

# Georgia Sings!

AMERICAN  
CHORAL  
DIRECTORS  
ASSOCIATION 

The Official Newsletter of the Georgia Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association

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## In this issue...

### [Events and Membership](#)

#### [2020 GA-ACDA Fall Convention Schedule](#)

[From Our President](#), Dr. Paul Neal, Director of Choral Activities and Associate Professor of Music, Berry College, GA ACDA President:  
*A Message from our President*

[A Message from Our New Membership Chair](#), Chantae Pittman, Director of Choral Activities, Campbell High School, Georgia ACDA Membership Chair

[GA-ACDA Virtual Choir and Commission](#), Dr. Timothy Powell, Director of Choral Activities, Oglethorpe University, Georgia ACDA Choral Composition Initiatives

*Dr. Powell announces the commissioned choral work by Brittney Boykin for the GA-ACDA Virtual Choir.*

[Time to Start a Show Choir or Jazz Choir!](#) Karen Davis, Appling County High School, Director of Choral Activities, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Jazz and Show Choirs

*Karen Davis shares new ideas for summer camps to help ease you through the process of starting show choirs or jazz choirs.*

[Should I Warm-Up My Middle School Chorus?](#) Dr. Karen Graffius, Assistant Professor of Music and Assistant Choral Director, University of West Georgia, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Junior High/Middle School Choirs

*Dr. Karen Graffius discusses the importance of warming up middle school choirs.*

#### [Pictures from the 2020 ACDA Southern Regional Conference](#)

[New Book: Conducting Men's Choirs edited by Donald Trott](#), Dr. David Morrow, Director of Choral Activities, Morehouse College, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Tenor/Bass Choirs

*Dr. David Morrow explains the value of this GIA Publication..*

[Singing in a Post-Graduation World](#), Dr. Keith Walker, Music Director, Festival Singers of Atlanta, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Community Choirs

*Dr. Keith Walker reminds music educators to encourage their graduates to keep singing.*

[The First Choral podcast You Should Listen To](#), Dr. Christopher M. Walters, Director of Choral Music, The Westminster Schools, Georgia ACDA R&R Chair for Ethnic/Multicultural Choirs

*GA-ACDA announces the inaugural GA-ACDA Composer Lab Choir, to be held Saturday, October 26 in the Skylight Gallery at the Oglethorpe University Museum of Art in Atlanta.*

[Strategies to Design Engaging Online Rehearsals](#), Craig Hurley, Director, Spivey Hall Young Artists Spivey Hall Children's Program, Georgia ACDA R&R Chair for Children's Choirs

*Craig Hurley offers new ideas for a Digital Learning World.*

#### [More Pictures from the 2020 GA-ACDA Southern Regional Conference](#)

*Publicize in Our Newsletter!*

## EVENTS...

### **2020 GA-ACDA Fall Convention** **Saturday, October 24th, 2020**

10:00am– Session 1– Dr. Gary Packwood

12:00pm– Virtual Lunch Roundtables

1:30pm– Session 2– Dr. Gary Packwood

3:00pm– Virtual Coffee Break Roundtables

4:00pm Session 3– Dr. Gary Packwood

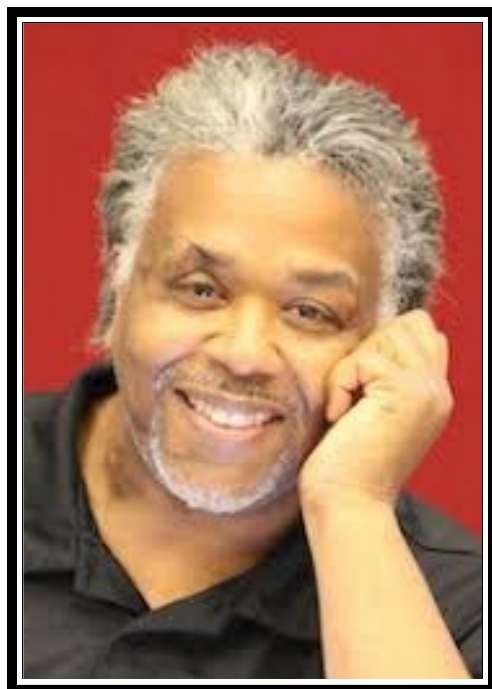
5:00pm– GA-ACDA Award Presentation and GA-ACDA Virtual Choir Premiere

Reading Packets available covering all areas

Holiday Music

Tried and True

New Works



From our President, Dr. Paul Neal, Georgia ACDA President, Page 3

## From our President

Dr. Paul Neal, Georgia ACDA President, Director of Choral Activities and Associate Professor of Music at Berry College

In James Jordan's book, *The Musician's Soul*, he quotes Parker Palmer, an American author and Founder/Senior Partner Emeritus of the Center for Courage & Renewal. Mr. Parker tells us:

*As good teachers weave the fabric that joins them with students and subjects, the heart is the loom on which the threads are tied, the tension held, the shuttle flies, and the fabric is stretched tight. Small wonder, then that teaching tugs at the heart, opens the heart, even breaks the heart - and the more one loves teaching, the more heartbreaking it can be. The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open to those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that the teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning, and living require.*



This quote speaks directly to what we are experiencing right now. In the midst of the chaos and uncertainty, our hearts are breaking. Many of us are scrambling to make sense of everything. How do we teach our choirs? How can we keep them singing?

I would say to you, stay focused on the task at hand, which is to stay safe, and look for ways to create art with our singers in person or virtually. I have been amazed at the level of knowledge our Georgia choir directors have shared over the last several months. Plus, national ACDA has given us great resources as we maneuver our choral community. Just remember, keep yourself from getting overwhelmed with the uncertain times and work to uplift your soul with singing. Our love of choral music is what led us to be teachers/directors, so don't lose that love!

**State Virtual Conference** - Because of COVID-19, the GA-ACDA Board has decided to move our state conference to an online platform. We will meet together virtually on Saturday, October 24. We are excited to welcome Dr. Gary Packwood from Mississippi State University as he will lead us in three different sessions. In addition, we will host two roundtables during lunch and an afternoon coffee break. This will be a great time for us all to “check in” with our areas and discuss how our choral worlds are going.

[Back to Cover](#)

From our President, Dr. Paul Neal, Georgia ACDA President, Page 4

**Ga-ACDA Virtual Choir** - We are asking all of our Georgia ACDA members to participate in our closing premiere for the State Convention. We have commissioned a closing benediction song written by B.E. Boykin. Ms. Boykin is a graduate of Spelman College, and is currently on the music faculty at Georgia Tech. She has also been featured as the conductor/composer-in-residence for the 2017 Harry T. Burleigh Commemorative Spiritual Festival at Tennessee State University. I encourage everyone to participate in this fun adventure. See details in this newsletter and check our website/Facebook page for more information. I look forward to seeing everyone on the final product. Many thanks to Tim Powell and Kendrick Kirkland for their help and organization on this project.

**Award Nominations** - During our virtual conference, we will still celebrate each other at the end of our time together on October 24. We will give out two awards - the Young Director Award and the Distinguished Director Award. If you would like to nominate someone, please take a moment and nominate them on our website - [www.gaacda.org](http://www.gaacda.org). Nominations are due October 1st.

### **Distinguished Director**

Excellence in choral music training, performance and scholarship

Commitment and contributions to choral music in the state of Georgia

Positive and supportive collegial interaction

Active participation, leadership and service to Ga-ACDA

Must have a minimum of 20 years in the Choral Music Profession

### **Young Director Award**

Successful teaching and performance in choral music in Georgia

Professional demeanor in interactions with colleagues

Potential as an exemplary professional with an extended career in choral music

A spirit of service through active participation and involvement in Ga-ACDA and/or GMEA

**Regional ACDA Conference in Mobile, Alabama** - Congratulations to all of our choirs/directors who participated in the 2020 Southern Regional ACDA Conference in Mobile. While some were able to perform/present and others were not able to attend due to COVID-19, we are so proud of them and their amazing work here in our home state of Georgia. We are proud of all our Georgia choirs - Kennesaw State University Chamber Singers (Dr. Leslie Blackwell), Atlanta Women's Choir (Dr. Missy Arasi) and the Georgia State University Singers (Dr. Deana Joseph). Kudos to our Georgia colleagues who presented/conducted at the convention - Craig Hurley, Eric Nelson and Martha Shaw. And many thanks to Dr. Eric Nelson for stepping up to conduct the Brahms Requiem at the last minute. Well done, Georgia ACDA!

**Be** sure and take care of yourself. Keep finding ways to inspire your singers through technology and the internet. We will come through this and when we do, we will join together and sing in celebration. Stay well and wash your hands!

From our President, Dr. Paul Neal, Georgia ACDA President, Page 5



2019 Winners were Laura Leigh Beall and Dr. Kay Pace.

## Membership...

[Like us on Facebook for news and updates from our membership.](#)



Encourage others to become a more active and informed part of our choral family in Georgia and join ACDA. Membership for all chapters of ACDA is handled via the National Office. Visit [Membership Central](#) for more information.

A Message from Our New Membership Chair, Chantae Pittman, Director of Choral Activities, Spivey Campbell High School, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Membership, Page 6

## A Message from Our New Membership Chair

Chantae Pittman, Director of Choral Activities, Spivey Campbell High School, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Membership

Greetings GA-ACDA members. My name is Chantae D. Pittman and I am your newly appointed Membership Chair for our state's ACDA chapter. I am extremely honored and excited to serve in this capacity since my expertise in other organizations that I am affiliated with have also been in membership, recruitment, and retention strategies. In fact, I use some of the same techniques in building my choral programs. By the time this newsletter goes out I will have more than likely reached out to you by email to either welcome you to new membership, or to remind you that it is time to renew. I encourage consistent communication and transparency in everything that I do and I am super excited to bring that energy into this new year.

With that being said I have some exciting things coming in order to help continue to grow ACDA membership in our great state:

Our Membership Drive will be beginning on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and it will run for 2 months. Our goal is to increase our state ACDA numbers! Please let your colleagues know about the great resources and benefits that come with being a member of ACDA. Beyond the fantastic in person national, regional, and state conferences there have been a wealth of virtual professional development just this past summer that states have been able to provide at low or no cost. I have personally had the pleasure of attending ACDA state conferences in Missouri, as well as Virginia, Delaware, and DC's joint summer conference. There are also tons of resources located on our national website regarding repertoire and resources for virtually any type of vocal ensemble. ACDA has also partnered with other national music organizations to be at the forefront of COVID-19 studies as it pertains to singing and musical performance. It has been extremely refreshing to know that we have an organization that has our collective best interest in mind. If you know of colleagues who may be on the fence about joining or renewing please send them my way! We have been afforded 10 free membership vouchers for brand new ACDA members. What a great way to have a "test" run of all of the awesomeness that is ACDA.

Collegiate members! Student memberships this year are only \$5 for ALL student members both returning and new. This year is a GREAT opportunity to build up your student chapters of pre-service choral conductors. Our national leadership realized that membership costs were a deterrent to collegiate members and they have answered that problem with a great solution in lowered membership prices for our collegiate members.

I hope each of you have been having a successful fall despite all of the craziness. Looking forward to "seeing" you at our Fall state conference in October. If you need to reach out please don't hesitate to email me at [chantae.pittman@cobbk12.org](mailto:chantae.pittman@cobbk12.org).

Musically Yours,

Chantae



GA-ACDA Virtual Choir and Commission, Dr. Timothy Powell, Director of Choral Activities, Oglethorpe University, GA-ACDA Choral Composition Initiatives Chair, Page 7

## GA-ACDA Virtual Choir and Commission

Dr. Timothy Powell, Director of Choral Activities, Oglethorpe University, GA-ACDA Choral Composition Initiatives Chair

This fall, through the efforts of Georgia ACDA and the Choral Composition Initiative, we are so pleased to announce the commission of a new choral work by B. E. Boykin, to be rehearsed and premiered “virtually” on October 24 at 5pm. In these very trying and unique times, it is important to continue to support the creation and performance of new music, in whatever way we safely can!

Our commissioned composer, **Brittney Boykin (B.E. Boykin)**, is a native of Alexandria, Virginia and pursued her classical piano studies at Spelman College under the leadership of Dr. Rachel Chung. Her compositions quickly became popular, including her arrangement of “Go Down, Moses” and a setting of “Ave Maria” and were performed and recorded by the Spelman College Glee Club. Ms. Boykin continued her studies at Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, New Jersey. She continued to compose music during her time at Westminster and was awarded the R and R Young Composition Prize.

Ms. Boykin’s choral piece, “We Sing as One,” was commissioned to celebrate Spelman College’s 133rd Anniversary of its founding at the 2014 Founders Day Convocation. She has also been featured as the conductor/composer-in-residence for the 2017 Harry T. Burleigh Commemorative Spiritual Festival at Tennessee State University. Ms. Boykin’s instrumental and choral works are currently being published and distributed through her own publishing company, Klavia Press.

She is currently the Assistant Director of the Spelman College Glee Club, as well as the Director of the Treble Choir at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Additionally, Ms. Boykin is also the newly appointed Interim Director of Choral Activities at Agnes Scott College. She is currently PhD candidate at Georgia State University with an emphasis in Music Education.

If you would like to participate in the GA ACDA Virtual Choir, simply register by navigating to this link: <http://bit.ly/GAACDAVirtualChoir>

Once we have completed registrations, you will receive an email from Match My Sound (MMS), inviting you to register with MyChoralCoach. This FREE desktop app is a fantastic rehearsal tool, which will allow you to see the score, work on your individual voice part, and once you’ve reached 90% on pitch and rhythm, to record yourself on video and upload your submission. It’s a synch!

If you have any questions, please reach out to me at [powelltimothy@hotmail.com](mailto:powelltimothy@hotmail.com)



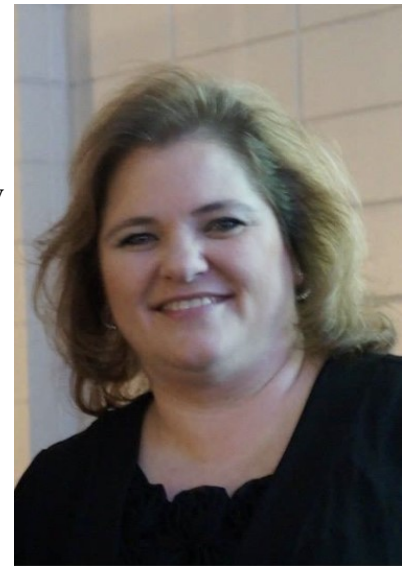
Time to Start a Show Choir or Jazz Choir! Karen Davis, Appling County High School, Director of Choral Activities, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Jazz and Show Choirs, Page 8

## Time to Start a Show Choir or Jazz Choir!

Karen Davis, Appling County High School, Director of Choral Activities, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Jazz and Show Choirs

Summer is almost here. The weather is getting warmer, and concerts are winding down. It's time to begin thinking about a new year and new goals. Maybe this is the year you would like to examine the possibility of beginning a show choir or jazz choir at your school. Does the thought make you feel queasy, wondering where to start and how to fit it into your current program? Good news! There are some exciting summer camps available to assist you in your new endeavor.

**Show Choir Camps of America** has been educating teachers and students for 40 years in show choir and jazz genres. For one week you will be immersed in teachings from the finest instructors, award winning directors and choreographers in the nation. You can also sit under the teachings of nationally known vocal coaches that work with choral programs and Broadway performers. During the day, you can go to various roundtables with other directors, or you can choose to attend interest-based sessions with a wide range of topics: vocal health, acapella music, choreography, motivational and leadership instruction, costuming ideas, musical technology, sound reinforcement, and building a show choir or jazz program from scratch. All of the interest sessions are led by leaders in their fields of study as well as professionals from Broadway, Los Angeles etc. At night, you have the opportunity to go to concerts featuring a variety of performers: Broadway stars, famous acapella groups and nationally ranked show choirs. Each day you will also have the opportunity to partake in music reading sessions from the top music publishers in the country which are led by the arrangers themselves: Mac Huff, Roger Emerson, Mark Brymer, Kirby Shaw, Greg Gilpin and Sally Albrecht.



Teachers can receive Continuing Education Credits or Graduate Credit for the camp from either Milikin University, Elmhurst College or Heidelberg University. All of these activities will keep the teachers busy, but there is one other optional activity that is a highlight for most of the teachers attending: the teacher show choir. During the week, teachers meet with vocal and choreography clinicians to prepare a show that they will present to the students at the camp at the end of the week. It is a wonderful way for the teachers to experience what their students go through as they are learning new music and dances. It is also a wonderful way to build relationships with other directors from across the country.

The other part of this camp is the student camp that is run concurrently along with the teacher's camp. Students from all over the country come to the camp to learn from the nationally known directors and choreographers. They are also allowed to attend many of the same interest sessions that directors can attend. Teachers that bring 10 or more students may attend the camp for free. The week-long camp takes place in June at Miliken University and in July at Heidelberg University. Their website is [www.showchoircamps.com](http://www.showchoircamps.com).

As a personal testimony, I have attended Show Choir Camps of America many times and although it is expensive and a long distance away, the valuable tools I have acquired through the many sessions offered at the camp was well worth the time and expense. No matter which camp you choose to attend, I have found that taking the time to meet, talk and work with other directors in the field is an invaluable tool for your professional growth.

Show Choir Camps of America was the only camp that offered experiences for teachers as well as students. Other camps cater to the students only.

Rising Stars camp in the Chicago area, which has hosted camps for over 20 years, offers

*Back to Cover*



**Time to Start a Show Choir or Jazz Choir! Karen Davis, Appling County High School, Director of Choral Activities, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Jazz and Show Choirs, Page 9**

week long camps for ages 3 through 12th grade. The students will spend a week with vocal and choreography clinicians, learning a show of 4-5 songs including singing, dancing, acting and formations. The camp has three dates throughout the summer. Students are divided by age groups into performing ensembles. At the end of the week, the students will present a professional quality show. Their website is [www.risingstarscamps.com](http://www.risingstarscamps.com).

A little closer to home are the Summer Showoffs camps located throughout the south. The camp began in Jackson, MS 31 years ago but has expanded throughout the South. There is even one located in the Atlanta area. Summer Showoffs is also a week long camp where students in grades 1-12 meet together from 9am-2pm each day to learn vocals and choreography for five songs and culminate in a performance on Friday of all the groups. The 2020 locations are: Birmingham, AL; Jackson, MS; Auburn, AL; Montgomery, AL; Atlanta, GA; and Huntsville, AL. Their website is: <https://www.summershowoffs.com/sso-2020-camps/>

The Southern Experience at Southern Mississippi University offers a week long camp for grades 5-8. The students have the opportunity to work with a nationally known clinician to prepare a concert to perform for parents and community on the last day of camp. Students also have the opportunity to participate in many fun games and activities as part of the camp. Their website is: <https://www.usm.edu/music/choirs/southern-experience.php>

Clover Hill High School Choral Department in Midlothian, VA offers a week long show choir camp, Dominion Show Choir Camp. They offer home stay accommodations with families of their show choir during the week. The camp gives students the opportunity to learn a show during the week from well known clinicians and also offers various workshops during the day. Workshops are offered on many topics: how to audition, hip hop dance, props and microphones, beat boxing and private voice lessons. Their website is: <https://www.dominionshowchoircamp.com/>

For those interested in jazz choirs, there are several adult jazz camps throughout the nation where adults can work with top jazz instructors. Adult campers will be participating in the choirs as well as attending breakout sessions.

Tritone Jazz at Naz is located at Nazareth College in Rochester, New York. Adults will stay on campus, room and board are included in the price. Classes will be taught on jazz rhythms, vocal master classes, jam sessions with faculty and jazz theory. Each night there are various concerts and the opportunity to go to a local jazz bar for a music jam session. The instructors are top notch such as, Gene Bertoni who is a veteran of the Benny Goodman and the NBC Tonight Show orchestras; and Amy London who is a member of the vocal jazz group the Royal Bopsters. There is also a sister Jazz Tritone Camp at Bjorklunden. The website for these camps are: <http://tritonejazz.com/camps>

The University of Louisville has Summer Jazz Workshops in Louisville, Kentucky. Their classes start from beginner to advanced for all ages. They offer jazz theory classes, ear training, combo performance, and master class sessions. In the evenings, they provide concerts with their talented faculty. Everyone at the camp will go through a short audition to be placed in groups according to ability so that each may have the opportunity to play in a jazz combo of their own. There are offerings of 2 or 3 day sessions as well as a week long camp. Prices may include room and board plus tuition. Their website is: <http://workshops.jazzbooks.com/about-us/summer-jazz-workshops/>

Each of the camps offers a great experience for students that wish to enhance their skills. While I was only able to find one show choir camp that catered to the director looking to hone their skills, attending any of the camps with your students would be a great learning experience for any teacher wishing to learn more about putting their own show together. There were multiple jazz camps throughout the US that cater to students only but I was able to find two that are for adults as well. Take a chance and spend a week of your summer trying out a new skill. You will have a blast and will pick up great skills to share with your students in the new year.

Should I Warm-Up My Middle School Chorus?, Dr. Karen Graffius, Assistant Professor of Music and Assistant Choral Director, University of West Georgia, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Junior High/Middle School, Page 10

# Should I Warm-Up My Middle School Chorus?

Dr. Karen Graffius, Assistant Professor of Music and Choral Director, University of West Georgia, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Junior High/Middle School

The answer is a resounding, yes! Most middle school students, boys and girls, will be going through their voice change during the time in your choir. Helping them navigate through this change is a primary responsibility of the middle school choral director. More than likely you are their only voice instructor and the warm-up can serve as their voice lesson. It is equally important to help your students transition from using their speaking voice to using their singing voice when they arrive for rehearsal. James Jordan, in his book *The School Choral Program* states that “If this transition is not made, choirs will sing with the vocalism they use for speaking. Use of the wrong resonances of the apparatus breeds vocal damage and creates numerous choral ensemble problems in the areas of pitch, diction, etc.”



## Elements of the Middle School Choral Warm-up

Daily warm-ups should consist of body stretches and/or movement, a breathing exercise, resonance/placement exercises, vowel exercises and ear training/sight-reading activities.

### Body Stretches and Movement

This segment of the warm-up can serve several purposes. Middle school students bring with them a plethora of energy when they walk in your door! Exercises which help them release some of that energy and focus the mind is such an important part of your warm-up. Begin with having your students raise their arms towards the ceiling. Have them then stretch from side to side to warm-up the muscles around the rib cage. They can then reach out in front and move their arms as if they are swimming. Have them slowly bow their heads with the chin moving toward the chest and then gently roll their head from side to side but not all the way around. Lastly have them bend from the waist and let their arms and head hang. They should then slowly come back up with the head being last. There are many excellent movement activities in the book *Quick Starts for Young Choirs* by Cristi Cary Miller and Angela K McKenna. Many of these are fun games and movement routines that will help channel the students' energy and prepare them for singing.

### Breathing Exercises

The middle school singing voice can be very breathy. Teaching proper techniques for breathing and breath management is necessary to produce a beautiful, well-supported tone. Begin by teaching your students correct posture as this is the basis for good breathing. If you have wall space, have your students stand up against a wall

Should I Warm-Up My Middle School Chorus?, Dr. Karen Graffius, Assistant Professor of Music and Assistant Choral Director, University of West Georgia, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Junior High/Middle School, Page 11

making sure their upper back around the shoulder blades is slightly touching the wall. This will aid them in learning how to raise the rib cage. The feet should be shoulder width apart, the shoulders down and relaxed and the head level with the chin parallel to the floor. This posture is not natural for the growing middle school body and must be reinforced daily! Constant reminders about good posture throughout the entire rehearsal and not just the warm-up may be necessary. Teach your students reminder cues about posture such as holding up one finger or periodically saying “posture check”. Perform at least one breathing exercise in each warm-up period. Have your students inhale on four counts while placing their hands around their belly button to feel the expansion of the muscles around the rib cage. They should exhale on a slow hiss or “s” sound. Keeping their hands in place, have your students inhale on four counts then sing on a unison pitch counting to 8 without taking a breath. This exercise can be repeated adding four numbers each time. Be careful that your students don’t try to “squeeze” out the tone if they begin to run out of air while singing the numbers!

### Resonance/Placement Exercises

Resonance and placement exercises are critically important for the transition from the speaking to the singing voice. When warming up your students, it is very important not to begin your pitch exercises in a key which is too low. The key of C major is not the best key for middle school students! Unchanged voices will immediately engage the chest voice and this key is too low for boys going through the voice change. The keys of Eb, E major and even F major are much better options. Begin with descending patterns which begin on the 5<sup>th</sup> scale degree (sol) and descend to 1 (do). One of the most efficient ways to warm-up the voice is to use semi-occluded vocal tract (SOVT) exercises. The most convenient of these is simply a lip trill or lip buzz. Have your students begin on sol sliding down to do and back up to sol. Vocalize them down by half steps being careful not to go too low for changing voices. Go back to the beginning key and repeat the exercises going up by half steps. Other options are to have your students sing the word “ming” or “zing-a-mama” on a five-note descending pattern. Humming through straws as a SOVT exercise is very effective but may not be practical with middle school students. Jeremy Manternach of the University of Illinois has published very interesting articles about the use of SOVT exercises in choral rehearsals. Also helpful for your middle school students is to have them begin very high in their range (falsetto for changing/changed voices) and have them descend down on a sigh or “ah”. Encourage your changing/changed voices to ease into the chest voice. This will take practice!

### Did you know ACDA has it's own *radio station*?

- [ACDA RADIO](#) is an online radio station broadcasted live from the ACDA National Office
- Recordings are brought to you directly by NAXOS
- ACDA members must login to listen!

Should I Warm-Up My Middle School Chorus?, Dr. Karen Graffius, Assistant Professor of Music and Assistant Choral Director, University of West Georgia, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Junior High/Middle School, Page 12

## Vowels

Vowel uniformity is necessary to produce a beautiful blended tone. You must teach your students how to shape their vowels and practicing the vowels before encountering them in literature is most advantageous. Begin vowel exercises with the brightest vowel, ee. This will help your students place the tone forward in the mask of the face. Perform the vowels in this order: ee, eh, ah, oh oo beginning with an initial “m”. You may have your students sing them on a unison pitch with repeated notes or a descending scale pattern (figure 1). If your students are more advanced create chordal exercises in which each voice part sings a pitch from a chord. (figure 2)

Figure 1



Figure 2



## Ear Training/Sight-Singing

Taking time during the warm-up to focus on ear training and sight-singing will greatly affect the efficiency of your literature preparation. Middle school students will enjoy solfege exercises such as “Follow the Hand” in which they sing a pitch of the scale based on the hand sign you are showing. Try this exercise in parts in which you sign different pitches with each hand and certain groups follow a particular hand. Show a visual representation of the scale and have students sing as you point to pitches on the scale. This exercise may be done in parts as well. Place different colored pieces of tape on both index fingers and assign certain groups to follow a particular color. Move your fingers through the scale in harmonic intervals. Singing the major, minor and chromatic scales everyday will have an enormous impact on improving your singers’ intonation. There are numerous sight-singing books and curriculums available and having your students sight-sing every day is imperative!

Developing a warm-up routine with your students may be challenging but in time they will expect it and may even ask for it! This consistent activity at the beginning of the rehearsal will improve your classroom control by contributing to routines which are necessary for working with middle school students. Spending 8-10 minutes a day in the warm-up will help your literature preparation be more efficient and will greatly improve the tone of your choruses.

**Need a job? Want to fill a position? Visit our blog at the  
GA-ACDA website.**

If you want to post a listing, email Nathan at [schreernj@fultonschools.org](mailto:schreernj@fultonschools.org).

Pictures from the 2020 ACDA Southern Regional Conference, Page 13

# Pictures from the 2020 ACDA Southern Regional Conference

## Georgia's Own!



The Atlanta Women's Chorus,  
Director Dr. Melissa Arasi



Kennesaw State University Chamber Singers,  
Director Dr. Leslie Blackwell



ACDA Children's Regional Honor Choir,  
Director Dr. Martha Shaw



ACDA Junior High Regional Honor Choir,  
Director Dr. Tesfa Wondemagegneu



ACDA Senior High Regional Honor Choir,  
Director Dr. Julie Yu



ACDA Senior High Regional Honor Choir,  
Director Dr. Joshua Oppenheim

*Back to Cover*

New Book: Conducting Men's Choirs edited by Donald Trott, Dr. David Morrow, Director of Choral Activities, Morehouse College, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Tenor/Bass Choirs, Page 14

## New Book: Conducting Men's Choirs edited by Donald Trott

Dr. David Morrow, Director of Choral Activities, Morehouse College, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Tenor/Bass Choirs

A very important new source from GIA Publications, Inc. on music for men's chorus is *Conducting Men's Choirs* edited and compiled by Donald L. Trott, Director of Choral Activities at the University of Mississippi (Oxford). It is perhaps inspired by the earlier *Conducting Women's Choirs: Strategies for Success* edited by Debra Lee Spurgeon. In this book there is comprehensive information from some of the most notable conductors and scholars about men's choirs. The book handles history, practice and repertoire and is a well-rounded source of information.

The book is divided into three sections. The first part includes chapters on the history of male choruses in general from collegiate choruses to professional choruses, to community choruses (including significant information on GALA choruses) and, of course, the famous U. S. Army Chorus under the direction of Allen Crowell. My chapter on the Morehouse College Glee Club gives a brief account of our 110-year history. The next part of the book includes some excellent information on the nuts and bolts of developing and rehearsing men's choruses. There is a very good article on working with middle school boys by J. Reese Norris. There are articles on perspective in creating a good TTBB sound by Jerry Blackstone, Glenn Miller and Jefferson Johnson. Don't fail to see Mary Hopper's chapter on *Women Conducting Male Choruses* and Marques Garrett's chapter on composing and arranging for TTBB voices.

No book like this would be complete without information on repertoire. Donald Trott's chapter *Resources and Selected Repertoire for the Tenor/Bass Chorus* is very comprehensive and has a wealth of information including publishers and an excellent bibliography of sources to find other information. Additionally, the repertoire discussed by other authors gives us an international look at repertoire from Canada and Estonia. Of special note is James Gallagher's chapter *Repertoire for High School and Collegiate Male Ensembles* which highlights the tried, true and new pieces for those levels of ensembles.

This is an excellent source for anyone interested in finding out about and learning how to develop men's choruses at all levels. It is a "must have" book.

<https://www.giamusic.com/store/resource/conducting-mens-choirs-book-g9890>

David Morrow



## Singing in a Post-Graduation World

Dr. Keith Walker, Music Director, Festival Singers of Atlanta, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Community Choirs

As we all approach the end of the current school year, Spring concerts, and Holy Week/Easter, we are all busy working on our repertoire for these various presentations of choral music. I work both in the world of church music and community choruses as many conductors do. It is so common in our profession to work in a couple of areas.

I would like to remind my music education colleagues to encourage your students to continue singing once they are finished with school. Choral singing, as we all know, is a lifetime activity with so many physical and emotional benefits besides being fun. In conversations with people at social gatherings, I find so many people who tell me that they enjoyed singing in choir in elementary/middle/high school and through their college years, but have not sung since graduation. This makes me a little sad.



While I understand that the demands of work and family can make it difficult to commit to weekly rehearsals, there are many opportunities available with a range of rehearsal and concert schedules. There are community choruses and church choirs all over who would welcome singers who have participated in choirs during their formal education years. Several years ago, I was on faculty at a community college and would make recruiting visits to area schools and speak for career days. I would often ask the students if they were aware of opportunities to continue singing after high school. Most were aware of college/university choirs. Some were aware of church choir opportunities, but an even smaller number were aware of community choirs.

We have a wonderful opportunity to showcase lifetime singing opportunities as part of our state conference this June. The Lifetime Singers Lifetime Learners Honor Chorus will present a program on Monday evening, June 15 at Spivey Hall. This chorus has representatives from community choirs and church choirs across the state of Georgia. Scott Martin, choral director at Creekview High School and the conductor of the Cherokee Chorale, will lead the singers in a performance of *Consider the Lilies: An Appalachian Requiem* composed by Timothy Powell. There will be a rehearsal on Sunday, June 14 and other rehearsals are being planned before the final rehearsal. More information is available on the Georgia ACDA website at [www.gaacda.org](http://www.gaacda.org).

The First Choral Podcast You Should Listen To, Dr. Christopher M. Walters, Director of Choral Music, The Westminster Schools, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Ethnic/Multicultural Choirs, Page 16

## The First Choral Podcast You Should Listen To

Dr. Christopher M. Walters, Director of Choral Music, The Westminster Schools, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Ethnic/Multicultural Choirs

Chances are good that you have listened to a podcast recently. By September 30, 2019 (International Podcasting Day), over 100 million people in the US were listening to a podcast every week. Perhaps this makes sense – mobile carriers and plans are gravitating ever more toward unlimited data, so downloading or streaming podcasts is becoming ever more convenient and commonplace. Too, it's so efficient to listen to a podcast while commuting!

At least for me, I jumped on the bandwagon and started listening to lots of podcasts this past summer. And, in addition to podcasts traversing random interests related and unrelated to choral music, I came across Chris Munce's *Choralosophy* podcast and became instantly fascinated by the topics he addresses. I highly recommend it to you. I found one particular episode—*Choralosophy* Episode 20: "Choral Appropriation? Or Cultural Sharing with Brandon Boyd"—to be exceptionally thought-provoking, and likewise deserving of a "shout out" here – in an article devoted to considerations of the ethnic/multicultural perspective in choral music-making. Indeed, I found one particular strand of talking points in that episode to be so important, that I wanted to take the time to briefly engage with the content here, in the hopes of furthering an important conversation within our profession.

With that said, I also want to acknowledge that this is truly a complex conversation, and worthy of more than just one podcast episode or newsletter article. Still, and even though I or you may not agree with all or any of Chris' or Brandon's viewpoints as heard in the podcast, I am just happy *that* a conversation of this depth and importance is happening. So check out [\*Choralosophy Episode 20\*](#) as you are able!

For this particular episode, Chris Munce (who teaches choral music at the high school level, who self-identifies as white) invited Dr. Brandon Boyd (who is an Assistant Professor and the Assistant Director of Choral Activities at the University of Missouri, who self-identifies as black) into a conversation about what Munce references as "cultural appropriation" in choral music. In short, according to Munce, "cultural appropriation" asks: Who should be allowed to perform, compose or arrange which kinds of music? Where do we draw the line? Does intent matter? What should a conductor do if they are worried about how a performance will be interpreted?

Another way to frame out this topic might be to ask this provocative yet practical question: Can an all-white or mostly white choir perform a spiritual? And in attempting to avoid arriving at definitive conclusions, while still making a good faith effort at considering honestly this type of question, Munce and Boyd enter into this conversation from their unique cultural/ethnic perspectives, and along the way land on some important touchstones. Some of these "take-aways" are as follows:

- Boyd notes that "Concert Spirituals" are intended as concert music, not necessarily as sacred music. And as well, that "some people from the African-American sacred world will hear a 'concert spiritual' and say that that's not authentic Gospel music."





The First Choral Podcast You Should Listen To, Dr. Christopher M. Walters, Director of Choral Music, The Westminster Schools, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Ethnic/Multicultural Choirs, Page 17

- In the case of a white choir performing a choral piece written by or from the Africa-American context, Boyd notes that the best practice might be to bring in a “Brandon Boyd” to help with the rehearsal process or to clinic the group. This step might help the conductor with solidifying choices. Boyd also notes that its always important to have a cultural understanding and historical background (just as he might bring in a German speaker when he programs a piece in German).
- Munce relates his experience of knowing white conductors who have expressed a nervousness to program music by black composers or arrangers because of a fear of “getting it wrong.” Munce’s concern is that the potential consequence of holding such a fear is that the music of black composers/arrangers will not get programmed with as much frequency.
- Boyd: “How educating is it to perform music only from your background? Students should have the experience of singing all kinds of music. To say that white people shouldn’t perform this music, or black people should perform Handel is ridiculous.”

So as you can see, this podcast does not hesitate to enter into complex territory. Though we may agree or disagree at various points along the way, I think it is a credit to our profession if we can engage in these types of conversations—particularly in the ethnic/multicultural area—and do so, as Chris Munce admonishes, from the place of assuming goodwill. And how lucky we are to have the benefit of the tool of podcasts to help us discover these types of conversations!



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Strategies to Design Engaging Online Rehearsals, Craig Hurley, Director, Spivey Hall Young Artists Spivey Hall Children's Program, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Children's Choirs, Page 18

## Strategies to Design Engaging Online Rehearsals

Craig Hurley, Director, Spivey Hall Young Artists Spivey Hall Children's Program, GA-ACDA R&R Chair for Children's Choirs

Due to COVID19 many of us are rehearsing our choirs in new ways. There are some definite disadvantages to digital or online rehearsals. Teaching tone and harmony concepts can be a real challenge. However, with creative planning and strategic use of technology, digital rehearsals can be used to conduct effective rehearsals.

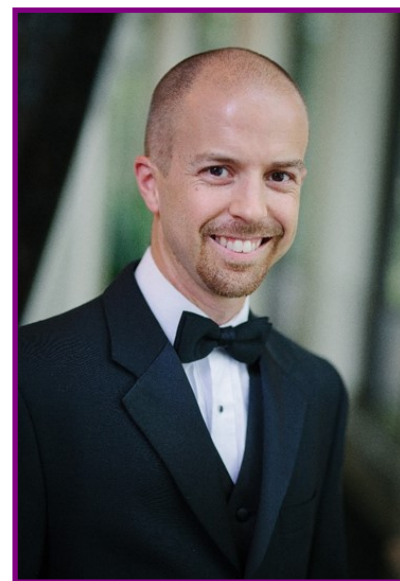
Many teaching skills that would be successful in a face to face rehearsal translate into the digital world. Good teaching is still good teaching. However, in a digital format, teachers need to be more intentional in order to reach their goals. Here are some dos and don'ts when planning a digital rehearsal.

**Focus on relationships.** Just like you would in a face to face environment, include intentional relationship building into every rehearsal. Small things such as dress-up days (i.e. red-carpet wear, crazy hat/hair day), group games (i.e. digital scavenger hunt, charades, etc.), and virtual check-ins help students feel a part of a bigger community. Invite students to create an introduction video in Flipgrid and then share two or three videos during each rehearsal. That way singers can get to know their fellow choir members. When possible, meet in smaller groups for shorter periods of time to provide more specific feedback for individuals. Call students by their name as often as possible. Their name is on their screen so there is no excuse to not use it.

**Communicate clearly.** Digital rehearsals are a new experience for our singers as well. Communicate clear expectations at the beginning of every rehearsal so all parties know what is expected. Provide students with an agenda for each rehearsal so they know what will be happening and can help you reach your goals. Checking in with your singers at least once every 3-4 minutes with a simple thumbs up, thumbs sideways or thumbs down question helps give you feedback on how the rehearsal is going and helps your singers feel involved with the rehearsal process.

### Digital Rehearsal Expectations:

- Participate Enthusiastically
- Be Kind & Considerate
- Use Digital Resources Wisely



**Recruit parents to help facilitate rehearsals.** Digital rehearsals require parent buy-in even more than face-to-face rehearsals. Before your first rehearsal hold a parent Zoom meeting to make sure parents are comfortable and aware of the technology requirements (Zoom, Flipgrid, etc.). Provide clear and concise information so parents know what is expected of their child during and outside of rehearsals. Provide ways for parents to ask questions and get help troubleshooting with technology.

**Use the technology to your advantage.** How often have you dreamed of being able to mute a student during rehearsal? It's possible in Zoom. Teach students how to mute/unmute themselves, raise their virtual hand and ask a question in a chat feature. Don't assume they know. For everyone's protection passwords are always a good idea. During Zoom calls have someone act as the "Zoom Wizard". The "Zoom Wizard" makes sure student's names are labelled correctly, disables distracting chat features, mutes students who have forgotten, and ensures that everyone is where they need to be. Having a Zoom wizard frees the director to focus on teaching and learning. When feasible, divide singers into smaller breakout rooms to work with each other and receive more individual instruction.

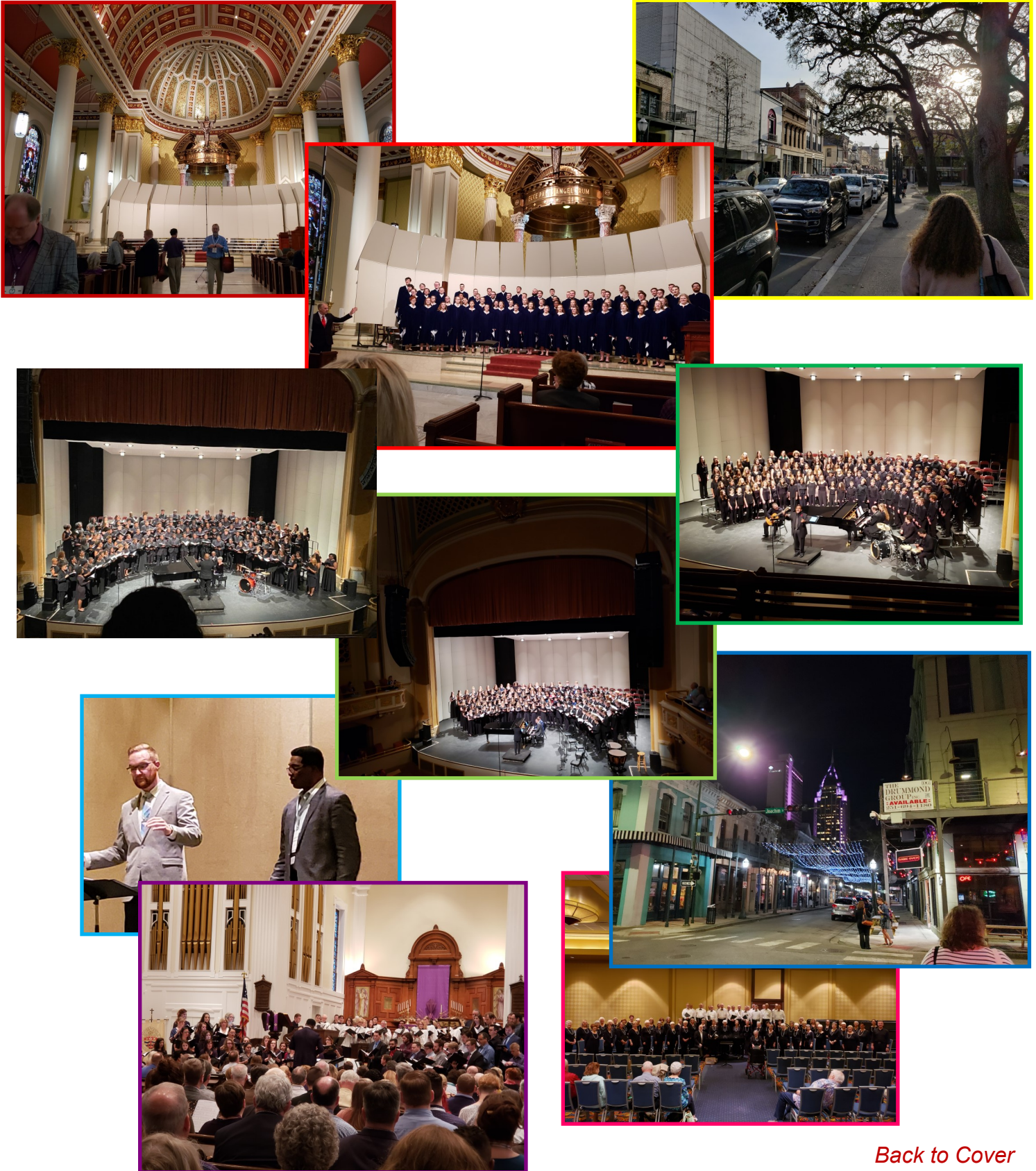
**Have a balance of synchronous and asynchronous activities.** Too much screen time is never a good thing and, chances are, you will not be able to meet virtually for as long as you would normally meet face to face. If an activity can be done asynchronously (i.e. theory lesson) let it be done asynchronously. Use your synchronous rehearsal time for things that can only be done synchronously.

**Work towards a final product.** Whether it's a virtual choir, digital talent show or online demonstration for the parents, having a performance goal helps focus your time together and build a sense of pride in the students. Performances help show the parents some of what goes on in rehearsals and provides a positive culminating event.

**Avoid trying to recreate a face to face rehearsal.** Digital Rehearsals are a new way of doing choir. It is not the same as a face to face rehearsal. There are skills and activities that are simply not possible in a digital environment. Be inspired by previous seasons, but let this digital format create something new and innovative.

More Pictures from the ACDA Southern Regional Conference, Page 20

# More Pictures from the 2020 ACDA Southern Regional Conference



[Back to Cover](#)

# All choral organizations are encouraged to publicize in our newsletter!

*Georgia Sings!* Is a great place to let our choral community know about your organizations and events!

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- If you want to include a written article or column in your advertisement, we reserve the right to place a disclaimer such as “*This is an advertisement*” somewhere in the ad.
- You may request for your ad to be placed before or after a certain article or section, but please be understanding of changes that must be made for the best layout.
- You may request a border for your ad, but please be understanding of changes that must be made for a visually appealing page.
- There is a discount for ACDA members from any state chapter. Non-members such as businesses are invited to advertise in our newsletter.
- If you know of other organizations from other states, please invite them to advertise in *Georgia Sings!*
- The Fall edition is published by Nov. 1; the Spring edition is published by May 15.
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