

Georgia Sings!

AMERICAN
CHORAL
DIRECTORS
ASSOCIATION 

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

Volume 12, Issue 2, Fall 2013 Edition

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Our chapter president explores the positive relationship between the conductor and singer, how we can do the same, and how ACDA can help. Important GA ACDA events also previewed.

Fall and Spring Youth and Student Activities in GA ACDA

Dr. Deanna Joseph, R&S Chair for Youth and Student Activities [\[PDF\]](#)

Accomplished collegiate conductors have enjoyed a great year. Dr. Deanna Joseph previews more of the same, including several upcoming opportunities for high school and collegiate singers, and membership campaigns and conference attendance for this level.

Surrounded by a Host of Witnesses!, Ariel Merivil, R&S Chair for Music in Worship [\[PDF\]](#)

Church musicians are reminded that they deserve to learn and appreciate the ministry of others in the church music profession. Ariel Merivil offers a small sampling of exemplary church music ministries and some events in the Atlanta area.

World Music Benefits, Barriers and Basic Pedagogy

Dr. Stefanie Cash, R&S Chair for Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Perspectives [\[PDF\]](#)

This in-depth article examines the historical importance of world music and its inclusion in the national standards. Dr. Cash draws on her vast knowledge the use of world music in high school choral classrooms.

Unmatched Inspiration for Women, Dr. Elise Eskew Sparks, R & S Chair for Women's Choirs [\[PDF\]](#)

In just four years, the new Intercollegiate Women's Choir Festival has provided rare opportunities for collegiate singers and conductors to perform for each other with great benefits.

Tips For Promoting New Music, Dr. Timothy Powell, R & S Chair for High School Choirs [\[PDF\]](#)

Dr. Timothy Powell offers wonderful information and advice for directors looking to commission a new piece of music and composers looking to write and publish. He also reports on the success of high school choral programs in Georgia this year.

Community Elementary Chorus Festival: Putting A Little Festival Back Into LGPE

Paige Mathis, R & S Chair for Children's Choirs [\[PDF\]](#)

Paige Mathis outlines the structure and success of the Community Elementary Chorus Festival. She also lists a series of upcoming concerts and events in our state.

Book Review From Our Membership

Beth Brown Shugart, a Georgia ACDA Past-President, offers a personal glimpse into a book of a woman's personal account of singing in a choir. [\[PDF\]](#)

[Read this newsletter on our website or download the entire Fall 2013 edition of Georgia Sings!](#)

Events...

The GMEA Convention will be in Savannah January 30-February 1, 2014. GA ACDA will be sponsoring Dr. Amanda Quist from Westminster Choir College as a clinician for this event and will host an ACDA reception at Churchill's Pub the evening of January 31st.

The Southern Division of ACDA will hold its Biennial Conference March 6-8, 2014 at the Hyatt Regency—Jacksonville Riverfront in Jacksonville, Florida.

The annual GA ACDA Conference will be held June 26-28, 2014 at Spivey Hall in Morrow, GA.

As part of the conference, GA ACDA will be hosting a Treble Honor Choir. Conducted by Mrs. Caroline Crocker, this event provides young singers with a special opportunity to develop their musical potential. Choir directors are invited to register singers for this event. Balanced trios are preferred, but not required, and directors may send up to six students. Additional info (including info on how to register or pay by mail instead of online) is available on the Treble Honor Choir Info Sheet and Application. Registration may be completed online via a 2-part process: 1. Complete the registration form for each singer. 2. Submit payment (\$50) for each registered singer. (All registered singers may be combined in one payment.)

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.

This is a paid advertisement. If you are interested in advertising with GA ACDA, please contact us.

ENCORE!
Choir Camp

Encore Choir Camp provides an outstanding musical experience for vocal students from beginner level through 12th grade and features a wonderful staff of Georgia ACDA members.

July 6-10, 2014
Emory University

Gratitude, Amy Hughley, Georgia ACDA President , Page 3

Gratitude

Amy Hughley, Georgia ACDA President [\[PDF\]](#)

Time is a luxury, and we rarely live in the present moment. The future is always nagging at us, reminding us to plan the next rehearsal, the next service, the next concert, the next tour, the next convention, the next vacation.

Directing choirs and working with a group of people takes an enormous amount of energy, and as the hours pile on and the time ticks away, we build up a stamina that is valued in our profession. It's a bit like training for a marathon: begin by running a few miles most days a week, and eventually work up to running a 20-miler. The race itself, though taxing and painful, always results in a feeling of euphoria at the finish line.

In reality, not every performance ends in euphoria, but it certainly ends with a feeling of mutual accomplishment and moments of heart-warming music making. We are often so self consumed by our own programs that we rarely have the time to enjoy the people that comprise our choir and our profession.

The creation of beautiful choral music is dependent upon the positive relationship between the conductor and each singer. There must be mutual respect, mutual trust, and mutual gratitude for one another. Robert Shaw expressed this idea with elegant simplicity:

"As soon as we find each other, we invite the miracle to begin."

One way to appreciate this multi-faceted relationship is to join a choir and become a choral singer again. No matter how long you have been a conductor, no matter how much you know about conducting choirs, it is easy to lose the perspective one has as a choral singer when you are constantly on the podium giving instructions.

Now, I realize choral directors can sometimes make terrible choir members, as we all have our own artistic ideas. Our self-dialogue may hinder us from connecting, as we may be thinking, "why would he/she choose a [U] vowel instead of a schwa?" "Why did he/she use that particular gesture for the breath?" We can end up hindering the music making process by simply forgetting how to be a choral member.

Take a moment to journey to your past. I am sure that most of us fell in love with choral music as choral singers, not as conductors. Did you experience moments of true joy in making music as a choral member? Were there times when collective voices singing as one expressed a passion beyond words? Has singing in a choir ever moved you to tears? During those moments, we were truly part of the choir, full of trust, respect, gratitude, and we thus helped to create music that reaches the soul.



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In this fast paced society, it is easy to forget that there is a sea of colleagues in our field who feel equally pressured by calendars and the final musical product. Time fades the fond memories of our days as choral singers. It is so easy for us to lose one another, and we as colleagues are just as vital to the future of choral music as our choirs are to each of us. We must reconnect and support one another.

ACDA offers this connection, and we are offered to take advantage of it. We strive to be a united field of music makers, regardless of the ages and abilities of the choral members we conduct. We must “find each other”, and invite more miracles. By joining together, singing together, and being truly grateful for one another, we can set a positive example for the next generation of choral conductors and choral singers.

Consider these upcoming ACDA events. They can nurture us professionally and offer connections with our colleagues, both retired and newly graduated, to further strengthen our unity.

Thursday, January 30, 4-5:15 pm, Savannah Convention Center, Savannah, Georgia

Collegiate Choir Master Class with **Dr. Amanda Quist**

Conducting students from **Emory, Valdosta State, Georgia State, University of Georgia,** and **Clayton State** will participate in a master class with the **GMEA Collegiate Honor Choir**, led by **Dr. Amanda Quist** of **Westminster Choir College**. The master class is open to any conference participants

Thursday, January 30-Saturday, February 1, Savannah Convention Center

Stop by to visit the Georgia ACDA booth, held at the Georgia Music Educators Association. Enter a drawing for free summer convention registration, meet and connect with colleagues, and gather more detailed information regarding our summer events.

Friday, January 31, Churchill's Pub, Savannah, Georgia

Georgia ACDA reception immediately following GMEA evening concert session

In order to promote our **2014 Georgia ACDA Treble Honor Choir** and include our children's choir directors, this event will be co-sponsored by **Savannah Coastal Song**. This reception is a great way to meet and connect with colleagues across the state.

Friday, February 21, The Classic Center, Athens, Georgia

Georgia ACDA will host its annual choral read for middle and high school teachers as part of the GMEA All State Chorus event.

Thursday-Saturday, June 26-28, Spivey Hall and Clayton State University, Morrow

2014 Georgia ACDA Conference

Gratitude, Amy Hughley, Georgia ACDA President , Page 5

The conference will offer times for us to sing together, as well as connect with one another. We will host **Dr. Jeff Johnson** from **University of Kentucky**, as well as feature a world premier composition by composer **Jocelyn Hagen** in honor of our esteemed colleague, **Dr. Amy Foster**. In addition, our 2014 Georgia ACDA Conference will feature an **ACDA Treble Honor Choir**, conducted by **Caroline Crocker**. The Treble Choir will rehearse various repertoire genres, including a world premier composition by composer **Russel Nadel**. More information on the honor choir and the conference is found on our website, www.gaacda.org.

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Fall and Spring Youth and Student Activities in GA ACDA

Dr. Deanna Joseph

Director of Choral Activities, Assistant Professor, Georgia State University, Georgia ACDA R & S Chair for Youth and Student Activities [\[PDF\]](#)

This is turning out to be a record year for events in the Youth and Student Activities area of GA ACDA. Congratulations to our summer conference conducting master class participants **Hannah Lee (Georgia State University)**, **Brian Lustig (University of Georgia)**, and **Caleb Lewis (Emory University)** for doing a fantastic job working with guest clinician **Dr. Jerry Blackstone** of the **University of Michigan**. It was inspiring to watch you on the podium. ACDA is sponsoring another conducting master class this year, this time at GMEA in January. I'm happy to report that we have five student conductors from five different colleges in GA participating. Congratulations to **Jon Easter (Emory University)**, **Kevin Jackson (Valdosta State University)**, **Emily Hobson (Georgia State University)**, **Joy Meade (University of Georgia)** and **Michelle Wynn (Clayton State University)** for being selected to participate in this master class and work with guest conductor **Amanda Quist** of **Westminster Choir College**.



Congratulations also to **Hannah Lee** of **Georgia State University** for being selected to participate in a conducting master class this October at the National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO) convention with **Joseph Flummerfelt**.

College directors, don't forget to take advantage of the collegiate honor choir this year at GMEA. The clinician is **Amanda Quist** from **Westminster Choir College**. Each school may sing as many as a balanced octet to participate. Applications are due at the end of October to the committee chair **Shannon Jeffries** of **Georgia Southern University**.

High school directors, there is a fantastic new opportunity at GMEA this year for your students who are considering going

Fall and Spring Youth and Student Activities in GA ACDA, Dr. Deanna Joseph, R&S Chair for Youth and Student Activities, Page 6

into a career in music education. The FMEC (Future Music Educators Colloquium) consists of band, choral and orchestral high school students interested in music education study in college. They pay no registration fees to attend the GMEA convention, but do have to provide all costs incurred with making the trip. If you have students who might be interested in taking advantage of this opportunity, please contact **Suzanne Logue** at choralgema@comcast.net.

The SingUp! Membership drive is going extraordinarily well. We still have a few weeks before sending in the \$5.00 student memberships to the ACDA national office. Please mail them to me at your earliest convenience and take advantage of this spectacular bargain.

Please encourage your students to attend conventions this year. If you have a small group of students who wish to attend GMEA, ACDA Southern Division, or Summer ACDA and are concerned because they do not have anyone to attend with, please have them contact me. I'll be happy to connect them with other students their age who are attending the conference. My email is djoseph@gsu.edu.

Thanks so much for everything you are doing to make youth and student activities successful this year. Our students are the future of our profession and of our professional organizations. Encouraging them to be invested and involved in activities while they are in school will get them started on the right path as they start their careers in the field.☰

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Surrounded by a Host of Witnesses!

Ariel Merivil, Director of Music and Worship, Atlanta First United Methodist Church, Georgia ACDA R & S Chair for Music in Worship [\[PDF\]](#)

Fall has officially arrived and I'm sure you've settled into your weekly rehearsal and service routines. In between the hustle of resuming your fall program schedules, preparing for the beginning of the liturgical year, and re-christening your favorite Advent hymns and Christmas carols, we are yet again, immersed in the all-consuming nature of managing the busy schedules in our various church positions.

The fulfilling and inspiring potential of our work as church musicians does not always overshadow the reality that we often work in isolation. In many cases, we are the sole or lead musician in our positions and therefore go long stretches without interaction with fellow colleagues or other sources for inspiration and encouragement. The job of crafting creative and exciting music in worship can be emotionally and spiritually draining. As such, it's important to remember that we serve in community alongside one another. Our worship arts family extends beyond church walls and denomination lines. Fortu-



Surrounded by a Host of Witnesses!, Ariel Merivil, Georgia ACDA Music in Worship R & S Chair, Page 7

nately, we serve in a chapter that is home to several excellent worship and arts programs where we may find inspiration.

With that in mind, I would like to highlight a small selection of worship-related choral events occurring this year that we may attend to support and connect with one another. My hope is that this short list of suggestions will help make us more aware of the amazing work going on in our Georgia ACDA worship arts community.

Peachtree Road United Methodist Church is home to an excellent music program and has a long-standing series of great concerts. This year **Scott Atchison** and his staff will host several choral programs among which will feature, the **Georgia Boy Choir**, the **Georgia State University Singers**, **Emory's University Chorus**, and **The University of Georgia Hodgson Singers**. Visit their website www.prumc.org for more information on their Worship and Arts program schedule.

Mary Hoffman's concert series at **Peachtree Presbyterian Church** also features a great series of concerts including their popular choral Christmas programs: "Christmas Legends" and the 20th Anniversary "Nicolas Bowden and Friends" concert. I encourage you to take note of their entire list of concerts and programs at www.peachtreepres.org.

If you have not had an opportunity to attend evensong at **The Cathedral of St. Phillip**, you are quite possibly missing some of the best choral sacred music in our city. Most every week during the church year, **Dale Adelman** leads the **Cathedral Choir** and **Schola** in an exquisite music-filled worship service on Sunday afternoons at 4 pm. On December 15, the cathedral will host "A Russian Christmas in Atlanta" with the **State Capella Choir of Russia**. Please visit www.stphillipscathedral.org for a complete schedule of worship services, concerts, and recitals.

On October 27, **Roswell United Methodist Church** will host the concert: "An Afternoon with **Mack Wilberg**" featuring the **Roswell UMC Sanctuary Choir**, the **Michael O'Neal Singers**, and the **Roswell UMC Orchestra** conducted by **Dr. Mack Wilberg**. Later in the year, they will also host **Oral Moses** and the **Spiritual Ensemble** in an afternoon concert of spirituals. More information can be found on their website: www.rumc.com.

Another local highlight is the concert series led by **Ray and Beth Chennault** at **All Saints' Episcopal Church**. In it's 10th Anniversary Organ Season, the concert series will host the **Georgia State University Singers** on November 19 at 7:30 pm and several solo artists including **Sylvia McNair**. Don't miss out on an opportunity to experience music in this beautiful worship space. A full concert schedule is posted at www.allsaintsatlanta.org.

In December, **First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta** presents the one-act opera "Amahl and the Night Visitors" and in April of next year, the **Musica Sacra Chorus and Orchestra** will present the "Crucifixion" by **John Stainer**. These concerts are part of their on-going Musica Sacra concert series of which additional offerings may found at <http://www.firstpresatl.org/musica-sacra>.

Johns Creek United Methodist Church has an exciting assortment of choral concerts this year. On Friday, November 1 the **Johns Creek UMC Choirs** will present Faure's Requiem for All Saints Day. Their concert series continues in 2014 with programs by Atlanta's own **Coro Vocati**, the **Louisiana State University A Cappella Choir**, **Reinhardt University Choir**, and **The Nashville Children's Chorus**. Visit www.johnscreekumc.org for more information on these concerts.

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This list is certainly not comprehensive but rather, a small sampling of the outstanding work occurring in our area of worship arts. As you work to inspire meaningful worshipful experiences in your congregations and with your choirs, please take a moment to replenish, reflect and re-energize by seeking similar opportunities. My hope is that you'll use the suggestions above as a starting point to reach beyond the walls of your music ministries to support other worship art programs in your area.

Please accept my greetings and well wishes as you settle into the start of your year. As I step into this new position, I look forward to meeting you and hope to work alongside you to facilitate the worship music needs of those serving music in worship across our state.☰

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World Music Benefits, Barriers and Basic Pedagogy

Dr. Stefanie Cash, Assistant Professor of Music, Director of Choral Activities and Music Education, Shorter University

Georgia ACDA R&S Chair for Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Perspectives [\[PDF\]](#)

The use of world music continues to be an important topic for discussion among choral directors. Questions ranging from, "Why should we program world music," to "How can I program world music when I am not fluent in the language," often present challenges to its incorporation in the classroom. An examination of the historical importance of world music and its inclusion in the National Standards, provide justification for dealing with the benefits, barriers and basic pedagogy of programming world music. Consequently, encouraging more teachers to program a wider variety of world music and expose more students to diverse cultures through music education.

When looking historically at world music's emphasis in the classroom, the late 1800's and early 1900's were dominated by music from the Western European tradition. It was the middle of the twentieth century that saw a rise in discussion about music of other cultures. One event that sparked this rise in discussion was the Yale Seminar in 1963, where the delegates complained about a lack of diversity in repertoire in the classroom (Palisca, 1963). Following the Yale Seminar, the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) sponsored the Tanglewood Symposium and also reit-



World Music Benefits, Barriers and Basic Pedagogy, Dr. Stefanie Cash, R&S Chair for Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Perspectives, Page 9

erated music from all cultures belonged in the classroom (Choate, 1968). In 1979, the American Choral Directors Association formed their committee on Ethnic and Minority Concerns and made a commitment to offer more sessions on diverse music at conventions (http://acda.org/archive/acda_history). MENC continued to reiterate the need for music of diverse cultures inclusion in the classroom through their release of the National Standards for Arts Education in 1994 (Blakeslee, 1994) and again in 1999 at the Vision 2020 meeting setting goals for music education through the year 2020 (Madsen, 2000).

Although the National Standards require world music's inclusion in the classroom, there are often legitimate barriers to its introduction and inclusion in daily teaching. Some of these include limited class time, difficulty of foreign language, lack of quality recordings and difficult tone quality choices (Cash, 2012; Marsh Chase, 2002). Although these barriers make world music difficult to include in the classroom, there are benefits that often outweigh the barriers. Examples of the benefits are using music to expose students to different cultures, meeting the National Standards through the inclusion of world music, teaching other musical concepts through world music, students often find the music exciting, and the possibility that students' preferences may be expanded.

Accepting that the benefits of programming world music outweigh the barriers teachers face in the process, there are several basic pedagogical tools that can help make world music inclusion much easier for teachers and provide enhanced experiences for the students. Music publishers often include either phonetic pronunciations or International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols as a key for pronunciation in the music, or make a recording of the spoken text available to teachers. This allows the teacher to feel confident walking into the classroom to teach a language they may have never heard or spoken. Additionally, quality recordings of world music pieces are becoming more readily available, providing examples for teachers and students alike.

Once there is increased proficiency with the language, there are several ways to approach teaching a piece, saving both time and energy in the classroom. One idea presented by Ben Allaway includes a three-step process. First, the teacher briefly explains the meaning of the text. Then, the teacher models the text for the students having them repeat it aloud. If necessary, repeating a phrase at a time. Then, the teacher begins to sing the bass part, having the bass section repeat after hearing the teacher. If the piece is long, the teacher may consider using a phrase or two that can be repeated as many times as needed. While the basses are repeating the section, the teacher begins to sing the tenor part, having the tenors join once they have heard their part. After the tenors and basses are repeating the section together, the teacher begins singing the alto part, having the altos join in after hearing their part sung by the teacher. Finally, the process is repeated for the soprano section, and all are singing together (Holt & Jordan, 2008). This technique can easily be transferred to SSA or TTBB music as needed. Also, depending on the voice part of the teacher, octave displacements may be necessary with students taking the

part up or down an octave as necessary.

Another beneficial pedagogical technique includes learning the piece on a neutral syllable prior to learning language. This is particularly helpful if the parts are somewhat difficult and adding another layer of language from the beginning would complicate the learning process even further. Another benefit of picking a neutral syllable is that the teacher can create an overall tone quality for the entire piece and allow the text to be infiltrated with that neutral syllable. For instance, if the piece is to be somewhat subdued and a warm, rich tone quality is desired for the piece, an “oo” vowel might be particularly useful in learning the notes and rhythms. Parts can still be learned independently and then layered together to form a beautiful sound on one vowel. Then, the teacher can model the text as learned from either the phonetic pronunciation, IPA, language recording or a student or teacher fluent in the language. If an immediate transfer from the neutral syllable to the text proves difficult, the teacher may have half the class on the neutral syllable and the other half on the text, then switch the next time through to provide an intermediary step prior to all singing on text.

One final pedagogical tool that can help in introducing world music involves teacher modeling. First, the teacher speaks the text in rhythm to the students, breaking it up into phrases as necessary. Then, the teacher models the part while the students keep a steady beat somewhere on their body. The teacher then repeats the part again asking the students to tap the rhythm while the teacher sings. Next, the teacher sings the part while having the students tap the rhythm and mouth the words. This method allows students to hear the part three times, thus solidifying their familiarity with the part prior to singing. Finally, the teacher sings a phrase at a time and the students sing it back. After going through all the individual phrases, the teacher begins to model combinations of two or three phrases and have students repeat the combined phrases. After this task is accomplished, the students sing an entire section all the way through. This technique works well with less experienced singers with limited sight-reading capabilities. It is also useful when working to develop students' aural skills and tonal memory.

There are ample opportunities for teachers and students to experience the many benefits of programming and performing diverse world music pieces. Perhaps the presentation of these helpful pedagogical techniques will encourage teachers to program more world music and experience greater success in teaching world music in the classroom. By implementing these techniques teachers are empowered to expose students to a variety of music from around the world. This not only allows them to meet state and national standards, but also achieve more diversity in programming, thus improving the learning experience of their students.

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Unmatched Inspiration for Women

Dr. Elise Eskew Sparks

Director of Choral Activities, Agnes Scott College,
Georgia ACDA R & S Chair for Women's Choirs [\[PDF\]](#)

Early in the fall semester of 2009, **Dr. Patrick Freer** contacted me and asked if I was interested in a combined concert of his **Georgia State University Women's Choir** and my **Collegiate Chorale at Agnes Scott**. On this invitation he included **Dr. Melissa Arasi, Georgia Tech Women's Chorus** founder and former director. We both said "Sure!" and all agreed on a date, time, and venue for a combined concert the following spring. Little did I know it at the time, but the event that Pat asked us to create would become a metro Atlanta tradition and a source of unmatched inspiration for the women of the **Agnes Scott Collegiate Chorale**.

Personally, I was not focused on special events at the time. I had infant twins and a pile of research data that I needed to



Unmatched Inspiration for Women, Dr. Elise Eskew Sparks, Georgia ACDA R & S Chair for Women's Choirs, Page 12

form into a dissertation before these babies learned to walk. I remember few specific events from that year. But I do remember the final rehearsal prior to the first annual **IWCF**. After the **Agnes Scott Chorale** heard just a few minutes of **Georgia Tech's** stage rehearsal, suddenly the choir cared more than ever before: diction, dynamics, memorization, intonation, etc. Peers had suddenly inspired them to new heights of artistry. Of course, the event itself was also memorable. These women's choirs cheered for each other and displayed an energy and passion for artistry so electrically charged that by the end there was almost an absence of gravity. These moments are hard to describe but we've all felt them.

This combined concert grew into the **Intercollegiate Women's Choir Festival (IWCF)**. Each year the Agnes Scott women have collaborated with both men's choirs and women's choirs. From these experiences I routinely observed that it was fellow *female* choristers that created the competitive yet supportive environment to inspire their peers towards the next level of musicianship.

Traditionally, we have formed women's choirs simply because we have excess women. And there are some of us who have followed **Jeffrey Redding's** example and formed these groups of mature and talented women into our top high school choirs. Why don't we do this more often?

With such a plentiful body of repertoire—new and old—written for treble voices, it's a wonderful time for women to be singing together. My fine colleagues— **Dr. Patrick Freer (GSU)**, **Dr. Melissa Arasi (GT)**, **Dr. Kevin Johnson (Spelman College)**, **Dr. Deanna Joseph (GSU)**, **Dr. Allison Mann (Kennesaw State University)**, **Wes Stoner (Hillgrove High School)**, and **Laura Inman (GT)**—have introduced me to excellent women's choir repertoire over the past four years of the IWCF. The music performed on each concert has led to a compilation of "must do" pieces for high school and college choirs alike. Just this year I've finally gotten a chance to program **Libby Larsen's** "Book of Spells" that **Pat Freer's** women sang on the first program in 2010.



Figure 1. **Agnes Scott Chorale** performs at 4th Annual **IWCF**

A founding and grounding principle of the IWCF is to celebrate the presence of women's choirs and allow them to see, hear, and support each other. **The 5th Annual IWCF will be held in Gaines Auditorium at Agnes Scott College on Sunday, April 6, 2014 at 3 p.m.** The **Agnes Scott Collegiate Chorale** will join with the **Georgia Tech Women's Chorus** (under the direction of **Beth Wilson**), the **Spelman College Glee Club** (under the direction of **Kevin Johnson**), and the **North Georgia College Le Belle Voci** (under the direction of **John M. Broman**). Through the first years of organic growth we've developed a tradition that we

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would love to share with fellow women choristers. We invite any and all to come and witness the exchange that goes on—which might just result in unmatched inspiration for your own women choristers.☰

Appendix 1.

A brief history of the locations and participants of the **Intercollegiate Women's Choral Festivals**

First annual **IWCF**: February 2010 in **Maclean Auditorium** at **Agnes Scott College**; with the host, **Georgia State** and **Georgia Tech**.

Second annual **IWCF**: March 2011 in **Kopleff Recital Hall** at **Georgia State University**; with the host, **Agnes Scott**, **Georgia Tech**, and **Spelman College**.

Third annual **IWCF**: March 2012 at **Peachtree Road UMC**, with **Georgia State**, **Georgia Tech**, **Agnes Scott**, **Kennesaw State**, with guest **Hillgrove High School**.

Fourth Annual **IWCF**: March 2013 in **Sisters Chapel** at **Spelman College**; with the host, **Georgia Tech**, **Georgia State**, and **Agnes Scott**.

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Tips For Promoting New Music

Dr. Timothy Powell

Director of Choral Activities, Davidson Fine Arts School, Georgia ACDA R & S Chair for High School Choirs [\[PDF\]](#)

It is my pleasure to contribute to Georgia's ACDA newsletter for the first time as High School R&S Chair. Thanks so much to **Amy Hughley** and our wonderful board for extending the invitation to me to serve ACDA in this capacity. ACDA has been one of the most important influences on my career, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to "give back." There are so many wonderful things going on in our state, which is truly becoming a mecca for great choral music! I hope you don't mind if I toot some high



Tips For Promoting New Music, Dr. Timothy Powell, Georgia ACDA R & S Chair for High School Choirs, Page 14

school choir horns?

Congratulations to our colleagues selected this year to perform at the annual **GMEA In-Service Conference**. **Stephen Rotz** and his **Woodward Academy Camerata**, and **Dr. Kay Pace's Advanced Chorus** at the **Fine Arts Magnet at Mt. Zion High School** will be featured on Thursday night, January 30 at **Christ Church**, along with some wonderful elementary, middle school and collegiate choirs. Don't miss the wonderful sessions led by **Greg Gilpin** and **Tim Seelig** as well as so many of our wonderful colleagues throughout the state – I know I'm already geeking out about their work! Friday night brings us concert performances by **Scott Martin** and his **Creekview Advanced Women's Chorus** and **Talmadge Smith Jr.'s Lumpkin County High School Varsity Singers** (as a former Lumpkin County Elementary school student, that's a program close to my heart!). Finally, that evening I'm looking forward to seeing former students perform with **Dr. Amanda Quist** as part of the **All-College Chorus**, a joint ACDA-GMEA collaborative effort!

I hope that you are all planning on attending the **2014 ACDA Southern Division Conference** March 6-8, in Jacksonville, FL. Convention attendance is at the heart of ACDA membership and for the first time attendee, and even for those of us who go to every one of them, they can be life-changing and career confirming! Congrats to **Dr. Daniel Bara** and the **University of Georgia Hodgson Singers** and to my own **Davidson Chorale** from the **John S. Davidson Fine Arts School** in Augusta for being selected this year to perform.

In other news around our state, the **LSU A Cappella Choir** is touring in February and concertizing with three high school choirs on each program. On Wednesday, February 26, 2014, **Brad Meyer** at **McEachern High School** (Powder Springs, Cobb County), **Will Hall** at **Etowah High School** (Woodstock, Cherokee County) and **Drew Bowers** at **Milton High School** (Milton, Fulton County) will showcase their choirs at a site to be determined. On Thursday, February 27, **Wes Stoner** at **Hillgrove High School**, **Brian Williams** at **Lassiter High School**, and **Jana Williams** at **Walton High School** will perform at **Lassiter High School's** beautiful new concert hall. On Friday, February 28, **Brain Clements** at **Northview High School** (John's Creek, Fulton), **Ryan Wason** at **Lambert High School** (Suwannee, Forsyth), and **Catherine Steen Lykins** at **Duluth High School** (Duluth, Gwinnett) will open for **LSU** at **Johns Creek United Methodist Church**.

Anton Armstrong and the **St. Olaf Choir** will be in Savannah on February 10 at **Armstrong Atlantic University** and in Augusta on February 11 at **St. Johns United Methodist Church** as part of the "**Concerts with a Cause**" **Arts Series**. They will stop off at the **Davidson Fine Arts Academy** for a choir exchange that morning before heading to **Emory University** on February 13. Get your tickets through the **St. Olaf** choir website.

Applications for the **Grammy Signature School Awards** were due recently and I answered a question on the application

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related to the commissioning and premiere of new music. This prompted some thoughts about how choral programs can take part in this very rewarding process. As part of ACDA's ongoing efforts to promote the composition and performance of new music, I want to encourage Georgia's choral directors to consider partnering with a composer to commission and premiere a new choral piece. I don't have to remind you all, but choral music is a thriving, participatory, culturally significant art form. And yet, if we do not continually renew our wineskins, we are ever in danger of becoming a "museum" instead of a forum for new art. We are in the midst of a revolution in terms of printed music. The international trend toward digital downloads and the rising costs of printed music are threatening the livelihoods of composers and publishers alike. Unless we, who fund the marketplace for choral music, take intentional steps to initiate and subsidize the process of new compositions, we may see this fount of musical blessing dry up.

The process of commissioning and premiering new choral music may seem very intimidating at first. I remember hearing a high school choir premiere a piece on my first attendance at a national ACDA convention and wondering how in the heck a high school program ever got lucky enough to work directly with a composer. Of course, my impression of the composers may have also been inflated. Surely these lofty artists would never deign to leave Parnassus to walk among mortals, let alone work with a high school choir! Imagine my surprise when later that same day, I actually got to speak to **Morten Lauridsen** at a publisher's booth, and found out he's much more approachable and human than I originally gave him credit for. Now, many years and multiple composer/conductor run-ins later, I have had the opportunity to be a part of a number of premieres and collaborations with published composers and the secret is...it is not that hard!

Often, the process of commission and premiere can be a wonderful collaboration between composers and students, resulting in high-level critical thinking, ensemble participation in the creative process, and that special "something" that comes when a choir is truly self-motivated to succeed. The easiest way to get started working with a composer is to *ask*. In this modern age of Facebook and email, it is quite easy to find contact information for a composer. Usually, it's right there on their website. Additionally, one of the greatest benefits of being an active ACDA member is the opportunity to rub shoulders with choral "celebrities" at ACDA state, divisional, and national conferences. Obviously, the creative process takes time, so you need to think a couple of years ahead, but composers are always interested in new things, and the worst they can say is "no."

There are two basic categories of conductor/composer collaboration: free and not-free. Guess which one is my favorite? Let's go with the free stuff first. There are so many choral composers out there who are looking for commissions or the chance to have their piece showcased by quality choirs. The biggest trick is to get to know them. A couple of sure-fire networking strategies are to approach them at conventions, send them emails with questions about their music, send them re-

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cordings of their pieces after concerts, and tag them on Facebook when you talk about a great rehearsal. Do this enough, and they begin to remember who you are! As a personal example, I ran into **Larry Shackley** at the Dallas ACDA convention last year. He is frequently published, and serves on the editorial board of **Lorenz**. I've known him for years, cultivating our relationship using some of the aforementioned techniques, and I always make a point to say hello at ACDA. In passing, we discussed my plans to apply for the Jacksonville ACDA convention. I asked, "If we get selected, would you be interested in writing a piece for us?" He said, "I'd love to." It is actually quite difficult for the average first-time composer to get published or showcased. If you are one of the GMEA-bound or ACDA-bound choirs, you are in a perfect position to premiere a new work, often at NO cost! A little-known secret is that publishers love to have a premiere at a convention, because it almost always guarantees purchases. That is a perfect way to encourage your favorite composer to write something for you to premiere, usually at no cost to your program. In this case, Larry began working on some ideas, we got selected for the convention, he approached the publisher with the news that his piece would be premiered at the convention, they offered to publish the work sight unseen, we began rehearsing, and a collaboration was born that will result in a world premiere in Jacksonville of **Larry Shackley's "Transfiguration Hymn."** All I had to do was ask.

Even if you are not going to a big convention event, there are composers lurking around your area, often at local colleges or churches or even one of your colleagues, who may be willing to work with your choir. In Augusta, we are fortunate enough to have **David Neches** teaching in our district. He is published by a number of companies. Two years ago, we ran into each other at a district event and we chatted about all things choral. Our conversation ended with me extending an invitation to him to work with my choir. David came in to my women's choir rehearsal every two or three weeks and let my girls sing through passages of one of his new, unpublished and unperformed works. He would change notes or rhythms here or there as a way to experiment in a "live" setting and my students got to ask him questions about why he made certain decisions. Those normally very reticent students began to ask some deep, perceptive questions, which is an example of high-level critical thinking (that makes the boss happy!). When he finished the music, he allowed us to sing his piece in concert as a world premiere. What a great way for my 8th grade girls to experience the creative process and work directly with a composer! Further, it cost us nothing. To belabor the point, I also got to check off some impressive GPS-type stuff in my annual assessment related to improvisation and composition. More than two birds with one stone.

Now, let's discuss the "not-so-free stuff." Some composers, particularly the full-time guys and gals, are usually booked quite far ahead with commissions. They are still very approachable, but are unable to work cheaply anymore. The average rate of commission is between \$300-\$500 per *minute* of music, may fluctuate depending on the level of orchestration and how busy the composer is, and usually requires a minimum price. One great way to promote the performance of quality choral music by recognized and published composers is to partner with other area directors to co-commission a work. Three or four pro-

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grams could fund \$500 each and create an opportunity for a great premiere for a local choir festival. Add a local or regional arts grant and you could bring the composer in for the rehearsals and performance. Another example is using the existing festival structures that we already have in place. For instance, in our GMEA district, we are now adding \$1 to every honor chorus registration so that we may commission a piece every four years to premiere at our District Honor Chorus, giving most participants the opportunity to premiere at least one piece during their high school careers.

If you are a composer yourself, there is another creative way to promote the commission and premiere new choral music: *your own!* Provided that you do not take the practice to extremes, it is certainly permissible to write, rehearse, and premiere a new work with your choir each year. As ACDA members, we must take our cues from the most successful of our colleagues, and it is quite common to see folks like **Brad Holmes** (a recent GaACDA clinician), **René Clausen**, or **Francisco Núñez** perform their own works in concert. One of the benefits of this practice is that you learn very quickly what works and what does not work for the voice (*no, an [i] vowel is not the best thing to give a soprano who is trying to sing a high Ab!*). Additionally, you have a great recording made under your supervision, which is a benefit when approaching publishers about publishing your work.

I hope that this discussion prompts some of you to consider commissioning and premiering a new choral piece in the near future. If you have any questions about the process, feel free to shoot me an email at powelltimothy@hotmail.com. I am, of course, always available to write a piece for your choir...☺

This is a paid advertisement. If you are interested in advertising with GA ACDA, please [contact us](#).



Encore Choir Camp provides an outstanding musical experience for vocal students from beginner level through 12th grade and features a wonderful [staff of Georgia ACDA members](#).

July 6-10, 2014
Emory University

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Community Elementary Chorus Festival: Putting A Little Festival Back Into LGPE, Paige Mathis, Georgia ACDA R & S Chair for Children's Choirs, Page 18

Community Elementary Chorus Festival: Putting A Little Festival Back Into LGPE

Paige Mathis

Music Director of Atlanta Young Singers

Georgia ACDA R & S Chair for Children's Choirs



Georgia has always been fortunate to be home to a lot of wonderful children's choirs. Here are a few events you may want to attend. The [Atlanta Young Singers of Callanwolde](#) season features music by Atlanta composer **Kevin Robison** and a new commission by **Eric Banks** for the **World Choir Games** in Riga, Latvia. Their *Holiday Concerts* take place December 20 and 21, 2013 at 8pm at the **Immaculate Heart of Mary Church**, Atlanta, GA. The [Augusta Children's Chorale](#), recently having celebrated its 20th Anniversary, has a brand new look to start its next 20 years. The [Greater Atlanta Girls Choir](#) Holiday Fanfare Concert is Saturday Dec 7, at 7pm at **St. David's Episcopal Church**, Roswell, GA. The [Gwinnett Young Singers](#) season features appearances with members of the **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra** in the *Christmas Concert with all GYS choirs*, Friday, December 6, at 8pm at **Tucker First United Methodist Church**, Tucker, Georgia. The [Spivey Hall Children's Choir](#) is celebrating its 20th Anniversary with concerts, alumni events, and an **ACDA Regional Convention** performance in Jacksonville. Their *Holiday Concerts* are December 13 at 7pm, and December 14-15 at 3pm at **Spivey Hall** on the campus of **Clayton State University**, Morrow, GA. The [Savannah Children's Choir](#) will present *A Night in Vienna* featuring baritone **Keith Miller** on Saturday, November 16 at the **Savannah College of Art and Design Museum**. The [Harmony International Youth Chorus](#) will sing on Sunday November 17 at 4pm at **Mountain Park United Methodist Church** in Stone Mountain, GA. The [Georgia Children's Chorus](#), the children's chorus in-residence at the **University of Georgia**, will present a *Holiday Concert* on Tuesday, December 10 at 7pm at **Hodgson Concert Hall**, Athens, GA.

The [North Georgia Children's Chorus](#) performs on Friday November 15 at 7pm at the **Gloria Shott Auditorium, University of North Georgia**, Dahlonega, GA. If you have children's and youth choir news you would like to share, please send to paigesings@gmail.com

“Festival” or “LGPE”?

Let's face it, **Large Group Performance Evaluation (LGPE)** can be a little intimidating for a many choirs, and can be downright daunting for an elementary school choir on its first time out. With that in mind, four extraordinary music teachers from

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the Atlanta area put their heads together to create a community children's choral festival designed to achieve two goals: to prepare their choirs for their first appearances at LGPE, and to have their kids experience the joy of meeting and interacting with chorus kids from other schools. **Caroline Goldstein** of the **Swift School**, **Brianne Turgeon** of **Springdale Park Elementary School**, **Meaghan Curry** of **Henderson Mill**, **John Marvel** of **Mary Lin Elementary School** crafted their first **Community Elementary Chorus Festival** in February 2013 and it was an immediate success. I had the privilege of serving as a clinician for the

Festival and was inspired by each of these educators who not only created something to meet their own goals, but created a very smart template that could be repeated in a variety of situations across the state.

Parts of the puzzle

From the very beginning, the goals of the project were very clear. The team wanted their choruses to have a "dress rehearsal" for LGPE and to interact with other singers. Timing was important and they scheduled the Festival two weeks before their LGPE performances so that they were concert-ready, but could improve significantly before hitting the LGPE stage. But the team of teachers also wanted to achieve a little more, and their additional goals would take some ingenuity. The parts of the puzzle for a one-shot, one-Saturday experience were Mass Choir, Social Interactions, Sight-singing Class, Recreation, Rhythm and Percussion, Adjudicated Performance. The choirs were on a rotating schedule that allowed time for them to have certain experiences with other choirs and some with just their own choirs.



Mass Choir

The mass choir was an important element in the Festival because it helped one of the main goals of any festival—singing together, especially with people outside of one's social circle. The organizers also wanted to ensure that if a school choir couldn't pull together their whole choir to make the day-long commitment, individual choir members who could come could participate. How do you pull off a mass choir experience on a grassroots budget and limited rehearsal time? The team decided that mass choir pieces would be drawn from the textbook series that all of the schools had in common. They chose *Sail Away* by **Malcolm Dalglish** and *Turn the World*



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Around by **Harry Belafonte**, as well as one easy round that could be taught on site and taken back to each school to be incorporated into their music libraries.



Sight-Singing and Rhythm Classes

Each choir in attendance had a sight-singing session where they practiced their routines for the sight-singing adjudication at LGPE. Sight-Singing clinician **Sue Briss** then worked with the kids to give some pointers and establish some ways to improve during the days before LGPE. Rhythm classes were conducted by **John Marvel** and kids learned through improvisation and playing various percussion instruments.

Adjudication and Work with a Clinician

Since part of the goal of the Festival was to prime each choir for their first LGPE adjudication and clinic, the Festival team brought in clinician **Dr. Susan Messer** and Georgia ACDA President **Amy Hughley** to score each choir according to the same rubric they would encounter at LGPE. **Dr. Messer** provided the clinic piece and helped the kids feel successful and excited about music while they were continuing to improve on crucial elements of their performance.



Social Interaction and Fun

The Festival team decided early on that the kids needed to have plenty of non-academic time if the Festival was to be successful. The day started with energizers as during registration to create a feeling of excitement for the day and to avoid the dead silence that comes when kids are unfamiliar with a situation and with new people. Lunchtime was important time for the kids to interact and the staff held a human scavenger hunt to help the kids get to know each other and learn about their similarities and differences. During the recreation times, teen mentors led circle songs and games.

Roll the credits please

The team of committed teachers worked hard on this project and each of them was willing to do it again in 2014. To pull off a good festival at the grassroots level on a shoestring budget, there are lots of things that have to be in place and this festival had some wonderful support. Each of the teachers took on a particular task and did it well: scheduling, arranging for clini-

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icians and adjudicators, venue arrangements, insurance waivers, etc. The team was fortunate that the **Mary Lin School** was willing to host the event and provide security at a low cost. They also made the decision that the kids would be responsible for their own transportation rather than be transported by school buses. Not every school is permitted to do that, but it was certainly a money saver. Tons of credit for the success of the event goes to the parents and families of the student for getting them there, paying a small fee (in some cases) for them to be there, and packing a lunch. There were also lots of volunteers like **Michele Ripley**, a Georgia State Masters candidate who wants to make her career in children's choir saw the Festival as a chance to be generous with her time, but also to gain valuable experience in her field. Chaperones, high school kids that helped with recreation, and administrators also gave their time during the day. Another key to this grassroots effort was securing adjudicators and clinicians that were willing to spend a little time on a Saturday for little or no money because they had a sincere belief in what the teachers and students were trying to accomplish.

Ready to plan a Community Children's Chorus Festival in your neck of the woods? Georgia ACDA wants to help! Please don't hesitate to contact us for interested clinicians or advice. We would also like to hear your stories of similar initiatives you may have started in your area. Contact me at paigesings@gmail.com

The Dig

Repertoire finds from out-of-the-way places

[One Voice](#) by Ruth Moody

SSA and piano

I first heard this **Wailin' Jennys** song performed by the **Electra Women's Choir** and I thought it would be great for young voices, too. In fact, **Ruth Moody** has also set it for SSA choir and Orff instruments. Harmonies should be no problem for experienced elementary school or novice high school treble choir.

[City Trees](#) by Joseph Gregorio

SSAA a cappella

Beautiful setting of an **Edna St. Vincent Millay** poem. Well suited to advanced children's choir or high school treble choir. Published by **Arete Music Imprints** and available for order online –

[O Magnum Mysterium](#) by Ivo Antognini

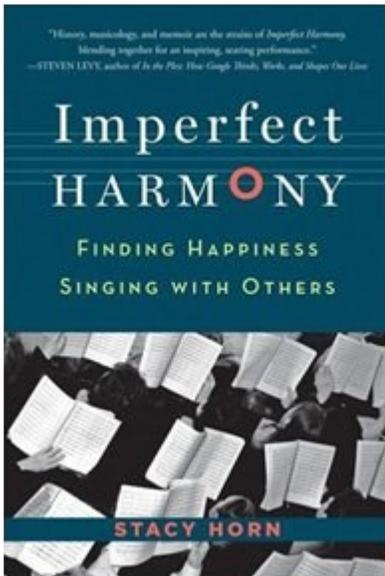
SA choir, cello, piano or organ

Swiss composer **Ivo Antognini** should be on everyone's list of composers to follow. He is currently the composer in residence for the **Calicantus Children's Choir** in Switzerland.☰

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Book Review From Our Membership



Imperfect Harmony: Finding Happiness Singing with Others

Stacy Horn

Workman Publishing Company

2013

Ms. Horn has sung with the Choral Society of Grace Church in New York City for many years. This book is a delightful account of being a part of a choir from the singer's perspective. Her observations are profound and moving. The teaser on the book cover states: "Imperfect Harmony is the story of one woman who has found joy and strength in the weekly ritual of singing and in the irresistible power of song."

Ms. Horn has done a vast amount of research. The history of choral singing in America is one topic. She relates information that is not a part of most music history classes. There are wonderful stories of singing schools and choirs born out of community events.

She also tells about several of the concerts given by the Choral Society and offers the reader insight to the different compositions sung. If the composer is living, she got an interview. The conductor was also interviewed about all the works that are a part of the book. She speaks about the joy of learning a new piece and of retuning to a beloved work.

One of the most affirming parts of the book for the choral director is that she learned how much work the conductor must do to make the choir successful. There are stories about score study, auditions, choosing repertoire, assigning voice parts, and even setting up the rehearsal space.

Read it! It will lift your spirits and remind you of why you do what you do!

Beth Brown Shugart
Georgia ACDA Past-President



If you would like to submit a book review of a book, film, documentary, or other media source that you think would benefit our membership, please contact Jay Champion, Georgia ACDA Newsletter Editor, at EncoreChoirCamp@gmail.com

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