



# Colorado RE:View

The Newsletter of the Colorado Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association  
Vol. 27, No. 2 Spring, 2010

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## Colorado ACDA Summer Workshop 2010 July 19-21, 2010

Bethany Lutheran Church, 4500 E. Hampden Avenue, Denver

### Featuring Guest Clinicians:

#### Dr. Brad Holmes



#### Dr. Mary Goetze



#### Sessions with Dr. Mary Goetze:

- ❖ Vocal Warm-ups
- ❖ Involving Singers in Artistic and Creative Processes
- ❖ Learning More than the Notes in the Choral Rehearsal
- ❖ Performing music from Diverse Cultures with Integrity

#### Sessions with Dr. Brad Holmes:

- ❖ Unifying Articulation Through Imagery and Movement
- ❖ Shape in Music as a Model of Life
- ❖ So Fierce the Transport: Programming and Audience Awareness

#### PLUS:

- ❖ College and Directors Honor Choir – Dr. Brad Holmes, Conductor
- ❖ 13 Reading Sessions
- ❖ Clinics Planned and Presented by CoACDA board members
- ❖ Music in Worship Day

**Something for Everyone!**

Brochures  
&  
Registration Forms  
for the

### CoACDA Summer Workshop

will reach your mailbox in  
May!

For more details:

[www.coloradoacda.org](http://www.coloradoacda.org)

## **CoACDA Board 2009-2011**

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Sidney Poppe  
Trail Ridge Middle School  
poppe\_sidney@stvrain.k12.co.us

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Metropolitan State College of Denver  
kornelse@mscd.edu

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Mountain Range High School  
heather.samsel@adams12.org

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cforkner@gmail.com

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Kim Hohensee  
hohenseefam@msn.com

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Dr. Frank Eychaner  
Colorado Christian University  
feychaner@ccu.edu

### **Newsletter Editor**

MB Krueger  
Metropolitan State College of Denver  
kruegema@mscd.edu

### **Webmaster**

Josh Jackson  
josh.jackson@comcast.net

## **From our President ...**

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This has been an exciting year for ACDA in Colorado. With much anticipation we were able to enjoy and experience SWACDA in our own backyard. Many thanks to Galen Darrough and Margie Camp for driving such a wonderful and successful conference! Thank you to all our Colorado board members and R&S chairs for your contributions as well. We had many Colorado directors and choirs performing in this conference. It was particularly pleasing for me to see several young directors whom I have known from their high school and colleges days, now with choirs of their own that were invited to perform at the conference, and also so many young directors who were so heavily involved on the board. Congratulations to all of our college, community, public school, and children's chorale directors and choirs for your participation at SWACDA. Thank you for all the work you do for choral music in our state.

The Colorado ACDA Board is currently heavily involved with preparation for our CoACDA Summer Workshop. For many years we have had summer workshops with world-class choral directors and teachers to share their experience and ideas with us, and this summer promises to be another exciting event. This year our headliners will be Dr. Mary Goetze from Indiana University, and Dr. Brad Holmes from Milikin University. Both directors and music educators bring extensive experience in the areas of music education, conducting, repertoire, multicultural repertoire/perspectives, and much more.

This year CoACDA will be hosting a Collegiate and Director's Honor Choir under the direction of Dr. Holmes. Our Collegiate R&S Chair, Beth Wagstrom from Adams State College in Alamosa, will be coordinating that event. In addition there will be many choral reading sessions and interest sessions. The summer workshop brochure and registration will be sent to you in May, and you may also check our website for updates on this event.

At SWACDA I attended many informative sessions and was able to take back materials and ideas that I could incorporate immediately in my classes. It doesn't matter how old we are, or how long we have been teaching, we should always be on the hunt for new ideas. Another very important aspect of the conference was the pleasure of connecting with my colleagues. I was able to catch up with old friends, strengthen connections with directors whom I have known for years, but had little opportunity for contact, and make new acquaintances. We must not forget how important it is to make these connections both personally and professionally.

Please plan to attend the CoACDA summer workshop July 19-21 and encourage our colleagues, particularly those new to the profession, to do the same.

Sidney Poppe  
President, Colorado ACDA

## Music in Worship

Dan Grace, Music and Worship R & S Chair



Hello Colleagues,

By now you should all be relaxing a bit following the end of Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Or, like me, you may be scrambling to catch up with all that you pushed to the back burner over the past few weeks. Either way, here we are. If we did our jobs effectively, we helped our congregations to have truly worshipful experiences during this recent time. Of course, we really should do that every Sunday, shouldn't we? Anyway, I wanted to mention something to you that I've had on my mind for quite some time. That thing is: what about us? When do we worship? Over the years I've talked with other church choir directors about the "worship health" of us, the people responsible for helping others to worship. Generally we have all agreed that we come away from a service without having much sense of having worshiped. Of course, it is our responsibility to help lead worship, but selfishly, I feel a little "left out." I would be curious to know if any of you feel the same, and if not, how you have managed it. I welcome your replies.

On another subject - those of you who attended last summer's CACDA workshop may remember that I asked each of you to share information about three or four of your favorite anthems. I said I would e mail you a composite list of those anthems so that we could learn from each other. Well, I never dreamed that the list would have a nine-month gestation period, but indeed it has. But, it is currently in process, and should reach you shortly after you receive this newsletter.

And speaking of Summer Workshops, there will be another one this July 19-21. Monday, July 19 will be Music-In-Worship day. There will be four reading sessions, including Christmas anthems, children's choir anthems, music for choirs with limited resources, and music for established choirs. To top it off, there will be three interest sessions, two featuring conductors from here in Colorado and one from out-state. All in all, a meaningful day well-spent. Come and learn, come and share, come and meet colleagues from other congregations and denominations. See you there.

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## Mark Your Calendars . . .

### CoACDA Summer Workshop 2010

July 21 – 23

Bethany Lutheran Church, 4500 E. Hampden, Denver

Register Now!

### St. Martin's Chamber Choir, "With Fresh Ears"

7:30 pm Friday, June 11, St. John's Cathedral, Denver

7:30 pm Saturday, June 13, First Congregational Church, Boulder

[www.stmartinchamberchoir.org](http://www.stmartinchamberchoir.org) for tickets and information

### Choral Celebration at Metro State

Thursday November 4 and Friday, November 5

King Center, 755 Lawrence Way, Denver

## Repertoire & Standards Chairs

### College and University

Beth Wagstrom

Adams State University

[bwagstrom@adams.edu](mailto:bwagstrom@adams.edu)

### High School

Sarah Harrison

Cherry Creek High School

[sharrison7@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:sharrison7@cherrycreekschools.org)

### Jazz and Show Choir

Julie Williams

Cherry Creek High School

[jwilliams67@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:jwilliams67@cherrycreekschools.org)

### Multi-Cultural

Sue Williamson

University of Colorado, Boulder

[sue.williamson@colorado.edu](mailto:sue.williamson@colorado.edu)

### Men's Choir

Larry Meerdinck

[lmeerdinck@me.com](mailto:lmeerdinck@me.com)

### Middle School/ Junior High Co-Chair

Abigail Kilcoyne

[klilcoyne\\_abigail@stvrain.k12.co.us](mailto:klilcoyne_abigail@stvrain.k12.co.us)

### Music and Worship

Dan Grace, DMA

Bethany Lutheran Church

[dbgrace@cybox.com](mailto:dbgrace@cybox.com)

### Women's Choir

Jill Burleson

University of Northern Colorado

[jill.burleson@unco.edu](mailto:jill.burleson@unco.edu)

### Youth and Student Activities

Leila Heil

Colorado State University

[lheil@colostate.edu](mailto:lheil@colostate.edu)

## The Choral Re-**“hear”**-sal: Developing Audiation Skills

Dr. Jill Burleson, Women’s Choir R & S Chair



As conductors, most of us would agree that one of the critical skills a good singer or conductor must possess is a “good ear.” While many of our singers receive outstanding training in vocal production, either in the private studio, or (hopefully) within the context of our rehearsals, ear-training is sometimes lacking. As a result, we often end up with a choir full of highly developed singers who depend quite heavily on the piano to “spoon-feed” parts. As our singers “grow-up” through the system, our goal is to take them from being “dependent” to the higher levels of becoming “independent” and/ or “interdependent.”

One the most memorable rehearsals that I attended was at a small undergraduate institution in the Midwest. From the moment the rehearsal began until it ended, there was NO PITCH given; not at the beginning of rehearsal, not between pieces. As a new piece started, the students set tonality by humming the tonic chord in 4 parts, then began the piece. **The well-developed ear was the expectation and the standard.**

As I have sought to develop singer-independence in my own choirs over the years, I have found that the consistent implementation of the following practices is essential in is developing the musical ear.

### 1. Use less (no) piano.

- Consider having “no piano days”, where you start the rehearsal with statement “would you please hum where you think an ‘a’ would be?”; check it with a standard (piano or tuning fork), then set tonality for each piece by outlining the tonic triad in the key.
- Consider giving pitches from tuning fork, rather than piano.
- Consider each student having/using a tuning fork to find their own starting pitch, to aid in developing their relative pitch and pitch independence.
- When the piano does give pitches, have them given in the dynamic level of the piece, not pounded out, to increase listening and student sensitivity to dynamics.
- Have accompanist play **only** intro and interludes, but drop out during the portions that are sung, to encourage ear development, yet “reminding” of the pitch standard during the interludes.

### 2. Hone your own sense of pitch as a conductor.

Sometimes we are using the piano in lieu of developing our own skills. Our most valuable asset as a conductor is our ear.

### 3. Program unaccompanied literature with your choir frequently.

Rather than “working up to” a cappella music, consider programming it the **first semester** to immediately set the listening standard.

### 4. Expect in-tune singing from the “get-go” to encourage good intonation.

- Insist on warm-ups being in tune and sung with matched vowel shapes to aid in tuning.
- Remember to correct intonation early in rehearsal process, particularly when sight reading; muscle memory is powerful, particularly the initial aural imprinting.
- Encourage singers to sight read at a piano (p) dynamic level to encourage listening.
- Consistently implement solfege, reminding singers to **maintain good vowel production** while using solfege, to assist with tuning.
- Focus on downward vocalizes and lighter tone production to aid in listening.
- Implement chromatic exercises in warm ups to stretch the ear.
- Implement more rounds.
- Implement “Minor/Major Warm-ups”: change it up in the middle of a warm-up unannounced, switching between modalities on the “cue chords” given on the piano.

- Don't always move warm-ups up and down by half- steps; change it up with occasional whole steps and skips between patterns.
- Devise warm-ups from the choral literature being rehearsed. Have students identify which portion of which piece they are singing in these warm ups.

### 5. Additional tips to promote listening:

- Get the singers into mixed formation as soon as possible- it promotes lighter singing, singer independence, and increased listening.
- Part Exchange: have altos to sing soprano, soprano sing alto, enable them to switch on command. Also do a T/S switch and an A/B switch, having them sing the other part in their own octave.
- Mini sectionals: conduct rehearsals with sections standing in a circle of their own section, with the other section/circles rehearsing in the room simultaneously.
- Consider holding sectional rehearsals with at least two parts at a time (SA and TB, etc.). Sectionals conducted in a vacuum do not encourage listening.
- Implement Audiation Exercises: Ask students to all begin singing a piece, then to drop out for specified measures, "thinking" their part, then resuming singing at a specified spot.
- Identify pillar chords within pieces: isolate and tune, sing from pillar chord to pillar choir, to encourage harmonic listening.
- Mix vertical and harmonic teaching. Rather than just teaching individual lines, stop and isolate chords, building them from the bottom up to encourage "spot tuning" within a piece and listening within the harmonic context.

Remember: **Excellence** is not necessarily **doing any one thing extraordinarily well**; rather, it is **doing many ordinary things extraordinarily well**.

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## Not Scared to Scat

Julie Williams, Jazz and Show Choir R & S Chair



Being the founder and former director of the Rocky Mountain Vocal Jazz Camp ([rmvjc.com](http://rmvjc.com)) and directing various vocal jazz choirs, I have had the opportunity to rub elbows with some of the most talented jazz vocalists and teachers in the field. While running RMVJC I found that the one aspect of vocal jazz that a great number of participants struggled with was vocal jazz improvisation.

"Scat singing is the vocalization of sounds and syllables that are musical but have no literal translation," Bob Stoloff. "Vocal Improvisation is the spontaneous invention of melody, rhythm and syllables over a given chord progression." Michele Weir.

Here are two of the best techniques I have used to learn and teach vocal jazz improvisation.

The first technique is aural transcription or to aurally transcribe recorded solos. Start with an easy tune, one you love, and listen to a recording of it at least 10 times before you try to learn it. Then sing the solo with the recording at least 10 times. Sing it with the recording until you know it thoroughly. Then try to sing it or play it by yourself with a rhythm section or a piano player. By this repetition, you are learning the jazz language and vocabulary. While attending UNC, my vocal jazz choir director had us aurally transcribe "Sassy's Blues" (Sassy Swings the Tivoli - Sarah Vaughan), in class and listen to a recording of the tune in-between rehearsals. Some of the best vocal jazz improvisers I know began their vocal jazz improvisation journey with this experience. While in high school, I fell in love with Ella Fitzgerald and listened to her recording of St. Louis Blues and eventually memorized her scat solo. While singing in my high school jazz choir I found myself feeling confident improvising and I know it was because I was obsessed with Ella and listened to her album daily. Through this process I was learning the vocal jazz language and vocabulary.

The second technique is melodic variation. Learn the melody of a tune so that you can sing it comfortably. Sing the same tune using syllables instead of lyrics. Keep the syllables relatively simple. Sing the same tune again, making variations in the rhythm of the tune. Once you feel successful, change a couple notes of the melody. Throw in a few more simple note changes. Add elements of articulation and stylistic melodic embellishments while continuing to make small alterations with the rhythm and melody of the tune. With each additional repetition of the tune, stray further and further away from the original melody.

Jazz is an aural art form. You cannot learn the feel of jazz by reading music or having a teacher describe it to you. These two improvisation techniques as well as listening to different jazz vocalists and instrumentalists sing or play the same jazz standard will greatly improve your vocal jazz improvisation technique as well as your appreciation for vocal jazz.

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## **Ownership in the College Choir**

Beth Wagstrom, College and University R & S Chair



While administrative work is a necessary part of being the director of a choral program, I think we can all agree that our main satisfaction comes from making music with our ensembles. But are our students as excited about that as we are? One way to increase enthusiasm is by encouraging student ownership in the ensemble.

Part of the joy of working with college choirs is recognizing that many of the students will become music educators themselves. It is never too early for them to begin making their own technical and artistic decisions. What better place to start honing those skills, than in the collegiate choral rehearsal room? I ask for a lot of feedback from my students during rehearsal. After running through a piece: what went well – what do we need to improve on? Why do you think I stopped you? Their answers need to be specific – merely saying we were not in tune is not enough.

In addition, I ask for possible solutions, again being specific. They may not always give me the answer that I am looking for, although sometimes they spark ideas that I would not have thought of otherwise. The most important thing is that they are paying attention and really listening to what is going on during the rehearsal process. This makes them better performers, better potential educators and stronger musicians.

A lot of rehearsal time is spent discussing the texts and why the composers set them the way that they did. Usually, composers are not working on a strictly theoretical basis when they compose music. They choose certain chords, articulations, dynamic markings, because those things enhance the text that is being set, or create a certain atmosphere, or provoke an emotional response. In addition to answering the questions of what and how, it is essential to answer the question, why. By giving students an emotional or intellectual connection to the music, they are more likely to internalize the technical and artistic elements you are asking for. Their musical response will be spontaneous and organic, rather than studied.

These concepts are nothing new and they can be employed, with certain adaptations, to all levels of learning. This does not mean that my rehearsals are run by committee. It is still a benevolent dictatorship. However, it does allow the students to participate in the rehearsal process on a level to which they may not be accustomed. That ownership leads to a sense of accomplishment and cohesiveness in the ensemble that they have created themselves.

As E. B. White wrote, “I get up every morning determined to both change the world and to have... a good time. Sometimes, this makes planning the day difficult.” We may not be able to change the world, but hopefully we can inspire our students, and instill in them the confidence and artistry necessary to make a difference in their students’ lives. And have a good time in the process.

## The Editor's Last Word: The Best Part of Teaching

MB Krueger, Newsletter Editor



Recently, three amigos – Mike Kornelsen, my husband Tim Krueger, and I – traveled to New York City to take private conducting lessons with Dr. Dennis Keene, who is the founder and director of the professional choir Voices of Ascension. He is also the foremost American authority on the music of Duruflé, and an internationally known and respected conductor and musician. We each sat in on each other's lessons, and had a wonderfully challenging, inspirational, and thrilling learning experience. Within this tiny little article, I can't begin to describe Dr. Keene's enlightening approach to conducting and teaching, but I will say that we all came home excited to get in front of a choir and apply the new techniques and ideas we had learned. Over dinner the night before we headed home, Mike told us that he thinks the best part of teaching is learning. How energizing it is to seek out learning opportunities that help us become better teachers! What a joy it is to witness a student really understanding for the first time something we have been working to teach! How rewarding it is to learn from that student something we had never realized about teaching! These are the experiences that make us long to get back into the classroom after spring break or summer vacation; they remind us of the passion that led us there in the first place.

The CoACDA Summer Workshop is just such a learning opportunity. Come and be inspired by our headliners, Dr. Brad Holmes and Dr. Mary Goetze, as well as by your friends and colleagues around the state who will share their ideas about repertoire, rehearsing, programming, teaching, and much more. The Summer Workshop will be full of practical sessions for all kinds of directors – church choir, children's choir, community choir, middle school and high school choir, college choir, jazz choir, women's choir, men's choir, and any others that I have forgotten to include. Take this opportunity to learn some new things and re-learn some old ones. It's the best part of teaching.

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### Repertoire Suggestions

#### **Artsa Alinu**

Composer/Arranger: Israeli Pioneer Song, arr. Nina Gilbert  
Voicing & Accompaniment: SSAA or TTBB, a cappella  
Language: Hebrew  
Difficulty: Easy - Medium  
Publisher: Treble Clef Music Press (SSAA)/Colla Voce (TTBB)  
Category: Women's or Men's

#### **Bright Morning Stars**

Composer/Arranger: Kentucky Folk Hymn, arr. Jay Althouse  
Voicing & Accompaniment: SSAA, a cappella  
Language: English  
Difficulty: Easy - Medium  
Publisher: Alfred  
Category: Women's

#### **Zikr: An Islamic Chant**

Composer/Arranger: A. R. Rahman, arr. Ethan Sperry  
Voicing & Accompaniment: SATB, guitar & percussion ad lib.  
Language: Urdu  
Difficulty: Medium-Difficult  
Publisher: earthsongs – Global Rhythms, Ethan Sperry, ed.  
Category: Mixed

#### **Alma Dei Creatoris**

Composer/Arranger: W. A. Mozart  
Voicing & Accompaniment: SATB, piano (or 2 violins + continuo)  
Language: Latin  
Difficulty: Medium  
Publisher: cpdl.org (public domain; free to copy)  
Category: Mixed

#### **Out in the Rain (Easter Monday)**

Composer/Arranger: Bob Chilcott  
Voicing & Accompaniment: SSA, piano  
Language: English  
Difficulty: Medium  
Publisher: Oxford  
Category: Women's

#### **Mogami River Boat Song**

Composer/Arranger: Osamu Shimizu  
Voicing & Accompaniment: TTBB a cappella  
Language: Japanese  
Difficulty: Medium - Difficult  
Publisher: earthsongs  
Category: Men's

#### **Three Japanese Folk Songs**

Composer/Arranger: Misuzu McManus  
Voicing & Accompaniment: SSAA, piano, oboe  
Language: Japanese  
Difficulty: Easy - Medium  
Publisher: Santa Barbara  
Category: Women's



**Colorado RE:View**

Heather Samsel, Treasurer  
13320 Jasmine St.  
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Mark your Calendars for the **CoACDA Summer Workshop:**  
**July 19 - 21, 2010**

**National ACDA Advocacy Resolution**

**Whereas** the human spirit is elevated to a broader understanding of itself through study and performance in the aesthetic arts; and

**Whereas** serious cutbacks in funding and support have steadily eroded arts institutions and their programs throughout our country,

**Be it resolved** that all citizens of the United States actively voice their affirmative and collective support for necessary funding at the local, state, and national levels of education and government, to ensure survival of arts programs for this and future generations.

Learn more and find ACDA Membership Application forms at [www.acdaonline.org](http://www.acdaonline.org).

**Visit the CoACDA Website:**  
**[www.coloradoacda.org](http://www.coloradoacda.org)**