can engage **verbally**: through discussion, analysis, or creation
- 4) Singers can engage **graphically**: through notation or art, original works or existing ones

The first strategy, musical engagement, can take many forms. In one sense, our singers are constantly engaged musically if they are rehearsing with us. However, this engagement may or may not be singer-centered. Rather than simply tell singers which pitches or rhythms were sung incorrectly, I ask my singers to identify problems that they heard. I might ask a section to sing a musical line and to raise their hands when they hear a wrong pitch. When musical problems occur again and again, I sometimes ask my singers to propose creative solutions to address the issue: perhaps there is another melody that sounds like the line that is an issue, or perhaps there are clashing notes in the accompaniment or in other voice parts that interfere with their progress. The solutions are proposed by the singer rather than by the conductor. I am constantly impressed by their creativity.



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Engagement in the Choral Rehearsal (cont.)

Students can also be engaged musically in considering interpretive elements. Sometimes, while preparing a piece of music, I ask students to bring in recordings of the piece that are meaningful to them. I then ask my singers to evaluate these recordings. What did they like? What did they not like? Even inexperienced singers are entitled to an aesthetic opinion.

Many effective choral directors use physical engagement in their rehearsals. For example, singers of any age can have fun conducting while they sing. Have you considered asking your singers to conduct one another? Give your choir permission to create their own gestures that express the musical line, and then use these gestures as they rehearse. If your choir is having trouble memorizing a selection, having your singers create some original choreography to assist in memorization can be a great (and sometimes hilarious) tool. I often ask my singers to pretend that they are painting while they sing; I simply ask that the painting they imagine express the musical intent of the piece. Learning dances associated with certain common musical forms is helpful in teaching many pieces, and some singers that excel in physical expression can find their musical voice in this way.

Verbal engagement, in a singer-centered context, is about more than listening to the choir director talk. It might involve the analysis of poetry, including elements like scansion, rhythm, and meter. Can singers relate the text that they sing to their own experiences? Are there ways in which the composer changes the original poem, through repetition or editorializing, to suit a musical or expressive aim? Could they rewrite the poetry in their own words? I recently asked my own choir to summarize the poetry of *Carmina Burana* in their own words; one student rewrote the work using emojis and text message abbreviations. That's engagement!

Graphical engagement occurs any time a singer marks their score using words, symbols, or musical notation. This engagement is especially important early in the music-learning process and for singers that may be less experienced. Of course, there are other ways to graphically engage. Can singers draw a map of important harmonic events in the score? Can they draw a melodic map? A rhythmic one? Can they illustrate the musical journey of the listener? Could a singer create a series of symbols that indicate certain musical events? Can singers associate the music they are learning with a piece of art? Can they create their own art that expresses the music? Consider displaying this art during your own choral performances, as a slideshow, as art featured in your program, or as a display outside of your performance hall.

These are just a few ideas for you to consider as you engage your own singers on this wonderful, collaborative journey of music-making. I would love to hear about ideas that work with your own choirs!

International Travel on a Shoe-String Budget

Bob Gehrenbeck, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

UW-Whitewater, where I teach, is not exactly an institution known for its huge endowment. The financial situation of my students is similar—many of them work multiple part-time jobs to make ends meet, and, campus wide, a large percentage of the student body are first generation college students whose families do not have large cash reserves. Back in 2009 I hatched a plan to take my advanced choir, the UWW Chamber Singers, on a tour to Germany. No choir from UWW had ever toured internationally before. But using a tour company was out of the question due to the prohibitive cost. Perhaps a handful of my students could have afforded the typical \$4000 price tag these trips entail, but I needed every member of my small, 27-voice choir to participate, regardless of whether their families could afford it or not.

So I had to improvise completely different arrangements for the trip, but this new paradigm turned out to be rewarding on many levels. Fortunately, I was able to build on a foundation of institutional and personal connections within Germany: the UW-System's Hessen-Wisconsin Exchange Program, as well as my own contacts from having spent 18 months as a student in eastern Germany two decades earlier. Moreover, my UWW students showed great enthusiasm for making the trip a reality, and they brought considerable ingenuity to the fundraising process. During ten days in May, 2010, my students and I visited Leipzig, Dresden, Jena, and Giessen in Germany, and Prague in the Czech Republic. We performed four concerts to near-capacity crowds in beautiful churches with fabulous acoustics. The price per student ended up being \$637 for those who could afford it, and I offered scholarships for those who couldn't. But beyond the financial arrangements, being forced to depend on personal connections in the countries we visited made our performances more meaningful, and the opportunities for cultural exchange with ordinary people that this mode of travel entailed were a treasure in their own right.



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International Travel (cont.)

Obviously, cutting expenses was a top priority. We did this in several ways. In the realm of transportation, we booked a group flight eight months in advance, locking in a price of \$735 per ticket. For ground transport, rather than booking one, ten-day charter we booked four separate one-day charters, staying in Leipzig, Dresden, Giessen and Prague for two days each. We used a company to bid out the charters—three of the four trips were excellent, but one was lousy: the driver took the wrong route, the restroom on the bus was locked, and the driver wouldn't stop when students needed to use the facilities. (Later, a driver from a different bus line with excellent service gave me his card and invited me to book directly through them in the future: www.weimar-tour.de.) For the short trip between Leipzig and Dresden we took the train because it was cheaper than chartering a bus for that day. Within each city, we used public transit. This wasn't as convenient as having a bus at our beck and call, but the students got to experience life in each city more realistically by using the same means of transport as the local residents.

The biggest savings, however, came from arranging stays with host families for five nights (half of the trip), and using youth hostels for the other nights. Here is where my personal and institutional connections within Germany were crucial. I was still in touch with two close friends from my student days who helped facilitate concerts at local churches and homestays with members of each parish. My friends' organizational work within Germany was essential to the overall travel planning process. For booking the youth hostels, the staff of the Hessen-Wisconsin Exchange program was very helpful. Our first stop after landing in Frankfurt am Main (the largest city in the German state of Hessen) was at Justus-Liebling University in Giessen, an hour north of Frankfurt. We participated in exchange activities with music students in Giessen and performed our first concert in a lovely chapel on campus. The university fed us two lunches in the student cafeteria and arranged for us to stay two nights at the local hostel at the members-only rate. The International Student office in Giessen also negotiated a reduced rate for us at a youth hostel in Frankfurt for our last night in Germany, before we flew home the following morning. We also used a youth hostel in Prague. The dormitory style housing was not as posh as staying in hotels, but, as compensation, it presented the opportunity to interact with other students from all over the world.

With all of these measures, the total cost of the trip came out to \$41,000, or \$1518 per student. To reduce this further, we utilized existing funding sources and engaged in various fundraising activities. My choir has a modest annual touring budget of \$6000, and by cutting costs in other areas—for example, I purchased all the sheet music for the tour during the previous fiscal year—we were able to squeeze out an additional \$2500 from our choir account (which is supported by student fees on campus). We received \$6500 from UWW's College of Arts and Communication, but we also had to *pay* \$4700 in fees to UWW's Center for Global Education, who served as travel agent. In retrospect, I could have hired an outside travel agent to do the same work for less. (The amount of the fees came as an unpleasant surprise after a change in leadership at that office.) Nevertheless, the Center for Global Education staff were very helpful with booking the group flight and the bus and train trips, and coordinating all the finances for the trip. Their office also provided travel insurance at the rate of \$37 per student.

The rest of the funds came from a variety of sources. For our three on-campus concerts that season we aimed to maximize ticket sales, and asked for donations at the conclusion of each concert. The students organized a silent auction and a bake sale in conjunction with one of the performances. They also sold pizzas all year as a fundraiser. I solicited donations from a handful of local business owners in Whitewater who had business interests in Germany. We benefited from in-kind donations as well, including items for the silent auction in Whitewater, and, while we were in Germany, the churches where we performed organized receptions with delicious food (much appreciated by the students). We were given permission to collect free-will offerings at each of our performances, and I distributed the euros directly back to the students to use for meals and museum entrance fees. The students were proud to "earn their keep" in this way.

Besides keeping the costs low, travelling on our own had many additional benefits. Since I was the travel planner, I could tailor the trip to the interests of my students, choosing the attractions I felt would be most educational. We visited museums devoted to composers (Bach, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schumann); toured the Dresden Opera House; attended the closing concert of the Leipzig A-Cappella Festival; and visited other historical landmarks. A colleague from the UWW German Department and I served as tour guides en route, manifesting a much more personal connection to the students than an outside guide would have had. Staying in one city for two days at a time not only saved us money, but allowed us dig more deeply into the local history and culture. One of the biggest boons was, again, the experience of staying with German host families. Most of them knew English well enough, but in a few cases my students were forced to use the small amount of German they knew, or simply to use sign language. But all the students raved about their interactions with their hosts. When it came time to perform, all of us felt like we were part of the community in our various concert locations, rather than coming in as an outside group with no further interaction with audience members.

The biggest disadvantage of this mode of travel was the enormous amount of time and energy it required for me to plan the trip. I haven't done another one since, partly for this reason. But the trip's intangible benefits made it an extremely rewarding experience for everyone. The personal connections we made were invaluable, and I hope someday to accept the numerous invitations we received to return. The next time, it will be easier...



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International Travel (cont.)

My ability to realize this project hinged on my personal contacts within Germany and my university's exchange relationship with a German university system. But I think this kind of trip could be replicated by other conductors, as long as you have some sort of connection within the target country on which to build. I only worked with two contacts initially, who then put me in touch with others. The Hessen-Wisconsin Exchange program, while helpful, didn't contribute any funding towards our trip except for the in-kind donations of lunches and youth hostel memberships. Having the institutional connection did, however, make it easier to sell the trip to administrators within my own university, but again, UWW's financial contribution was marginal. In the final analysis, the people-to-people connections that made this particular trip possible financially ended up being its greatest asset overall.





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Community Choirs High 5

Andrew Haase

1. How Can I Keep from Singing
Janet Whitcomb Pummill
SATB with divisi, piano
Walton WLG148

We've all done one or five different settings of this familiar text by Lowry. This new arrangement, published in 2014, offers a variety of musical expressions for both choir and piano. The music includes 8-part divisi and sections of a cappella singing. It's a great octavo for the intermediate to advanced community choir.

2. Oh, What a Beautiful City
Arr. Stacey Gibbs
SATB a cappella
Santa Barbara SBMP 1054

Looking for a closer for your next concert? Look no further! "Oh What a Beautiful City" is a fun, refreshing arrangement of a traditional American Spiritual. With lots of call and response and straightforward harmonic progressions, this is perfect for any community choir! The song's end will have your audience members jumping to their feet in applause.

3. Ignea Vis (The Fiery Force)
J. Michael Saunders
SATB with divisi, piano
Walton WJMS1144

This octavo is for the more advanced community choir. Unique harmonies, interesting melodic lines and unfamiliar Latin text will challenge your choir members. This song requires skilled singers. However, I'm certain that your community choir will love the challenge of this new publication.

4. August Moonrise
Blake Henson
SATB, piano and cello
GIA G-8187

August Moonrise is a must for any choir. Blake Henson perfectly captures the powerful text of Sarah Teasdale through the duet between SATB choir and cello. Simple, yet effective melodic lines combined with a lyrical cello part make this song a WOW for any choir.

5. Over The Rainbow
Harold Arlen, arr. Mark Hayes
SATB, piano
Alfred 27333

Who doesn't love "Over the Rainbow"? Published in 2007, this is not a new arrangement; however, it remains my favorite of this unforgettable song. Typical of a Mark Hayes, he twists and turns the melody and incorporates jazz chords to give new life to this familiar tune. This song provides great balance in any concert program and is sure to be a favorite of any audience.



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Ethnic/Multicultural High 5

Note from Robert Gehrenbeck, State R&S Chair: For Eduardo Garcia-Novelli this year's ethnic/multicultural entry, I asked Eduardo Garcia -Novelli to contribute a list of his favorite pieces from the catalog of an Argentinean publisher, Ediciones GCC, www.gcc.org.ar. Over the years my choirs have enjoyed performing a number of Piazzolla tango arrangements that are available from this source, which also publishes original compositions and historical music by Latin American composers. Both the original works and the arrangements span many different styles, voicings, and difficulty levels. I highly recommend this music—your choirs will love it! Eduardo's comments and list of recommended pieces are below, with a few of my own recommendations sprinkled in. —RG

Eduardo writes:

Ediciones GCC is a publisher of choral music dedicated primarily to the work of Argentinian composers and arrangers, though it also includes a few who hail from other countries in Latin America. It was founded in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1995 by the GCC—Grupo de Canto Coral, a prestigious chamber choir in the country. Since 2004 Ediciones GCC is part of the Kultrum Foundation, whose mission is the dissemination and encouragement of study, creation, and performance of music. Ediciones GCC has received numerous grants from the Antorchas Foundation, the National Secretary of Culture, the Music Office of the City of Buenos Aires, the Argentinian Foreign Affairs Ministry, and the Argentinian National Endowment for the Arts.

The website for Ediciones GCC is: <http://www.gcc.org.ar/htm/edito/edito.html>. Laura Dubinsky manages the catalog and she extremely knowledgeable and helpful. This catalog is not available from retailers in the US. Laura will happily ship material to the US or sell PDF certified copies. Please inquire about recordings of works since not all of them are readily available on the website.

[Although the website is only in Spanish, Laura and her staff will correspond with you in English via email. PDF delivery has worked well for me in the past. —RG]

Original compositions recommended by Eduardo Garcia-Novelli:

Advanced:

Missa brevis gregoriana
Alberto Balzanelli
SSAATTBB

Venite!
Ricardo Mansilla
SSATB, tenor solo

Venite exsultemus Domino!
Antonio Russo
SSMAA

Intermediate:

Misa en sol, N°1
Gustavo Felice
SATB, soli

Beginning:

Aleluia
Gustavo Felice
SSA



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Ethnic/Multicultural High 5 (cont.)

Folk and popular music arrangements recommended by Eduardo Garcia-Novelli and Robert Gehrenbeck:

Advanced:

La pomeña (The Woman from La Poma, *zamba*)
arr. Hugo de la Vega
SSATTB
(EGN)

El último café (The Last Café, *tango*)
arr. Emilio Dublanc
SATB
(EGN)

El gato de mi casa (My Housecat, *gato*)
Antonio Russo
SSATBB
(EGN)

Introducción al ángel (Introduction to the Angel, *tango*)
Astor Piazzolla, arr. Javier Zentner
SAATTB
(RG)

Intermediate:

Tres villacicos (Three Christmas Carols)
Dante Andreo
SATB
(EGN)

¡Viva la cueca! (Long Live the Cueca!, *cueca*)
arr. Ricardo Mansilla
SATB
(RG)

La muerte del ángel (The Death of the Angel, *tango*)
Astor Piazzolla, arr. Néstor Zadoff
SATB
(RG)

Beginning:

Buenos Aires hora cero (Midnight in Buenos Aires, *tango*)
Astor Piazzola, arr. Nestor Zadoff
SATB, two short soprano solos
(RG)



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Vocal Jazz High 5

Timothy Buchholz

It was a joy to have the professional vocal jazz group Vertical Voices as the headliner for our state choral directors' convention this past January. For this year's Vocal Jazz High Five, I thought it would be fun to feature music by the members of Vertical Voices. These charts range in difficulty from beginning high school through advanced ensembles. As always, if you'd like other repertoire suggestions for your group, please don't hesitate to contact me!

1. VoiceDance

Greg Jasperse
SATB or SSAA, a cappella
Shawnee Press A2226 (SATB); B0645 (SSAA)
Difficulty level III

Written originally as a wedding processional, this wordless, a cappella composition in 6/8 evokes a sense of joy. It is one of the best-selling vocal jazz charts of the past decade for good reason, and your students will surely enjoy the challenge of singing this piece. Pedagogically, it is a great tool to teach your group part independence, compound meter, and how to maintain a steady pulse without accompaniment. The melody moves between voice parts, and singers must be aware of who has the melody in each section, which can help open up their ears to the rest of the ensemble. This contemporary piece will likely contrast most anything else in your ensemble's repertoire.

2. Feelin' Good

Arr. Kerry Marsh
SSATB, piano, bass, and drums
Available for purchase with PDF download from www.kerrymarsh.com
Part learning tracks are available for purchase.
Difficulty level IV

This new arrangement of Kerry's is a perfect set closer. It begins with a hip reharmonization of this classic swing tune, and ends in half time with a heavy 12/8 feel that will bring down the house. It features either a male or female soloist in two separate sections, which could be split up or done by one singer, as well as an open improvisation section for vocalists or instrumentalists. The writing features a good mix of both background and melodic textures with advanced harmonic voicings. A great bonus is that the part tracks you can purchase separately are sung by Kerry and Julia Dollison of Vertical Voices, making it very easy for your singers to learn and memorize this chart.

3. Old Devil Moon

Arr. Jennifer Barnes
SATB, or SSAA, or SSA with rhythm section.
UNC Jazz Press NC.VJ1253
Difficulty level II-III

This energetic chart by Jennifer Barnes (www.jenniferbarnesmusic.com) is written for an intermediate level group. It features an alternating Latin/swing feel throughout which can be used to teach the difference between straight and swung eighths. Like most of Jen's charts, it has very accessible part-writing, and this particular chart has easy vamp chord changes that are perfect for beginning improvisers. This would make a good opening number for your vocal jazz group.

4. The Hummingbird

Kerry Marsh and Julia Dollison
SSATB, or SSAB, or SSA with piano, bass, and drums
Available for purchase with PDF download from www.kerrymarsh.com
Part learning tracks are available for purchase.
Difficulty level II-III

This is a fantastic entry-level chart for any group, regardless of voicing. The wordless melody is set in a samba feel over minor blues chord changes with a bridge. The melody is catchy for both singers and the audience, and harmonies are fun with easy voice-leading. The chart is also available in a "Starter Series" adaptation, titled, "Little Hummingbird," that is even more singable for younger groups. The piano, bass, and drum parts are fully notated for groups who do not have accompanists who read chord charts. If you're looking for a good way to introduce a Latin groove to your vocal jazz ensemble, this is a great choice.



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Vocal Jazz High 5 (cont.)

5. Fields of Gold

Arr. Greg Jasperse

SATB a cappella

Hal Leonard HL 08748893

Difficulty level II-III

This a cappella arrangement of the popular song by Sting works well for a variety of groups. It does not delve too far into sophisticated jazz harmony, and as such would be good for a group that is new to the vocal jazz idiom. Advanced groups can spend rehearsal time working on creating unique sounding textures that vary throughout the piece. The phrasing and shape of the lines are written in a way that allows for a focus on great dynamic shaping. It is a slower tempo ballad that your audience will recognize and would be a nice contrast to up-tempo numbers.

Speaking of Greg Jasperse, he will be the director of our Wisconsin All-State Vocal Jazz Ensemble this coming January, so I hope many of you will encourage your singers to submit audition recordings to be a part of that group! More details coming in late summer/early fall. I hope you have a great year ahead with your vocal jazz ensembles! Please feel free to contact me with any questions. I'm always happy to talk about vocal jazz. My email is: tim.buchholz@uwc.edu and my office phone is 715-261-6246.

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