



VOICE of WCDA

Spring Issue—2023

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The Influence of a Teacher

Kevin Kriegel, *The Voice* editor

The American Choral Directors Association National Conference is such an important event for me. It provides me the opportunity to attend inspiring interest sessions to assist with rejuvenation, to witness moving choral performances, and to connect with my choral family. This year's conference lived up to its expectations in so many ways, and I'm so touched to tears every time I encounter a hug from a former colleague, student, or teacher. Each time I entered the conference convention center I either experienced or witnessed a hug, and after a day at the conference I decided to sit in a corner and observe human connection through the hug (I also had brought my laptop with me because the deadline for writing this article was fast approaching and I needed just that small nudge to get me started). As I observed all of these other hugs, I said to myself, "yup, that person just hugged their teacher"....and then someone else who was in the area came up and hugged that person, and I said to myself, "yup, that teacher just hugged their teacher." Around and around it went, everyday for the duration of the conference. It filled me with such joy and inspired me to write this opening article for this Spring Issue: *Celebrating Our Teachers*.

As I reflect on my time at the conference, I have come to understand the unbelievably-fortunate privilege of having so many influential teachers for the duration of my career, and it propelled me to further reflect on a more specific time when I was most influenced by teachers. My senior year of high school was fraught with challenges, most notably for being bullied because of my involvement with choral music. Yes, the choir room was always a safe place for me, but it was outside of the choir room that proved to be the most cruel, and seeking shelter in the choir room or my choir director's office became a daily occurrence for me. One spring day in 1989 as I was sharing frustrations with the bullying with my choir director at the time, I remember receiving a phone call from my wonderful mother, who read to me over the phone the letter of acceptance into The Iowa State Fair Singers and Jazz Band. At that moment, all three of us jumped for joy because we all knew that my life was about to change. And change, it did! All of the wonderful music students and teachers in that program helped shape me to be the human being and teacher I am today as they helped teach me that love and acceptance is the most influential tool for changing a person's life. I will be forever grateful for the teachers associated with The Iowa State Fair Singers and Jazz Band, and I am proud to share with you, as we *Celebrate Our Teachers* in this issue, that a celebration of that organization is currently being planned for this summer.

I invite you to reflect on and to celebrate the influential teachers in your life, for may they always remind us the importance of carrying on their legacies through love and acceptance. Please enjoy this Spring issue of *The Voice* as it will be my last as editor. I want to thank Zack Durlam, another influential teacher, for asking and trusting me to be its editor. Best to you all!





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Letter from the President

Zack Durlam, WCDA President

What a privilege it is to serve in a profession where we can touch others' lives in such a direct and meaningful way. Whether we lead school choirs, church music, or community ensembles, all of us are, at our heart, teachers who strive to make positive change in the lives of our singers.

Most of us can name a music teacher who inspired us to pursue a career in the arts. For me it was Tim, the vocal director of an Iowa summer high school program similar to Kids from Wisconsin. Tim was a young teacher full of passion who set high standards and cared deeply about each member of his ensemble. He inspired me to consider a career in music education, and he showed me what a great teacher looks like. Without his mentorship, I wouldn't be where I am today. Now all of us have the joy and responsibility of being someone else's "Tim."

This is my final letter as President. In July, I step into the Past President role and turn over the reins to incoming President Phillip Swan. Special thanks to Past President Rebecca Winnie who has been a rock for our organization over the past six years. Thanks also to Kevin Kriegel who has done exceptional work as editor of The Voice of WCDA these past several years.

I hope to see you all at Refresh and NextDirection this summer. Our WCDA Summer Conference that encompasses both events is such a fun, relaxed, and educational time for everyone involved. If you've attended in the past, you know how special these events are, and if you haven't attended, I strongly encourage you to check them out!

It has been a joy and an honor to serve as your president. It has also been challenging, at times exhausting, exciting, frustrating, and rewarding. I'm proud of the way our organization persevered through Covid, and I'm excited for the future of WCDA. If you ever have the chance to serve WCDA in a leadership role, I encourage you to say yes. We're all incredibly busy, but WCDA is a terrific organization full of amazing people, and serving in a leadership role is a fulfilling way to give back to our organization, our profession, and all of the "Tim"s out there who are changing lives around our state!





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Letter from President-Elect

Phillip Swan, WCDA President-Elect

As we take time to celebrate our teachers in this issue of *The Voice*, there are so many teachers that I could personally highlight and thank. Mentors like Bill and Carolyn Brown (my high school band and choir directors), Russ Pesola (college band director), Larry Fleming and Dick Edstrom (college choir directors), Prentice Loftin (my masters degree mentor), and Jo-Michael Scheibe (my doctoral degree mentor). They each contributed significantly to the musician I am today. But, an inconspicuous teacher who made an enormous impact on my musical career was my college sight singing teacher, Roy Stahl. He was tough and terrifying, always expecting accuracy and quality. He instilled in me the importance of accurate pitch and impeccable rhythm. Focused listening skills and an ability to replicate what I heard was paramount. He wouldn't settle for "close" and neither would I.

At the end of my Freshman year, I stepped forward to take my final exam. I was prepared and confident, but also terrified. I nervously entered the room but ultimately nailed my final exam. At the end, Mr. Stahl had a concerned look on his face and asked me why I wasn't in choir. I quickly explained that saxophone was my major instrument and therefore, I was in band. He paused and again asked the same question. I curiously looked at him and started to reiterate my response, but he stopped me and said, "You're not hearing my question." I again looked at him a little perplexed and then finally had a lightbulb moment. Ah hah! He saw potential. He wouldn't let me leave his office until I promised to audition for choir the next fall. There's much more to the story, but the most important thing I took away from that encounter is that this rough and tough teacher that I deeply respected, saw something in me that I couldn't see. He pushed me to be my best. He believed in me! This was an important moment that I embraced and have attempted to replicate throughout my teaching career . . . seeing potential in my students, highlighting and nurturing those hidden talents, and truly BELIEVING in them! We are all blessed to have important mentors. I cherish each of mine and today, particularly, celebrate Roy Stahl!





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Spring Smiles

Eva Stokes, Northeast District Representative

When I think of all the choral directors I have had the privilege of working with, there are so many things that they instilled in me or gave me the opportunity to experience. Everything from repertoire selection to international tours. However, one thing that has always been a common thread is the need to express the human experience. During this time of year, I always need a little extra positivity to make it through the rest of the school year. As we celebrate teachers this spring, I decided I wanted to honor all the directors that remind us to be human and smile. Here are some stories, celebrations, and pictures from WCDA members that I hope make you smile!

"I've got a student who has taken an interest in accents. He has now learned probably 30+ different voices or impressions. When we did Mary Poppins this past fall, he seemed excited for the challenge of getting to speak in a German Accent (which for some reason always turned Scottish...), But you never know what interests you may inspire through the work we do and the opportunities we offer to our students." (Abby Bordak-Raaflaub)

"A first grader came into my classroom, literally glowing from the inside, and said, 'Mrs. Klotz, guess what?!?! I found my singing voice!! It was in my HEART!'" (Michelle Klotz)

"I had a 6th grade choir student ask "Why do we always sing the same songs?" And I realized I needed to teach the word "rehearsal". It ends up being a game: what can we improve next?" (Marcy Russell)

"I don't know about you, but as a teacher, all it takes is a snowflake and any number above 40 degrees on my weather app to put a smile of anticipation on my face for a whole week. You know where I'm going with this. This time was different, though, because it also had the potential to affect opening night of our production of Newsies and the hard work of 100 kids in the cast, crew, and orchestra. This was one snow day none of us wanted. The day before the storm arrived, we went into our final dress rehearsal with the knowledge that school and all after-school activities would be canceled the next day. The kids had heard the same message but somehow I don't think they understood that it would also apply to them. When the dress rehearsal ended, everyone sat on stage for some final notes and we delivered the bad news with aching hearts. It was initially met with silence and tears, and in a time where social media is filled with the brilliance of armchair school administrators lambasting district officials for the next to impossible task of predicting the weather (and almost everything else under the sun), I wasn't sure what to expect in response. And then a few hands went in the air. The one that stuck out to me was a freshman boy who, with teary eyes, reminded all of us to be thankful for what we have. He had just moved in from another school that didn't have opportunities like this for students, and he was just so grateful to participate. After that, the hands continued to go into the air, and each brought with it words of encouragement, gratitude, and care for one another. We opened the show the day after the storm, and it was a great run. But as choral directors all know, it was the amazing sense of community that made it a truly fulfilling experience." (Matt Wanner)

"The biggest thing making me smile over the past couple of months has been lessons with my tenors and basses. On the first day, I had about 3 out of 21 consistently matching. They were a serious group of droners. I was very scared as a new teacher that I wouldn't be able to help them. We've been doing lessons for solo and ensemble and everyone in class is learning a song. The massive amount of growth they've had while working on their solos has been a huge celebration! I see their joy as they hear and feel themselves getting it." (Anonymous)

"So, there's a play going on in our black box theater. In the green room for that space are some of the costumes and we also use it as a practice room during solo & ensemble season. Two choir students' curiosity got the best of them when they found what they thought were prop handcuffs. Nope. Then they had to figure out how to find our school resource officer to unlock them from each other, without me finding out, they needed to find the school resource officer to unlock them from each other! I posted a photo on the choir door of them, smiling, handcuffed to one another. It says 'choir. You can check out anytime you like, but you can never leave.' Oh, and by the way, these were senior, co-presidents of Model UN, not freshman tenors..." (Paul Gregg)

"As I was putting together my pops concert for KHS choirs, I was drawn to the song "World's Smallest Violin." I couldn't find any existing arrangements. But, my sister arranges stuff, so I asked her to do one. I said nothing about what I wanted except it should be SATB. (I had really thought there was one section that would sound hilarious on kazoo, but I didn't tell her that.) She said she'd listen to it and get back to me. After about 2-3 days she called and said "how do you feel about kazoos?!?! That's when our sister-brain share was solidified... Anyway, I wasn't sure how my choir of mostly juniors and seniors in high school would feel about kazoos...so I asked them. They were soooo pumped! They wanted to know if they could "bedazzle them" for the concert. As we've rehearsed the song, they've now even added "kazoo choreography"!!! The pure joy, silliness, and fun that I've seen these teens have is worth every second of kazoo sound!" (Joy Paffenroth)





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Spring Smiles (cont.)

"We had a day-long celebration of our accompanist, Mrs. Fraleigh. Cake, certificates, a huge card, flowers, and a gift certificate to a spa. We call it Fray Day, a play on her name!" (Jonathan Brooks)

"At District Solo and Ensemble, my tenor and bass triple trio had a few surprises up their sleeves. They were singing an arrangement of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" and as the basses sang the words "Hot Dogs" they pulled actual hot dogs out of their pockets and held them up similar to how Simba is held in the Lion King. On the last beat of the song they took a bite out of the hot dogs. Leaving the room I heard one of them say "Best \$6 I've ever spent." (Olivia Haven)

"At our first rehearsal of the after-school choir, one of the 5th grade students forgot to stay, so her mom brought her back, visibly upset and embarrassed. To add to her stress, her diabetes monitor sounded an alarm that she was low. I discreetly asked the mother if it would be ok to share with the students what the alarm was for (she stayed after bringing her daughter back) and she said it would be fine. After explaining the alarm, the boy next to her said that his dad has diabetes, so he's comfortable with it. A 6th grade girl added, "you never have to worry about us, choir is family." This was such a great first rehearsal, for all of us!" (Karrie Been)

"While subbing in another class one morning, a student of mine was singing the Burger King Whopper jingle, so naturally, I turned it into a warm up that day in choir. The students are obsessed with it and we have fun singing it a bunch of different ways. To add complete chaos, I'll often end the warm up by quickly playing the McDonald's jingle." (Mike Jones)

To all those who shared moments from this spring that made you smile, thank you! Thank you for seeing the positivity in our daily work, celebrating silliness, appreciating the connections that music brings us and making us smile!



Ten Wisconsin students perform with the ACDA National Honors Choirs in February in Cincinnati.



PJ Uhazie, Lori Wildeman and their students had a great time at the National ACDA Conference!



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An Abundance of Gratitude

Rachel Zarzyski, Middle-Level R&R Chair

Where does a teacher even begin when it comes to expressing their gratitude for their most influential teachers? To be honest, the thought is overwhelming to me. I'd like to think that most teachers go into the field of education because of the influence a teacher once had on them.

I remember sitting in my middle school choir room in sixth grade when I decided I wanted to be a choir teacher when I grew up. My middle school choir teacher created a safe, welcoming space that encouraged community, vulnerability, and creativity amongst everyone in the classroom. It was at that moment in middle school that I knew I wanted to help others feel the same way I did in the classroom.

As someone who found a lot of success both academically and socially in the music classroom, I really struggled when it came to other subjects (science and math - I'm lookin' at you!). I had to spend a lot of time outside of the classroom studying and reviewing information when it came to science specifically. In eighth grade, my science teacher would spend everyday after school tutoring whoever was interested in being there. It didn't matter what day of the week it was - his room was packed! (I think it helped that he provided snacks, haha!) Thinking back on it now, he was so patient with all of us. He answered question after question and spent so much time explaining concepts in new ways until we understood them. I am very appreciative of not only the time, but also the energy he spent working with his students, myself included.

I know that everyone's story is different when it comes to the influence their teachers had on them. Some are similar to mine while others happened when they were much younger in elementary school or older whether it was high school or college. The bottom line is that as teachers we have the opportunity to make a lasting, profound impact on our students' lives, and *that* is the point, isn't it?





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What is a Legacy?

Lyrice Daentl, Early Career & Collegiate Liaison



As long as I can remember, I always knew I wanted to be a music teacher. Well, maybe except for those two weeks in first grade where I wanted to be a geologist.

From an early age, the comment “*How funny that your name is Lyrice and you are a **music** teacher!?*” I found myself always laughing that observation off with a shrug. “*Guess it was fate. I had to live up to my name.*” I would reply back with a smile and laugh. But the thing is, it wasn’t

fate. I wasn’t honoring and living up to the name I was given at birth - instead, I found myself honoring my past music teachers - The teachers that taught me what it means to be a music educator.

In the first grade, I started piano lessons with the first teacher of many who left a huge impact on my life, Amos. Amos was the kind of teacher we all strive to be - kind, funny, full of high expectations, and someone who had an answer for any question, regardless of the topic. He always cared about what was going on in my life and formed connections with each one of his students. Occasionally, we would spend almost an entire lesson talking about the importance of Beethoven, Chopin, music theory, fugues, Hanon, blues, or honestly anything that we could possibly think of. He would make me practice scales along with my music theory, checking off the keys that I had memorized and perfected. At the time, I didn’t appreciate any of this. “*Ugh, not another conversation about the importance of the circle of fifths.*” or “*Why do I even need to practice scales anyway?*” I would think to myself as Amos would share his thoughts on key signatures and the importance they had in each piece we worked on.

It wasn’t until I started college, I finally understood.

Amos taught me the importance of knowing your craft, from the inside out. I found myself falling in love with music theory and aural skills during my late high school and undergraduate years. While in college, I would give Amos a call thanking him for everything he taught me during those twelve years of piano lessons. He would laugh, and yet again, we’d find ourselves in a deep conversation on the weird tactics that Schumann used to “strengthen” his fingers for piano. “*Ah, Amos. How I missed this.*” I would admit under my breath, finally understanding the impact he left with me as a young musician.

Years went by, and I contacted Amos less and less. Eventually, I graduated from college and scored my first teaching job - Choir at DeForest Area High School - and before I even realized it, I was giving Amos a call to tell him all about it. He lived in the Madison area, and I couldn’t wait to invite him to my classroom to meet my students and play for them. It was the late spring of 2020, the height of COVID-19, and I wasn’t able to visit him. Over the phone he mentioned how proud he was of me and invited me over for supper as soon as the pandemic was clearing up. I looked forward to this day, and in the meantime, I started planning for my first year of teaching (virtually, might I add). I was starting to plan 4-hand piano pieces such as *Moon Goddess* by Jocelyn Hagen and think of other ways to have Amos work with my students before I received **the** text. “*Hey Lyrice, it’s Amos’s wife. Give me a call when you can.*”

And just like that, he was gone.

At first, I was mad. He never got to meet my students or see my classroom and auditorium. He wouldn’t have the chance to play on our beautiful concert grand or talk to my students about the importance of the circle of fifths. And then I was mad at myself. “*I should have texted and called more. I wish I had more time.*” The idea that my students wouldn’t be able to meet such an influential teacher in my life brought me to tears. After everything he did for me, my students won’t even be able to meet him.

And then I remembered. The teacher that Amos was for me, is the teacher I’ve been this whole time. The teacher that talked about key signatures, time signatures, and the importance of memorizing the circle of fifths with a huge smile and passion. The teacher that would share bits of random music facts that I knew would blow my students away. The teacher that ... *occasionally*... got side-tracked during class and would find herself talking about anything under the sun because forming strong connections and relationships through music **was** Amos.

Amos has been gone for over two years, but his legacy lives on in my classroom.



Circa December 2012 - December Piano Recital in Dodgeville, WI





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A Life in Music

Neil Bubke, WCDA Music in Worship R & R Chair

Most of us who've chosen a life on the podium can quickly point to a mentor who opened our eyes, ears, and hearts to the wonder of music. In my forty years of music making, I've had the privilege of working with virtuosic conductors, pianists, and singers. Few have impacted me as deeply as my middle school music teacher, Dixie Brueck. She didn't just shape phrases, she shaped lives.

Mrs. Brueck served as the general music teacher, the choir director, and the band director for Galva-Holstein Middle School in northwest Iowa. She managed her taxing class schedule with creativity, optimism, and tenderness. Long before it was in vogue, Mrs. Brueck designed a general music class that connected sound to history. I remember her lessons on the wreck of the Edmond Fitzgerald, 17th century line dancing, Menotti opera, and Vietnam protest songs. In choir, she exposed us to classical rep, contemporary rep, and everything in between. In band, she introduced us to Swearingen and Sousa, while patiently training our clumsy adolescent bodies to march as one. How could someone be so capable in so many musical styles?

Like many influential teachers, Mrs. Brueck created opportunities. She taught countless extra lessons before and after school to prepare students for honor bands, honor choirs, and solo contests, but that was just the beginning. Mrs. Brueck connected her students to the community, arranging for her young musicians to perform at holiday gatherings, Lion's Club meetings, local churches, county fairs, weddings, funerals, and garden parties. If students struggled to find transportation to these events, Mrs. Brueck drove them herself. If they couldn't afford an event, Mrs. Brueck paid the fee.

We all know the powerful bonds music can form. Mrs. Brueck used that power to build friendships. When one of her bookish guitar students had learned enough chords, Mrs. Brueck paired him up with a couple of athletes who played drums and keyboard. Their rendition of Del Shannon's "Runaway" stole the show at the spring pops concert. It also bridged a gap between one nerd and two jocks.

Mrs. Brueck stood by her students when they failed. She taught them that disappointment is natural, but that wallowing is a waste of time. One of her trumpet students got "dry mouth" and botched his memorized solo at the 1989 Morningside College spring solo/ensemble contest. Realizing that he suffered from severe stage fright, Mrs. Brueck moved his weekly trumpet lessons to the gymnasium stage. Teacher and student focused not only on the rudiments of music, but on the psychology of *sharing musical treasures*. *What a difference there is between performing and sharing.*

Mrs. Brueck guided her most gifted students to their musical futures. When she learned that one of her pupils had good hands for piano, she implored his parent to get a keyboard in their home. A few years later, she drove this young pianist to Sioux Falls, South Dakota to hear one of her former students give a collegiate senior piano recital. Fully inspired, the young pianist returned to northwest Iowa determined to play the same Haydn concerto. More importantly, he returned with a deep desire to study music in college. How life changing that exposure to collegiate music making was!

Mrs. Brueck loved her students as if she were their mother. One of her seventh grade boys was ostracized and harassed. For an entire year, the male classmates taunted him in the hallways, on the playground, in the lunch room, and in the locker room. There was only one place where the student felt protected and accepted--Mrs. Brueck's music room. She created a sanctuary, and in doing so, saved a young man's life.

Mrs. Brueck influenced generations of musicians in ways she will never fully know. On behalf of all of them, I say THANK YOU. May all of us who have chosen a life in music approach our craft with similar diligence, creativity, and excellence. May we share with our students the kind of compassion, gentleness, and love that Mrs. Brueck gave to me--a most grateful guitar player, trumpet player, piano player, and survivor.





VOICE of WCDA

Thank You for the Music

Schuyler Pietz, Central District Representative

We have all had those special teachers in our lives that helped shape us into who we are today. They often find greatness in us before we can even see it in ourselves. I remember my high school and college choir teachers repeatedly telling me that I was going to be a music teacher someday. I laughed and denied it, thinking music would be something fun I did on the side, but not that it would be my career. I am incredibly grateful that they proved me wrong!

Lisa Utecht from Berlin shared... “My director during my junior and senior year, James Vine, inspired me to become a choral director because I saw how much he loved his job and how connected he was with his students. I just remember thinking ‘how cool is it that you get to do something you love every single day’... and I do!!”

I completely agree. How many people get to share their passion with others every day (and get paid for it)? And the inspiration goes both ways. In challenging our students, they also challenge us to be better teachers. That sharing of musical passion extends beyond the classroom into the extraordinary choral community we have built in Wisconsin. I am continually amazed by the remarkable things happening across our state. We have such a rich musical tradition here and you make that possible.

Sometimes as music teachers we are forgotten when accolades are given out, so I wanted to take a moment to celebrate all of you.

Thank you for...

- The early mornings and late nights you have spent in extra rehearsals
- The lunch and prep hours when you open up your room so students have a positive, safe space to go
- The hours spent listening to countless pieces trying to choose repertoire that will best fit your students/ensembles
- The thousands of steps you put in every day (especially on concert days or at Solo and Ensemble!)
- The energy you have spent lugging risers and acoustical shells across stages to get your performing space concert-ready
- The different hats you wear each day- teacher, parent, counselor, cheerleader, wrangler, entertainer, event planner, advocate, and many more
- The diligent research you have done on song backgrounds so you can have deeper discussions with your students about the meaning of the pieces they are singing
- The thought and effort put into writing concert program notes to help the audience get a better understanding of the pieces as well
- The joy of music you bring to your community through concerts and outreach tours
- The new ideas and repertoire you openly share with your music colleagues across the state
- The students you have taken under your wing and helped find their voice
- All the other things you do each and every day to provide meaningful, life-changing musical experiences for your students

I will conclude my expression of gratitude to all of you with lyrics from one of my favorite ABBA songs (yes, they are one of my guilty musical pleasures)...

Thank you for the music, the songs I'm singing
Thanks for all the joy they're bringing
Who can live without it? I ask in all honesty
What would life be?
Without a song or a dance, what are we?
So I say thank you for the music
For giving it to me



Thank YOU for the music. ♥

Central WCDA Happenings:

Lisa Utecht (Berlin)- We had two of our seniors chosen to participate in the ACDA National Honors Choirs held in Cincinnati at the end of February! Our tenor, Ethan Brunke, was the only person from Wisconsin in the SATB choir and our soprano, Anna Schumacher, was one of only 3 in the SSAA choir. We are extremely proud of those two and the performances were simply amazing!!



VOICE of WCDA

Choosing a Music School

By Derek Machan, Choral Director
Waterford High School
NextDirection Choir



It seems rather bizarre that some of the most important decisions we have to make in life must be made at such an early age. And choosing where to go to school is certainly a big one! It ranks up there with choosing a field of study, and subsequently a career. In my years as a music teacher, I have talked with many high school students who were looking for a music school and have heard many reasons for choosing a particular school. Some are pertinent while others are preposterous (ie: great sports teams, cool guys)!

Seriously, anyone who has decided that music is to be their chosen field must next decide which school to attend. Today there are many fine music programs from which to choose, many right here in Wisconsin! Some programs are comprehensive while others concentrate on certain areas such as performance, sacred music, music education, etc. Of course, your chosen concentration will play a large part in the selection process. Before you look at music specifics, however, there are some general considerations that must be addressed first.

That ALL-Important Decision: Choosing a Music School

THINK ABOUT IT

- 1. Geography:** Is it important to stay in a specific region of the country? If so, this will greatly narrow the scope of consideration; if not, the field is still wide open. Consider the time and cost of travel between school and home. If you are content to go home only for important holidays and between terms, you may not be restricted by geography, but others may need to be closer to family.
- 2. Cost:** For most people this is an important factor and may be the most restrictive aspect in choosing a school. Generally speaking, state assisted institutions cost less than private schools. However, don't rule out the more costly schools since many of these are able to provide financial aid packages consisting of scholarships, loan and work-study which could make them more accessible.
- 3. Size:** Some institutions are huge, with perhaps in excess of 40,000 students, while others are small, with maybe a few hundred students enrolled in all majors. It is important that you feel comfortable with the size of the institution. While size and quality are not synonymous, there are some things that are not possible in one or the other. For instance, if you are looking for a large marching band program, it will be unlikely that a small college would have it. If you want an intimate setting, then a huge university most likely cannot give that to you.
- 4. Accreditation:** It is strongly advisable to consider institutions that are accredited academically by the appropriate accrediting agencies which includes accreditation in music. You can be assured that the music program meets at least a minimum standard.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Once these concerns have been addressed, you can start drawing up a list of potential schools. Musical considerations are of the utmost importance. The following are some of the considerations which must be made, but may not be all for everyone.

- A. Concentration:** All schools do not offer degrees in all concentrations. Investigate to see which schools offer your desired degree and concentration. If a particular program is not listed, contact the school for that information or surf the web. When in doubt, contact the school and ask!
- B. Size:** Although we considered size above, the size of the music program may not necessarily be reflected in the size of the overall institution. You may find a small music program in a large university and vice versa. If you prefer an intimate setting, you may give up some opportunities which may be available in the large setting. Some music programs enroll fewer than one hundred majors while others enroll many hundreds. Of course, there are many schools between these extremes. You should investigate class sizes, ensembles available, and applied opportunities. Determine what you would be comfortable with in terms of size, but keep an open mind until all other considerations have been made.
- C. Faculty:** In some areas of music the choice of a school may boil down to the applied teacher, or the choral director, or some other specific attraction. For performance majors, this is obviously important; but knowing the faculty may be just as important for other concentrations as well. Some schools have applied lessons taught by a faculty member while some depend heavily on graduate assistants to teach undergrads. Ask questions about the faculty members. Know what you are getting.
- D. Facilities:** It is important that a school has adequate facilities to aid the learning environment regardless of concentration. This may mean proper practice rooms, music library, technology lab, to mention only a few. Catalogs and web pages may provide some information in this area, at least enough to decide whether or not to put a school on your final list.
- E. Reputation:** Most schools have some kind of track record which is known in the profession. Talk with people who know the industry. This may include your guidance counselor, your high school music teacher, and professionals in the area.

LOOK AND LEARN

When you have drawn up your short list of schools, plan visits to each to learn more about it. You wouldn't think of buying a pair of shoes without trying them on; a trip to a potential school is no less important and is well worth the effort and expenses. This will give you an opportunity to meet the faculty and sit in on classes or lessons. You should also plan such trips so as to be able to hear performances by appropriate ensembles. The ensembles form a window into the department.

The musical health of a music program will be indicated by the performance of its ensembles. Talk with a faculty advisor about your intended program. You may choose to visit before you schedule an audition, but such visits may also be incorporated with an audition visit. Some visits may begin before your senior year if you have chosen your field by then.

10 Reasons NOT to Choose a Music School

- 1. My friend is going there.
- 2. Everyone in my family has attended that school for years.
- 3. I will be able to go home on weekends and see my significant other.
- 4. They have the coolest guys/girls there.
- 5. I *heard* they have a good music department.
- 6. My math teacher said I should go there.
- 7. I heard it's easy to graduate from there.
- 8. My high school music director went there.
- 9. It has the lowest tuition around.
- 10. They have a great sports team.

Taking the time to thoroughly consider where you will attend school is of the utmost importance. It is time well spent and could save you many headaches in the future. It will also ensure that you get the best music education that you can possibly get. You deserve it!



VOICE of WCDA

Treble Choir High Five

Genevieve Michels, Treble Clef R&R Chair

1. Vivos Voco

Joan Szymko

SSAA (div.), piano and handbells

Santa Barbara Music Publishing: SBMP 615

I may not be able to tell you all of the titles of songs I performed earlier in my life, but I can describe the feelings I experienced when singing them. “Vivos Voco” left a mark on me as a singer, and it was one of the most powerful pieces I have ever performed. It opened my eyes to the power that treble ensembles can produce. The repeated mantra “all will be well” combined with the cluster chords, both from the choir and handbells, fills the performance space and creates a feeling that is absolutely electric. It made me feel like I was putting something good into the world. Though I am not able to perform it with my high school students due to the level of difficulty, I wanted to share it as ear candy and as a reminder that all types of choirs can bring power, strength, and emotional depth to our art.

<https://sbmp.com/SR2.php?CatalogNumber=615>

https://youtu.be/B0BufUTF_TY

2. Still I Rise

Rosephayne Powell

SSAA, piano

Gentry Publications: 08739824

This chestnut choral piece will inspire your students while also providing a much needed emotional outlet. The text was inspired by the poem “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou, introducing students to an important poet laureate. The piece is in the gospel style and has solo opportunities as well as an option to add bass guitar and drums. The emotional outlet comes from singing the text that acknowledges and celebrates vulnerability. The final section of the song builds as sections layer on top of one another until the climactic final refrain and ending phrase “Yes, still I rise!”. This is a text that every adolescent should sing!

<https://www.jwpepper.com/Still-I-Rise/3304157.item#.ZAEagezMKqV>

<https://youtu.be/8mf9IMcSbxQ>

3. Cauldron Dance (opera chorus from *Macbeth*)

Giuseppe Verdi / ed. Ryan Kelly

SSA, piano

Boosey and Hawkes: M051483846

This piece provides an excellent introduction to opera choruses. Students enjoy the drama while also being challenged with style and singing Italian. Depending on the arrangement, you can use high school instrumentalists to form a small orchestra for accompaniment. It is a moderate difficulty, so you may be able to stretch your non-auditioned treble group to perform this! It gave my students the opportunity to sing in a less common genre, and they really enjoyed it.

<https://www.jwpepper.com/Cauldron-Dance/10735000.item#.ZAEreuzMKqU>

[Giuseppe Verdi -- Macbeth - Che faceste? dite su!](#)

4. Now I Become Myself

Gwyneth Walker

SSAA, piano

E.C. Schirmer Music Co.: 5409

I have experienced this song on both sides of the podium. As a singer, I remember greatly enjoying the drastic changes that represent the scurrying of life. As a teacher and conductor, I loved seeing my students react the first time we sang the initial forte chords on the text “now I become myself”. My students also connected with the theme of the song: experiencing periods of uncertainty and self-doubt before finding your way and owning your true self. The music celebrates this process and is exclamatory as it implies how much potential and beauty there is in this moment! It is a challenging piece but the payoff is excellent!

<https://www.jwpepper.com/Now-I-Become-Myself/3270667.item#.ZAEv9-zMKqU>

<https://youtu.be/Kg6L3EirrTs>

5. Heart We Will Forget Him

Laura Farnell

SSA, piano

Hal Leonard: 08745125

This is one of a handful of pieces that I save for a particular time in the year with my non-auditioned choirs. Once we have reached the third quarter, I feel the opportunity to introduce something with more emotional depth and musical challenge. The text is by Emily Dickinson and is relatable to anyone who has experienced unrequited love. The ranges for each of the 3 parts are very comfortable for younger treble singers. I have found that programming a song like this in the middle of the year eliminates the response of “it’s slow” or “boring”. They are able to see and appreciate the beauty in it!

<https://www.halleonard.com/product/8745125/heart-we-will-forget-him>

<https://youtu.be/johhKyyL550>



VOICE of WCDA

Bass Clef High Five

Shannon Gravelle - R&R Chair for Bass Clef

In celebration of our teachers, I want to share a high five that came to me through a variety of unexpected teachers. Enjoy!

1. Oh Captain! My Captain

John Leavitt

TTBB with piano

Hal Leonard Corporation: 08740030

I first heard this piece in high school at the Dorian Choral Festival. I was swept away by the story, especially being familiar with the “Dead Poets Society” movie. Full of energy, great solos, and an excellent reason to be intentional about diction. There are a lot of great recordings out there, but here is one:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDhaGwKMosw>

<https://www.jwpepper.com/1899848.item>

2. Cover Me with the Night

Andrea Ramsey

TTB with piano and Djembe

Alliance Music Publications, Inc.: AMP0766

Also available in SSA and SATB voicings, this piece is quite accessible. Good piece to work on diphthongs and transitioning between different articulations. I programmed this for an honors choir and was not sure how it would go over– but it went over well!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W72gBDdwwEY>

<https://www.jwpepper.com/Cover-Me-with-the-Night/10073119.item>

3. The Pasture from *Frostiana*

Randall Thompson

TBB with piano

E.C. Schirmer: 2181

It’s oft-done for a reason; sensitive singing, not about ships or drinking or a lass. The beautiful thing about this text is that it does not give you context. The relationship can truly be any that has meaning to the singer.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-ZbkThCuN4>

<https://www.jwpepper.com/The-Pasture/343350.item>

4. The Steady Light

Reginald Unterseher

TTBB a cappella

<https://reginaldunterseher.com/the-steady-ligh/>

One of my students shared this piece with me. It is on his bucket list to sing some day. And now I share it with you. What a beautiful, encouraging piece.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTZZ0OVZbB4&t=1s>

<https://reginaldunterseher.com/the-steady-ligh/>

5. The Curse

Braeden Ayres

TB with piano

Musicspoke

Braeden Ayres writes music that is really quite engaging. I’m looking for a reason to program this. A slow opening that has a pop-feel in 10/8 (and some 6/4) for the rest of it? Yes, please.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqc3dcQl69o&t=32s>

<https://www.jwpepper.com/The-Curse/11123769.item>



VOICE of WCDA

Children Community and Youth High Five

Rachel Maki- R&R Chair for Children, Community and Youth

This article was a fun memory lane journey for me and one I completely enjoyed writing about. I tried to walk through some of my most influential teachers that brought me to where I am today, while also keeping in mind the voicing and meeting different needs for ensembles. Enjoy!

1. Love is a Rain of Diamonds

Gwyneth W. Walker

SSA with piano

E.C. Schirmer Music Co.: 5023

Over 15 years later, I still vividly remember singing this song as a senior in High School at the First Annual Michigan Music Conference, High School State Honors Choir in 2006. Nina R. Scott was the conductor of the SSA ensemble and she was FULL of life and passion. Coming from a small town in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, singing under her direction was a completely different experience due to her positive and feminine spirit. This song, Love is a rain of Diamonds, is a fun, luscious challenge for a more advanced treble ensemble. It is playful with the "La la la" moments with beautiful and flirty melodic lines. The cadences have a fullness and satisfaction that is a joy to sing and feel. It is a timeless song that will last the years to come. Recording link:

[Love is a Rain of Diamonds \(Western HS Women's & Treble Choir, 2017 District MPA\)](https://www.jwpepper.com/Love-Is-a-Rain-of-Diamonds/3010642.item#.Y_gnnXbMLIU)

https://www.jwpepper.com/Love-Is-a-Rain-of-Diamonds/3010642.item#.Y_gnnXbMLIU

2. I am the Gentle Light

Paul Mealor

SA with piano (optional guitar)

Novello & Company Limited: 10365812

I truly have a crazy story on how I fell upon Westminster Choir College, one where I was enrolled in another college and the guest professor, James Jordan, had different plans for me. I am forever grateful for how he changed my life and the people he introduced to me during my time at Westminster. Paul Mealor is one of those people. He has a way with his music that is honest and pure. I am the Gentle Light, is a sweet song for younger voices, could be maybe a smaller group, but also have good vocal technique. There is a lightness with the melodic line and innocence that creates depth in its simplicity. When I did this song, I adjusted the tempo to help with phrasing and the melodic line for the singers..

[PAUL MEALOR I AM THE GENTLE LIGHT](https://www.jwpepper.com/I-am-the-Gentle-Light/10365812.item#.Y_bkXbMLIV)

https://www.jwpepper.com/I-am-the-Gentle-Light/10365812.item#.Y_bkXbMLIV

3. El Vito

Emily Crocker

Two part with optional Descant and available Three part mixed

Hal Leonard Corporation: 08552162

This is a very fun and lively song with flair and added drama if you wish you add hand movements! I worked with the Princeton Girl Choir under the direction of Lynnel Jenkins for a season and had a blast learning from her and gaining experience with children's choirs. Again, a life changing experience that led me to where I am now. This song, written by the founder of Milwaukee Children's Choir (and who knew I would later join the staff of MCC!) is both a crowd pleaser and something middle school and older singers will enjoy. With Spanish flair, playfulness, and the need for artistic expression and phrasing, it will stay in my memory for years to come. I did take the tempo slightly faster for breath support and help with the energy than this recording-

[El Vito \(3-Part Mixed Choir\) - Arranged by Emily Crocker](#)

4. Stars I Shall Find

Seth Houston

SA or TB, also available SATB

Santa Barbara Music Publishing: SBMP1065

Ah, the emotion in me for this song. This song feeds the soul and was programmed during my second season with Milwaukee Children's Choir. It was a personally difficult time in my life and this song gave me the strength and hope for a better tomorrow when working on it with my singers. Stars I Shall Find has many voicing options with a stillness and intention in the score by the composer for the singers. The text is beautiful, and both middle school and high school singers will feel and understand the meaning of the text. A great piece to talk with the singers about hard times, how to handle them, options and looking ahead to find peace. Recordings are available in the link. Tempo could be adjusted slower for deeper impact- not a song to rush.

https://www.jwpepper.com/Stars-I-Shall-Find/10294922.item#.Y_j3QnbMLIU

5. Bhombela

Will Skaff

Two Part with Rhythm Sticks

Hal Leonard: 00286469

The pandemic, what to do?! Ensembles are smaller, life is hard. This song, Bhombela, was a great find. Satisfying two part harmony, fun, movement, rhythm sticks- it helped our singers feel a little more normal. This South African children's stick game was a great rebuilding song for both singers musical skills but also social skills with each other. As a director, we need fun too and it was a joy to plan, choreograph, and perform.

["Bhombela" - MCC Lyric Chorale](https://www.halleonard.com/product/286469/bhombela)

<https://www.halleonard.com/product/286469/bhombela>



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2023 Winter Conference: Invitation

On January 13-14, 2023, we met in Appleton, Wisconsin for the Winter Conference held on Lawrence University's campus. Thanks to all who made this inspiring event possible. Please enjoy some of the pictures from this event. More photos can be enjoyed at:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1w2HYOitPTfg22cVolcnJj35t1h_CP_Cw





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2023 Winter Conference: Invitation (cont.)



WISCONSIN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION



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2023 Winter Conference: Invitation (cont.)



invitation

2023 WCDA Winter Conference
Appleton | January 13-14



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2023 WCDA Award Winners

THE STANLEY CUSTER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD:

THE STANLEY CUSTER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD was established in 1994, and renamed in honor of our unique benefactor and champion of choral music, Dr. G. Stanley Custer, in 1999. The award winner is to be an individual whose contributions to the organization are exemplary and go beyond the normal services provided for the operation of Wisconsin Choral Directors Association, Inc. The WCDA 2023 Stanley Custer Distinguished Service Award was awarded to **Jerry Hui**.



(pictured: Rebecca Winnie, Jerry Hui, Zack Durlam, Phillip Swan)

OUTSTANDING YOUNG CHORAL DIRECTOR AWARD:

The Outstanding Young Choral Director Award was established in 1993 and honors directors with ten or fewer years of experience. The WCDA 2023 Outstanding Young Choral Director Award was awarded to **Samuel Clemmons**.



(pictured: Rebecca Winnie, Samuel Clemmons, Zack Durlam, Phillip Swan)

OUTSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL DIRECTOR AWARD:

The OUTSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL DIRECTOR AWARD was established in 2020 and honors directors with a minimum of ten years of experience who exhibit characteristics of a master teacher of students within grades 9-12. The WCDA 2023 Outstanding High School Choral Director Award was awarded to **Matthew Wanner**.



(pictured: Rebecca Winnie, Zack Durlam, Matthew Wanner, Phillip Swan)





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2023 WCDA Award Winners (cont.)

MORRIS D. HAYES AWARD:

The **MORRIS D. HAYES AWARD** was established in 1985 and is named for one of the founders of WCDA, Morris D. Hayes, who was president of WCDA, NCACDA, and National ACDA. The award is reserved for people of outstanding merit. The award winner is to be a current or former resident of Wisconsin who has demonstrated a commitment to choral music whether through teaching, conducting, or service to the art, and who has made outstanding contributions to choral music in Wisconsin. The WCDA 2023 Morris D. Hayes Award was awarded to **Richard Johnson**.



(pictured: Rebecca Winnie, Richard Johnson, Zack Durlam, Phillip Swan)

WCDA Board Service Awards:

The Wisconsin Choral Directors Association is a group whose stated mission is to foster musical excellence within an inclusive singing community through education, collaboration, and inspiration! We do this through a leadership board that volunteers countless hours in service of our choral community. As individuals complete their terms on the board, we take a moment to honor their service.

Heather Thorpe: Southwest District Representative , 2018-2022

Mike Jones: All-State Chair, 2020-2022

Matthew Wanner: Summer Conference Chair, 2019-2022

Eric Leih: Youth Area and Middle Level R&R Chair, 2016-2022

David Bowman: High School R&R Chair, 2020-2022

Toni Weijola: Children and Community Youth R&R Chair, 2019-2022

Herb Berendsen: Bass Clef R&R Chair, 2018-2022

Paul Gregg: Refresh! Chair, 2020-2022

Cody Miller: Central District Representative, 2020-2022

Dennis Gephart: Commercial and Contemporary R&R Chair, 2017-2022



(pictured: Rebecca Winnie, Zack Durlam, Heather Thorpe, Mike Jones, Matthew Wanner, Eric Leih, Phillip Swan)

Thank you for your service to WCDA and choral musicians throughout our state!



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WCDA Summer Conference: Refresh! and NextDirection

Mark your calendars for **July 18th- 20th** as our Refresh! portion of our 2023 Summer Conference is coming back to Carroll University in Waukesha, WI!

This year we are looking forward to:

- A casual and productive professional development experience rooted in collaboration, community, and connection with your colleagues from around Wisconsin (and beyond).
- Learning and growing from **Dr. Derrick Fox** from the University of Nebraska-Omaha, who will be the keynote speaker this summer.
- A ***NEW*** housing option that allows attendees to stay onsite during the Refresh! portion of the conference.
- A new opportunity to **reduce the cost of attendance**: any director that has a student register for the Next Direction portion of the conference will receive \$15.00 off of their registration for each student (up to 5 students)

Cost:

Early Bird Registration Regular Registration

\$85.00 (non-housing option) \$100.00 (non-housing option)

\$185.00 (housing option) \$200.00 (housing option)

2023 Summer Conference - Refresh!:

Early Bird registration is open **until March 30**. <https://www.wischoral.org/refresh>

We are currently seeking **summer conference presenters**. If you or a colleague might be interested in sharing your expertise at Refresh! this summer, please complete this very short **[NOMINATION FORM](#)** and let us know!

Any questions may be directed to refresh@wischoral.org.





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JULY 17-21, 2023

HIGH SCHOOL CONFERENCE

JULY 19-21, 2023

Registration Deadline:

March 30, 2023

First year teachers are welcome to join the Collegiate Conference!

Registration and more information:
www.wischoral.org/NextDirection



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Summer Conference

Carroll University, Waukesha WI

July 18th-20th, 2023

Relevant Topics Unity in Vision Practical Collaboration

Early Bird Registration Open Until 3/30

www.wischoral.org

Early Bird Registration:

\$85.00 No Housing Option

\$185.00 With Housing Option

Directors who register a student in the Next Direction program will receive \$15.00 off of their Refresh! registration (up to 5 students)