



June 2015

Summer Issue

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September 11-13, 2015
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November 14, 2015
Singing in Wisconsin

January 15-16, 2016
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Letter From the President

Matt Wanner

Dear WCDA Members,

My father worked for the church his whole adult life, and one of the lessons he taught me when I was young is the idea that “We are the church”. The church is not a building, it is not clergy, it is not “someone else”. The church is, in fact, all of the people, and it is only as strong as their commitment, dedication, and action. This axiom holds true as it applies to our organization. ALL of us are WCDA. While the health of WCDA is dependent upon the participation and contributions of the membership, individual choral directors are also stronger when they stand together. I was reminded of this recently collaborating with my colleagues in Muskego, and it has created a sense of optimism perfectly timed for a guy about to begin the second act of his career.



Matthew Wanner
WCDA President

When thinking about jumping in and becoming an active part of the WCDA community, it would be easy for us to consider our busy lives and utter the common refrain, “well, maybe next year...” (I say this all the time, especially in reference to the cleanliness of my desk at school), but maybe the time is now. Opportunities for collaboration, idea sharing, idea stealing, mutual support, and exchange have never been greater for WCDA.

- Our Facebook page remains a lively place where members share success stories, post job openings as well as solicit the greater wisdom of our community in their search for repertoire, teaching methods, and everything else under the sun.
- Look for an increasing presence of the WCDA Helping Hands initiative in the near future as we continue to connect members with clinicians and collegiate ACDA chapters who are excited to visit your school and lend a hand.
- Have you ever considered the opportunity for your choir to Skype with another conductor, composer, or even another choir? Better yet, what about inviting another choir into your “house” for an exchange?
- Beyond the ever expanding world of electronic connections, you will be happy to know that according to the latest reports, human beings still connect in person, too! WCDA events provide ample opportunity to learn, think, and dream with colleagues from diverse programs around the state. Make time to attend our January convention, our summer conference, Refresh!, or enjoy a great conversation while the kids are in rehearsal at Singing in Wisconsin!

That’s it. I am so cleaning my desk tomorrow.

Finally, as I prepare to switch lanes on the WCDA leadership freeway and assume the role of immediate past president, I wish to publicly thank all of the members of the board and especially my fellow officers from the last four years for their dedication and service to our organization. I have learned so much from all of you, and as the song goes, I have been changed for good. With that in mind, I enthusiastically look forward to serving alongside our new president, Joy Paffenroth and our new President-Elect, Stephen Sieck over the next two years. I’m sure we ain’t seen nothin’ yet.

Have a great summer, everyone,
Matt

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Letter From the Editor

Bryson Mortensen

Dear Friends,

The end of the year is always bittersweet. Its when our choirs sound their best and we finally have time to celebrate their achievements with them. At the same time, the end of the year is incredibly busy – sometimes with meaningful activities, sometimes not. Perhaps the most difficult part of the end of the year is saying goodbye.

Soon, our Jazz Singers will be singing at commencement, their final performance before the end of the year. Several will be moving on to bigger and better things, and some won’t be able to find time in their schedule next year. No matter the reason, this will be the last time we will perform together before we say goodbye.

I am terrible at goodbyes, I do my absolute best to avoid them every year. Unfortunately, this makes it incredibly difficult to enjoy those last few times that we have together, and we miss the opportunity to validate one another and to honor the role that we have played in each others’ lives.

This year I am making a new commitment:

1. I will savor each moment that I have with my students.
2. I will celebrate our accomplishments while still pushing us to new heights.
3. I will make sure that my students and colleagues know how much I appreciate them.

I want to take advantage of this opportunity to thank you, my WCDA community, for the support that you are in my life. It is an honor to see you each January and to visit with you throughout the year. I wish you all the best as you savor those final moments of the semester and prepare for the beginning of the next year.

All the best,

Bryson Mortensen



Bryson Mortensen

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Go For It!

By Chris Anderson, NE District Representative

As I work through this week in a bit of a fog, I reflect on our recent music trip to St. Louis. Four jam-packed days in two tour busses with 88 students, 20 chaperones, and a van of parents following us who just did not want to be left behind. I have the opportunity to provide an experience that my students will talk about as they remember their high school years. (I am quite sure they will not reminisce about their favorite math test.) Yes, these trips are the experiences of which memories are made and I get to be part them.

Since I believe that these types of activities create energy in my program and a spirit of community I will continue to offer trips for my students. I have learned a few things along the way that may be helpful to some of you wondering if it is worth the effort. It is a lot of work but the benefits, in my opinion, outweigh any of the hard work necessary to make the trip happen.

What type of musical activities should I include on my trip?

Performances! Opportunities are there for the taking. Most university or college professors would be happy to clinic your students. They may even include a tour of their campus. Another director working with your students, teaching fundamentals, reinforcing concepts you are working on with the choirs, and giving new insight into the music that you are rehearsing are the benefits of this performance option. Festivals are great but confirm that you will have choral adjudicators for your choral group and that the venue will be conducive for a choral performance. I have had good and bad experiences with festivals.

Impromptu performances are sometimes my favorite part of the trip. Wrapping the music up with the new environment is relevant and memorable; the National Anthem at the foot of the Twin Towers Memorial or at Arlington National Cemetery, a sacred canon at St. Paul’s Cathedral, or a Jazz standard sung for your supper some evening. Kids like to perform. This year we created a flash mob at the City Garden Sculpture Museum to “Uptown Funk” (clean version). Our dance team choreographed and rehearsed the band and choir. If you are planning on doing this get permission from your venue before you arrive. Many malls and seemingly obvious choices are hesitant to agree to have a performance such as this that may draw a crowd.

Attend a performance true to the culture of the place you are travelling such as a Riverboat dinner cruise that includes ragtime banjo and piano music. If you are in New Orleans experience jazz, when in Branson go to a show, if you are in New York hit up a Broadway production. Your tour planner should be able to make suggestion.

What other activities should I include?

Find activities that are unique to the area. I love museums but places where the students can experience life together in an active way is wonderful. I love tired teenagers! Amusement parks, river cruises, tours of all sorts, comedy sports, playgrounds, monuments, or a morning of community service are just a few examples.

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Chris Anderson

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How should I raise money for my trip?

My students each have their own personal account starting in 6th grade. This account is added to every time they earn money through a student fundraiser and follows them through high school. It is managed by a parent accountant which is important. Our Music Boosters supplement through raffles, chili suppers with profits matched by a financial institution, crazy bowls, parking cars, pancake and porky breakfasts, etc.

What is the time frame in planning a trip?

A two year window works for most families. My families work hard for every dollar and they need time to put money away for a trip. My philosophy is to travel with as close to my entire choir as possible. If the purpose is to create community it doesn't seem right to travel without some of my students. A number of my students had never left the state of Wisconsin until our trip to St. Louis. (There were cheers when we crossed the Illinois border!)

Two years out:

- *Contact a tour company two years prior to a trip year to get estimated cost per student. (Always plan more than that original amount.)
- *Announce your destination at the end of the school year.
- *Begin fundraising.

Trip year:

- *In the Fall of a trip year send out a sample itinerary and collect a simple contract with a non-refundable deposit for those students who are planning on travelling.
- *Set up a payment plan with specific collection dates. Send out reminders for those dates ahead of time. My music boosters came the last hour of the day to collect those payments so the directors did not have to do it during class.

Final weeks:

- *On the last payment day each student who was fully paid received a ticket to sign up for their room. They brought them to me and we made up our rooming list. There were surprisingly very few late payments with this system. I assist with the process of selecting roommates rather than just posting it on the board for them to fill out. I make suggestions for inclusion and helped students find a place they would feel comfortable.
- * Schedule a mandatory parent/student meeting and make sure that everyone signs in and includes their phone number. Parents/students cannot claim they did not know your behavioral expectations while on the trip. Be very specific about your expectations. Make a trip handbook with itinerary, dress code, curfew, bus list, chaperone assignments, emergency numbers, and VERY Specific expectations. At this meeting hand out a behavior contract and a medical release.

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*A chaperone meeting is a good idea at this time. Each potential chaperone must pass a background check and should be people that you can trust with your students. A lead chaperone is helpful in organizing night shifts and serves as the go to person while on the trip. Leading by example is my main request.

Trip take off:

*I suggest having a male and female police liaison or other figures of importance on hand for luggage, purse, and instrument search. Our chaperones did this search with a check off list for their assigned students. When this was completed each chaperone escorted their entire group on to the buswith no stops at their lockers or cars on the way. (This is a procedure I have fine-tuned through experience.)

While on the trip:

* Students are fully aware that at curfew their hotel doors will be taped. Chaperones who are on duty for that evening have a list of student rooms and check them regularly. If the tape is off...someone has left the room.

In my small high school of 230 students a music trip is a huge event as we take over 1/3 of our student body. This year the band director and I organized our own trip with a great deal of assistance from our Music Parent Organization. It saved our students many dollars but was also quite a few more headaches for us as directors. The success or failure of the trip was definitely on our shoulders. We took the gamble since we had travelled to St. Louis before and the result was a pretty fabulous trip.

It may sound like a lot of work and frankly it is. I have a concert one week from now; guess how my rehearsals are going? These students have a greater appreciation for each other and the process of making music. If you are thinking of travelling with your students.....GO FOR IT!

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The Professional Patchwork Quilt

By Tim Wurgler, MENC Liaison

Much like those that bring patches of fabric together in a harmonious whole to create a quilt that comforts us, educators and choral artists have the same opportunity to select many patches of opportunity and bring them together into a professional patchwork quilt that is comforting to the musical soul but also beneficial to students and ensembles. The biggest part is selecting the right patches to bring together that provide a focused and harmonious theme to the quilt while still allowing different textures that can add diversity and contrast to life. Here are some things to consider in creating the professional patchwork quilt.

Membership Organizations: There are many organizations that seek to have musicians and educators as members. While that is certainly exciting, it can also be overwhelming. In considering organizations to join make sure the organization provides something that expands the musical and emotional life. Two organizations that are an absolute must are the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association and its national organization, the American Choral Directors Association as well as the Wisconsin Music Educators Association and its national organization, the National Association for Music Education. Encouraging others to join is also imperative to a strong quilt. Both organizations provide a wealth of opportunities to musicians and educators but also to students. Both are geared to provide the highest level of professional development and to allow growth as educators and for that to benefit students and ensembles.

The great part about these two organizations is that both lead to other patches that work well together. Comprehensive Musicianship Through Performance (CMP) Project and the Listening Project (soon to be known as iListen Wi) are examples of other patches that are complimentary. Other opportunities that stem from membership include NextDirection, Singing in Wisconsin, Refresh, and the WCDA All-State Choirs.

There are certainly a number of other organizations available to educators that continue to add patches such as the Association of Wisconsin Area Kodály Educators and its national component, the Organization of American Kodály Educators or the National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO) but these and other like organizations are intended to focus on specific areas in choral education but are necessary to augment the quilt and allow it to grow in size.

Membership Associations: While the organizations mentioned above provide opportunities for educators to grow, there are also organizations available for schools and institutions that add to the quilt. An example of this is the Wisconsin School Music Association. WSMA is a member school organization that provides opportunities to school music programs including the State Honors Music Project, Student Composition Project, Solo & Ensemble Festivals, Concert Festivals and all of the opportunities connected to these programs. All of these opportunities are intended to support growth in the school music program. This type of patch continues to add to the harmony of the quilt and allow for a continued reach to students.

Complimentary Patches: As we explore other patches for the quilt, we need to consider how each patch compliments others. Some patches are the church musicians while another is working with adult choirs. Then there is the opportunity to add patches that represent performing.

Other opportunities include teaching private lessons or performing at assisted living communities. Really anything that is part of music outside of our “regular” day can be considered a complimentary patch and add to the strength and comfort of the overall quilt.

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Patches that Provide Balance: These are the patches that allow for relaxation and recreation but are still an important part of the professional quilt. These patches can represent hobbies or other pursuits. Examples can include reading, biking, running, camping, knitting, as well as being a soccer coach, volunteer or scout leader. Another important patch is family and friends. Without the support of that particular patch a definite weakness can occur in the quilt.

While all of these opportunities might seem unrelated to our musical life, these pursuits still provide patches to our quilt because they add diversity, contrast and balance to the other patches.

Bringing the Patches Together: Just like the quilter, it is important to consider how to bring all of the patches together into a harmonious, contrasting and complimentary whole. In considering each patch, examine its purpose and function carefully to ensure that it provides a beneficial and supportive piece to the overall quilt. Make sure that the quilt is balanced and represents all of the parts needed to make it a cohesive and complete whole. Strive to allow the quilt to become stronger as a whole than the sum of its parts ensuring that it is balanced and complete.

Once this level of balance is met, the professional patchwork quilt becomes a synergistic whole that provides comfort and security, as it becomes a part of our life. With that said though, just like the quilt that is a blanket requires periodic repair, the professional patchwork quilt also requires maintenance. Each patch needs to be examined for wear and whether it still provides a complimentary element to the overall quilt. The sense of balance needs to always be maintained to keep the quilt strong and current. This comes through professional development, new opportunities and the ever-evolving educational landscape. With this regular consideration of the professional patchwork quilt, it will become a life long foundation and always provide the comfort and security required of any good quilt.

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Educate, Collaborate, Inspire!

By Lucinda Thayer, 2015 Morris D. Hayes Award Winner

You know that you are getting old when you get the equivalent of a Lifetime Achievement Award. That is just fine, since getting older is really wonderful! Thanks to those of you who nominated me and to my wonderful husband, Jim Carpenter.



Lucinda Thayer

But the folks who really need to be acknowledged are not necessarily those of us who have been fortunate enough to be in leadership roles in WCDA, but all of you – the teachers, from pre-school all the way to college and on to community choirs. Those of us who teach at the college level are the blessed recipients of everything that all of you do to encourage young people to explore music in all ways, so the thanks and the glory should go to you.

I guess, in part, I’d like to just give a little “pep talk” to everyone here. While acknowledging that I am preaching to the choir, I still want to remind us (myself included) that we must prevail in this current climate of dismissive attitudes towards the noble profession of teaching, of devaluation of the arts’ role in education, and of the ever-increasing pressure for accountability and data-driven justification for our existence. I don’t need to, nor do I want to, rehash all of that.

So... this begs the question. What can we do? I certainly don’t have all the answers. We need to be pro-active, on so many levels. College directors need to support their student ACDA chapters and, more importantly, need to impress upon the graduates that they stay in WCDA/ACDA. High school teachers must encourage those high school students who show both musical aptitude/talent and a passion for teaching to enter the profession. Middle school and elementary teachers still need to plant and nurture the seeds of musical love and literacy. That sure isn’t easy if you are spending your days driving between three schools and wheeling your Orff instruments around on a cart! Keep positive with the students, and kick and scream to everyone else! We all need to communicate our 100% justifiable frustrations with the ongoing negative messages and ever-increasing workload that has little to do with music. Parents (the taxpayers) who support the arts need to become school board members and we certainly need more arts teachers to become school administrators (thank you, Dan Wolfgram).

In this current climate of standardized everything, I worry about our collective ability to keep music at the forefront of what we do. Personally, I’m struggling with how to cover everything that I need to teach in my choral methods class and yet still prepare my students to pass the EdTPA – and we don’t even know yet what it means to “pass.” You all know better than I the “alphabet soup” you must negotiate. I was struck, yet again, by the hoops that you and particularly teachers starting out in the profession must jump through when I saw this post by a recent alum of mine on Facebook, who gave me permission to share it with you:

“Today I spent several hours catching up on all my “teacher hoops”. Wrote my goal, rationale and implementation plan for my PDP, updated my teaching portfolio, updated my LinkedIn profile, transferred my portfolio artifacts to a safe place, made a list of all the artifacts that I will need to upload into Teachscape, updated my plan for my SLO data and checked in on my PPG data as well. Plus, I continued a little work on my first micro-credential.”

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Educate, Collaborate, Inspire!

By Lucinda Thayer, 2015 Morris D. Hayes Award Winner

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This made my head spin! Lest you think that those of us in the college world don’t have to deal with this kind of thing, think again. Our campus took several years and did a complete overhaul of our General Education requirements. Happily, they inserted an Arts Requirement for everyone on campus. Participation in one of our large ensembles satisfies that requirement. Great, right? This provides a bit more incentive for those folks who sang in high school to do a bit more in college. But... by February 1st, I have to prepare the dreaded “P” word (portfolio) in which I provide hard data that the students in my choirs actually met one of the learning outcomes listed for an Arts Requirement course: “Demonstrate an understanding of creative expression by critiquing, creating, or collaborating on a specific work of art.” The conductors have collectively come up with a way to push this square peg into the round hole, but it will take a lot of time and effort.

I’ll behave and give it my best shot, but here is what I would rather submit. When our students graduate, they have an online opportunity to send a thank you note to any of their teachers. I know that all of you who have taught for at least a couple of years have all received similar messages – those little notes that blindside you and, thank God, remind us all that what we do DOES matter. Here are two examples:

- Without Choral Union I don’t think I would have made it through college. You taught me how to sing, how to read music and how to live life happily.

- You have taught many of us to love life and to keep on singing.

Thanks so much for this wonderful award, I am honored, and I hope that we can all remember that the true “lifetime achievement” is about giving students the experiences they need to love life and to keep on singing.

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Message from Our Neighbor: Creating the Environment

By **Bradley Miller, University of Minnesota - Morris**

“Through discipline comes freedom.” These words of Aristotle have become my mantra as we have progressed through this past semester. At first glance, this quotation may seem counterintuitive, especially in thinking about its application to choral ensemble performance; however, I would argue that it is, in fact, the formula necessary to produce performances that are both technically exemplary and wonderfully expressive.

Perhaps we would all agree that for our choirs to truly realize their artistic potential, the collective needs to bring an unyielding commitment to excellence every single day—discipline. How then does this discipline somehow become freeing? In reflecting on my own experiences, the most meaningful performances (and rehearsals) as both a chorister and conductor have been those in which the music has been so deeply internalized that it became part of my emotions, part of me. I am convinced that, for me, this emotional connection would not have been possible had the unrelenting work ethic of all involved not been present day in and day out. Without the elimination of imperfections in the music, it is difficult, if not impossible, to for me to have profound aesthetic experience, let alone accurately represent a composer’s intention. In this brief commentary, I will present a few ideas that we, as conductors, might consider as we prepare and execute our rehearsals. It is my hope that these notions might help us more consistently create a rehearsal environment that facilitates music-making at the highest level.

Creating an environment with a commitment to discipline is easier for some than others. Some conductors bring a natural authoritative presence, while others may have a rather gentle demeanor on the podium, all the while being equally demanding. Regardless of a conductor’s style, regular reflection as to whether or not one has upheld his or her standards should become part of the modus operandi. We should ask ourselves after every rehearsal if we were consistent in our demands, both musical and otherwise. At times we can all feel overextended, tired, under the weather, etc. I tell my students that the most important time to show up fully engaged and ready to work is when we least feel like it. I believe this to be paramount in bringing a group from good to great.

We can make this process a bit easier on ourselves if we can somehow get our students to buy in to these ideas; otherwise, our work can easily become “pulling teeth” and is exhausting. An environment in which students feel invested and have a sense of ownership will help instill in them a mindset that their work is valuable and requires of them a high level of energy and commitment. I do my best to give my students as much responsibility as possible. This begins with student leaders serving as officers, section leaders, and the like. These positions give my students a deep sense of ownership, to be sure, but we can go even further by handing over responsibility within the rehearsal process. Dr. Elizabeth Schauer of The University of Arizona says, “The more you do for them, the less they will do for themselves.” This is so incredibly true. If students know that the conductor is going to tell them exactly how to execute every measure, one at a time, they will wait for him or her to do so. There are myriad opportunities for us to teach musical concepts and then hand over responsibility to our singers, and it is far more efficient to teach something once and expect that they will transfer it to other analogous moments in the piece, or even better, to other pieces. Students will only do this if 1) we have taught them how, and 2) if we expect them to do so. Once they have acquired a skill, it is our job to be unrelenting in holding them accountable for its application.

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By **Bradley Miller, University of Minnesota - Morris**

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The manner in which we address our ensembles and the language we choose is also critical. If our intention is to involve students more consistently in the process, we should elect to use language that fosters an environment of collaboration. Replacing phrases such as “I need” with “we need,” or “stand up!” with “let’s stand” helps create a situation that is much more collaborative. We should speak to our singers like the choir we want them to become. Berating our ensembles, or its opposite, giving false praise, will not help them rise to the next level. We need to be honest, positive, and affirming. Finally, I believe we need to stop taking ourselves so seriously. It is healthy, perfectly appropriate, and so often needed, to inject humor into rehearsals. Laughter helps us relax and lifts our spirits.

As we forge ahead into the last weeks of this academic year, I would encourage all of us to examine our teaching strategies and ask ourselves if we are consistently creating an environment conducive to high level music-making. If we and our students commit to bringing the necessary intensity, focus, and perseverance to our final rehearsals, it will surely be an exciting and musically satisfying end of the year.

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High Fives Children’s Choirs

Ellen Schuler

1. Velvet Shoes

Randall Thompson

E.C Schirmer 2526

2-Part Treble

Piano accompaniment

Velvet Shoes is set in a very gentle style. A nice reflective work that is perfect for a winter concert. Dynamics and phrasing are two great elements of music that can be the focus. The poem is by Elinor Wylie

2. Sound the Trumpet

Henry Purcell, ed. James Erb

Alfred Publishing AP.LG00787

2-Part Treble

Singing Baroque music is exciting for young singers. The melismas in this piece are great opportunity to teach about sequences. The mood is light and bouncy.

3. Marienwürmchen (Lady Bug)

Johannes Brahms, ed. Mary Goetze

Boosey & Hawkes M-051-46521-7

Unison

A beautiful unison work that tells the story of “Lady Bug Fly Away Home!” With many teaching elements, this authentic setting of a beautiful German folksong is a must for young singers!

4. Amavolovolo

traditional Zulu arr. Rudolf de Beer

Hal Leonard HL.8749217

SSAA

This popular Zulu song is arranged by the former conductor of the Drakensberg Boys Choir of South Africa. With fun rhythmic lines, this a cappella work is perfect for adding choreography and drumming. Also available in SATB

5. Ili-ili – Tolog Anay (Hush, Sleep For Now)

Visayan Folk Song arr. Jude B. Roldan

Hal Leonard HL.123660

3-part Treble

From the Panay Island in the Philippines, this lullaby can be performed either a cappella or with piano accompaniment. A super choice for transitioning boys’ voices, Ili-Ili tolg Anay allows singers to sing legato lines with beautiful open sounds in their high range.

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High Fives Community Choirs

Andrew Haase

1. Serenade to Music

Ralph Vaughan Williams
Oxford University Press
SATB, w/ soloists
Orchestra, or Keyboard

Setting a text by William Shakespeare, Vaughan Williams captures the beauty of the poetry with his pastoral style of composition. Originally scored for sixteen solo voices with orchestra, the piece works well for choir and one or more soloists from each voice part (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass). Some of the solo parts can also be sung by the entire section. This work can be performed with orchestra or solo piano, or perhaps add a solo violin (from the original orchestration) to the keyboard accompaniment. (The pianist must be of a high caliber.)

2. Evening Prayer

Ola Gjeilo
Walton Music WW1520
SATB divisi
Piano and Soprano Saxophone

Incorporating improvisation between piano and sax, Evening Prayer provides great contrast to any concert repertoire. The jazz style of the saxophone combined with the lush harmonies of the choir create a hauntingly beautiful sound.

3. A Festive Praise

Jeff Ames
Walton Music WW1505
SATB divisi
Piano and optional Brass Quintet

This octavo is perfect for any concert opener or closer! The added brass and percussion are sure to energize your singers and entertain your audience members. This is a real winner!

4. Moonlight and Rain

Kevin Memley
Pavane Publishing P1470
SATB
Piano and violin

Moonlight and Rain is one of Kevin Memley’s newest compositions, published in 2014. This octavo is ideal for any choir looking to perfect their lyrical and expressive singing. This music is not too difficult and fairly straight forward harmonically. This song provides great balance to this list of high fives for community choirs.

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5. Sing A Mighty Song

Daniel Gawthrop
Alliance Music AMP0002
SATB & Piano

When we hear the name Gawthrop we instantly think of Sing me to Heaven. However, Daniel wrote many other great octavos – this being one of them. This song will challenge your singers with his rhythmic intensity, challenging harmonic dissonance, multiple modulations and unconventional harmonic progressions. This is a fabulous concert opener sure to excite your singers and audience members!

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High Fives Vocal Jazz

Timothy Buccholz

Vocal jazz has had a great year in Wisconsin: two successful vocal jazz festivals and the return of WCDA Vocal Jazz All-State to our convention. Sadly, our music has lost one of its torchbearers in the great vocal jazz educator Steve Zegree. I had the great pleasure of studying with Steve for four years at Western Michigan University. Not only was he a superb educator, but he was also a fantastic arranger of this style of music. All the pieces in this year’s edition of Vocal Jazz “High Fives,” are Zegree arrangements. The charts on this list range in difficulty from beginning high school to advanced groups. As always, if you’d like other repertoire suggestions for your group, don’t hesitate to contact me.

1. Love Walked In

Arranged by Steve Zegree

Hal Leonard (HL.08704361)

SATB a cappella

Level II-III

This is my favorite a cappella ballad arrangement by Zegree. It voice leads beautifully, and while it certainly works perfectly in a small group vocal jazz setting, you could also make this work with your large concert choir. There are a few 3-part splits in the women’s voices, and a couple for the guys at the end. At only 34 bars in length, it can be learned in relatively short rehearsal duration. Once notes are learned, this will sound best if it is performed with rubato phrasing.

2. Mas Que Nada

Arranged by Steve Zegree

Hal Leonard (HL.08742275)

SATB with notated piano accompaniment and optional rhythm section

Level II

This high-energy samba arrangement is based on the recording by Sergio Mendez & Brazil ’66. It has easy unison melody lines on the choruses, and very attainable 4-part splits on the verses and background sections. Repetition also helps make this arrangement accessible for most groups. The lyrics are in Portuguese and a phonetic pronunciation is provided in the octavo. There are two lyric solo opportunities on the bridge of the tune, as well as an optional improvisation section at the end over a two-chord vamp. This piece will likely provide some great contrast to your program/repertoire. Also available in SAB and SSA voicings.

3. Take the “A” Train

Arranged by Steve Zegree

Shawnee Press (HL.35022415)

SATB with notated piano accompaniment

Level III

This swing arrangement of the classic big band tune made popular by Duke Ellington works well for advanced groups who have a good sense of harmony and rhythmic syncopation. It includes a harmonized scat soli section in the middle as well as space for improvisation. If you have a jazz drummer at your school, have them join your group on this up-tempo classic.

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High Fives Vocal Jazz

Timothy Buccholz

4. But Beautiful

Arranged by Steve Zegree
Shawnee Press (HL.35002530)
SATB with notated piano accompaniment
Level III

While this accompanied jazz ballad starts out with a unison statement of the melody, it quickly breaks into four-part, tight harmony. The voice-leading works very well, but there are still some crunchy jazz chords that will challenge your singers’ ears. There are a couple places in the arrangement to feature soloists over “oo” background vocals, and a four-bar, a cappella section near the end that briefly breaks into 3-part splits in both the men’s and women’s voices. It can be hard to find accompanied vocal jazz ballads of this difficulty level, and this one could be programed by an advanced high school or college group.

5. New York State of Mind.

Arranged by Steve Zegree.
Hal Leonard (HL.08201461).
SATB with notated piano accompaniment and optional rhythm section.
Level III

If you ever took your group to one of the Steve Zegree vocal jazz festivals in New York, your group likely sang this arrangement of the great Billy Joel tune. This pop tune with jazz voicings can work well as a concert closer, and provides a couple great opportunities for the pop/jazz soloist(s) in your group to shine. Chromaticism in the inner voice parts will provide a challenge for your altos and tenors, but the arrangement as a whole is very singable. There is a written unison scat soli section in the middle that works well or could be replaced by an improvised soloist. If using this as a concert closer, I would highly suggest adding the option rhythm section parts, drums in particular. Also available in SAB and SSA voicings, which are slightly easier (Level II).

I hope you have a great year ahead with your vocal jazz ensembles! Please feel free to contact me with any questions. I’m more than happy to give advice or make recommendations for your group. My email is: tim.buchholz@uwc.edu and my office phone is 715-261-6246.

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Dr. Matt Turner - Cellist, pianist, composer, Yamaha Performing Artist, recording artist and lecturer at Lawrence University Conservatory of Music

“Music Literacy/Sight-Reading - What Works for ALL Levels!”
Panel - Cheryl Meyer - Appleton Public Schools Elementary General and Lawrence Academy Choirs; Karen Wysocky - Director of Choirs at West Bend Public Schools; Jaclyn Kottman - Appleton Public Schools and Lawrence Academy Choirs.

“Giving Life & Breath to Repertoire”
Phillip Swan - Professor and Director of Choirs at Lawrence University Conservatory of Music; NC-ACDA R&S Chair for Women’s Choirs.

“Technology Tips, Tricks, & Techniques”
Johnathan Turba - Director of Choirs - Iola-Scandinavia Middle & High Schools; WCDA Technology Chair

“Building Community in Your Choir”
Joy Paffenroth - Director of Choirs - Chilton Middle & High School; WCDA President-Elect

“Servant Leadership & NC-ACDA News”
Dr. Bob Demaree - Director of Choral Activities at UW-Platteville; NC-ACDA President.

Reading Sessions

Complimentary Music Packets

“Choral Repertoire Every Singer Should Know” - Selections suggested by your colleagues from across the state from elementary through college/community

Concert - WSMA Honors Mixed Choir, Dr. Bruce Gladstone - UW-Madison

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Best Ideas Sharing Session

Picnic Supper at Bay Beach Amusement Park - Ride the Zippin Pippin!

Speed-Learning Social at Gipper’s Pub

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Featuring Dr. Andrew Last, Luther College - Dr. Last is a master at guiding singers in outstanding life experiences including: working together on a common goal, tackling tough challenges, taking time for themselves, savoring the final product, trusting others, and allowing all to take down barriers and become vulnerable to fellow musicians. Dr. Last believes it is his responsibility to pay it forward through inspiring others to sing because they just cannot help it - it is a vital part of who they are.

Quotes from Attendees

"A really moving experience. I recommend this event if you want to learn not just about music, but about life-come!" ~ND Participant 2013

"If I could do this every year for the rest of my life, I totally would!" ~ND Participant 2013

"The chaperones were wonderful to talk to and sing with, and they gave me insight into college choices and college life." ~ND Participant 2012

"I learned a lot about the music field from amazing people who love what they do." ~NDParticipant 2013

"I feel like I have become more of myself. This conference put me in a position to talk to new people. It has also taught me to always have a passion for what I do." ~ND Participant 2011

"Helpful, educational, eye opening- oh yes, and the food was awesome!" ~ND Participant 2012

"NextDirection is an amazing experience that really influenced my passion for music education." ~ND Participant 2011

"I loved just being able to make music with amazing people." ~ND Participant 2010

"NextDirection is what made me decide to go into music." ~ND Participant 2009"Simply put, NextDirection changed my life." ~NextDirection Participant 2010

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