



COLORADO RE:VIEW

The Newsletter of the Colorado Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association

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Bethany Lutheran Church

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Englewood, CO

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Charles Bruffy, conductor of the Grammy Award winning Kansas City Chorale and Phoenix Chorale



Ann Howard Jones, Director of Choral Activities, Boston University

Please see www.coloradoacda.org for more information and for registration.



**From the President:
Catherine Sailer,
University of Denver**

It may seem like it will never get here, but before we know it, summer will be upon us, and with that, comes the Colorado ACDA summer conference. Our board is hard at work planning an exciting conference for our state. We are

looking forward to amazing sessions from our headliners, Ann Howard Jones, and Charles Bruffy. These two clinicians bring a variety of diverse knowledge and experience and we are so pleased that they will be here to share this with us. Charles Bruffy will be conducting our Director's/Collegiate Choir, for anyone interested in participating. This is a fantastic chance to really dive into the rehearsal process of multi-grammy award winning conductor of the Phoenix Chorale and the Kansas City Chorale. I highly recommend getting involved. Dr. Jones will be sharing from her wealth of experience with Boston University, the Tanglewood Festival, and as Robert Shaw's assistant for Atlanta Symphony Chorus and the Robert Shaw Festival Chorus.

In addition to the teaching and inspiration from our esteemed special guests, R & S chairs in each area are hard at work creating interest sessions and reading sessions that will be valuable to every area, and will challenge us to bring quality repertoire and fresh perspectives to our choirs. We will also have plenty of chances to catch up with old friends and colleagues, and make new connections in the choral field.

New this year is an interest session on Colorado Choral Composers. If you are a composer, or know of someone you would like to see included in this session, please let me know at csailer@du.edu. It will be exciting to get to know more about our talented pool of local composers, and to connect our conductors to these local musicians for future collaborations.

On another note, I want to congratulate all the ways that Colorado was represented at the SWACDA divisional conference. Adam Cave and the Girls' 21 choral performance (Cherry Creek HS), interest sessions by Ryan Olsen (CSU), reading sessions by Sharon Darland (Poudre HS) and Jena Dickey (Young Voices of Colorado), Men's 7-10 honor choir conducted by Andrea Ramsey (CU), three graduate students in the conducting competition: Taylor Martin (DU), Paul Thompson (CU) and Braeden Ayers (UNC), and graduate student Krista Beckman (DU) presenting in the poster session. Thank you for representing our state so well.

I wish you good music and good singing! See you July 18-20 at CoACDA!

All the best,

Catherine

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Upcoming Performances and Events

April 8 7:30pm Colorado State University Men's Chorus and
University Chorus "Aspects of Love," Griffin Concert Hall,
University Center for the Arts, Fort Collins, CO

April 16 7:30pm ASTER Women's Chamber Choir "Poets,
Patriots, and Pioneers: Celebrating Women's Words"
Broomfield Auditorium, 3 Community Park Road, Broomfield,
CO 80020 www.AsterChoir.org

April 11 7pm ASTER Women's Chamber Choir "Poets,
Patriots, and Pioneers: Celebrating Women's Words" Good
Shepherd Episcopal Church, 8545 E. Dry Creek Road,
Centennial, CO, 80112 with Freewill offering to support "The
Crisis Center"
<http://gshep.org/ministry/music-mission-concert-series>

April 17, 5pm Colorado Bach Ensemble "Weinen, Klagen,
Sorge, Zagen, BWV 12, Bethany Lutheran Church,
www.coloradobach.org

April 23, 7:30pm & April 24, 2:00pm Denver Chorale Spring
Concert, Washington Park United Church of Christ, 400 S
Williams St, Denver, CO 80209 www.denverchorale.org

April 28 & 29, 7:30pmn Sergei Prokofiev's "Alexander Nevsky
Cantata," Griffin Concert Hall, University Center for the Arts,
Fort Collins, CO

May 8, 2:30pm & May 14, 7:30pm Safonia Women's
Chamber Choir performing Vivaldi's "Gloria" set for women's
voices, send-off concert for trip to Carnegie Hall,
www.safonia.org

May 14, 7:30pm Kantorei "Movie Music" Montview
Boulevard Presbyterian Church, www.kantorei.org

May 15, 3:00pm Kantorei "Movie Music" Cherry Creek
Presbyterian Church, www.kantorei.org

June 3, 7:30pm St. Martin's Chamber Choir "Short Stories in
Song" Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church, Denver
www.stmartinschamberchoir.org

June 5, 3:00pm St. Martin's Chamber Choir "Short Stories in
Song" St. Gabriel the Archangel Episcopal Church, Cherry
Hills Village, www.stmartinschamberchoir.org

June 17, 7:30pm & June 18, 2pm Arvada Chorale "Boogie
Woogie JUMP!" with special guests the Queen City Jazz
Band, Arvada United Methodist Church, 6750 Carr St.,
Arvada. www.arvadachorale.org

June 24-26 Mennonite Society of Musical Heritage, adult
choral festival with guest conductor Mark Bartel from Friends
University.



The Aging Voice

**Dana Ihm, Director of Choral Activities,
Colorado State University-Pueblo
Community Choir R & S Chair, CoACDA**

As the voice ages it becomes increasingly more important to use proper vocal technique to prevent the deterioration of the vocal mechanism. There is only so much we can do to delay the aging process but with attention to vocal care, proper posture and breathing technique, we can certainly maintain a healthy singing voice for a much

longer time period. Church and Community Choirs are a great place for our older singers to continue to participate musically in a meaningful way, but often we as directors of these groups feel that we don't have the right to "correct" the singing technique of those singing in these groups because they are there for fun or to praise God in worship. I'm here to tell you that not only should you do this, but it is imperative you do so if you want to maintain a level of performance that will keep your program thriving and growing. No one wants to sing in an ensemble that sounds "old" or "wobbly", especially younger singers who are the life blood of your organization. Here are some ideas to use in your ensembles that may be helpful for you in addressing these issues.

Vocal care should be one of your top priorities as a choral director. Most of our adult singers work all day and don't often speak or use their voices correctly. Many speak in ranges that are not optimal for their singing voice and continually press down on the vocal mechanism as they speak. This causes fatigue and stress on the voice that translates into a strained and tense singing voice. Emphasize speaking with a singing quality to the tone and raising the pitch level at which they talk to help relieve some of the pressure on the voice.

Correct posture and breathing seem to be the first things to go as we age. Many community and church choirs rehearse for extended time periods and usually sitting in chairs which is not optimal. Older singers have a difficult time standing for extended periods and so it is important to allow some sitting time, but always insist on correct posture for sitting – both feet on the floor, sitting on the edge of your seat, and the back away from the chair. This will allow the singers to more effectively breathe and support the sound.

As our choir ages, vocal tone and resonance also suffer. This is generally caused by the lack of muscular coordination that develops over time. When the lower body is unable to support appropriately, tension begins to develop in the shoulders, neck, jaw and head. This leads to poor singing habits. You can help with this by involving bodily motion with warm –up exercises and this helps with posture and helps to energize the tone once again. Older singers simply forget what it feels like to sing correctly and we have to keep reminding them.

And finally, doing simple exercises to develop their inner hearing and sense of intonation is key to good ensemble sound. We make a big mistake by assuming they already know this and so we shouldn't have to address it. As singers age, their hearing and eyesight become weaker and so they need to learn to adjust what they do vocally to accommodate for this decline in physical abilities. Older singers begin to "shout sing" to hear themselves and reminding them of good ensemble sound with a few key warm-ups is very beneficial for the entire organization.

And remember, always insist on proper vocal technique.



THE MUSICS WITHIN OUR BORDERS

Wanda Vasquez de Garcia, Ethnic and Multicultural Perspectives

Spring concert season is around the corner! Perhaps you planned your concert music in advance at the beginning of the school year, or if you are like me, you are still looking for that special piece to complete the program. Whether you have a theme for your concert or you just like to find good repertoire and wave it together, you're still missing something, maybe it is the piece that you want to use to showcase another culture - (one of your students') or your choir diction in another language.

As a foreign resident of this country, the sound of America is, in itself, "multicultural" to me. I am charmed by the sweet melodies and poetry of the folk songs, intrigued by the complexity of the Native American culture, and excited by the power of the spirituals. But perhaps, if you think about it, this country is so vast that it might feel the same to you, for example a choir from the Midwest performing a spiritual, might not feel it as natural to them as it would be for a choir from the south. Which sparks the question, what is multicultural? According to the Oxford dictionary, Multicultural is "*relating to or constituting several cultural or ethnic groups within a society.*"

As music educators working with choirs we have an abundance of resources that allow us to showcase the many cultures of this great country. Resources such as Spirituals Project and the Choral Net are a few of the online communities that we can visit and ask for suggestions about repertoire; our local ACDA chapter, and summer workshop are also great resources.

I would like to make the argument that Native American music is one that doesn't enjoy the same level of popularity as musics from other cultures. Most Native American choral works use native texts but not necessarily comply with the aesthetics of the community being featured. With that said I would like to introduce to you a Denver composer, Excier Rodriguez, who is creating choral music inspired on some of Colorado's and southwest's Native American communities. His music is accessible for high school choirs. In his *Ockaya, Corn Grinding Song of the Zuñi Nation*, the composer creates the percussive beat of a work song using the lower voices and the beautiful melody of the women singing as they work on grinding the corn. He has two other works, *Chuhwuht, Song of the World: A Creation Song of the Pimas* that he dedicated to the legendary conductor Weston Noble, his mentor. *Chuhwuht* is written for mixed choir with a baritone solo and Native American drums. *Chuhtek-Ohohik-Nieh, Blue Bird Song*, for mixed choir, alto solo and string ensemble.

If you would like to know more about his music, feel free to contact me and I will share his contact and sample music.

I invite you to explore the multiple soundscapes within our borders.



Guess Who's Coming To Dinner

**Kyle Fleming, College & University,
University of Denver**

If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas... - George Bernard Shaw

As is the case with many of our wonderful newsletter articles, this is a friendly reminder of a few things we are already aware of somewhere in the recesses of our "choral brains." So, here I go preaching to the choir about the benefits of a good ole fashioned *podium exchange*.

Over the course of the past few months I have had several colleagues visit my ensembles (community, college and church) as well as marvelous opportunities to visit the rehearsals of other conductors. I am reminded of the many benefits that can come from having guest conductors in and serving as guest conductors. In fact, there may be no more efficient and effective tool to shoehorn us out of our well-intended but sometimes tired and insulated routines.

Of course, the obstacles are numerous and recurring: busy schedules, navigating the logistics of planning to leave (escape) the building, and the tyranny of the urgent in terms of learning music for upcoming concerts. This is all before we get to the internal obstacles...the sometimes present insecurities about our own skills and abilities as well as the fear of judgment that surrounds letting our colleagues hear the wonderful works in progress affectionately known as our choirs. I would suggest that the potential benefits outweigh the risks and hassles!

I. There are several ways to facilitate conductor "visits":

Do a full podium exchange – you and a colleague swap places for a rehearsal or a day or something in between

Schedule a simple visit by a colleague – this could be merely to observe and/or actually work with your ensemble

Ask a colleague if you can come visit their rehearsal – again this could be merely to observe and/or actually work with the ensemble

You *and* your ensemble go visit a colleague or neighboring choir (or vice versa)

Offer to help a colleague with sectionals or vice versa

Facetime or Skype with a colleague and his/her ensemble during rehearsal (i.e. digital sing-in)

Note that the above suggestions avoid full-blown musical collaborations...these are merely a handful of ways to connect without major and ongoing investments of time and resources.

II. Benefits of having a guest conductor visit:

Choirs often clean and straighten up, so to speak, when

there is a guest "expert" in the room

There is nothing like a fresh set of eyes and ears to provide a different take on our ensemble's strengths and weaknesses

A guest conductor can often say the same things we've said a thousand times but with revelatory effect (insert regular director banging head against wall here...)

A guest conductor can provide, somewhat, objective feedback on longer term goals and objectives that the choir has been working on

In the sentiments of George Bernard Shaw, the presence of a colleague doubles the wisdom, skill and problem-solving juice in the room

If we are open to it, a guest conductor can provide important feedback on our pedagogy, routines and strategies

Our ensembles can benefit greatly from working with, hearing from and following a different face and set of hands

It can simply be fun to have a special visitor who "gets it"

III. Benefits of being a guest conductor:

It's fun

It instantly takes us out of our routinized comfort zones thereby stretching us...our skills, techniques and perspectives

It often highlights both our strengths as conductors as well as areas for growth and improvement

There are powerful and profound benefits to simply being in someone else's choral world...much like visiting a foreign country it cures myopathy and often generates appreciation not only for our own lives (and choirs, institutions and positions) but also the lives of others

Did I mention it's fun

IV. A few helpful tips:

Try to get some plans in motion before your choir "season" begins (whatever your choral season may be)

Work with people you trust (vs. people you are trying to impress)

Share plans with your choir earlier than later to help ease any anxiety that might rise and create a sense of excitement and anticipation

Try to preplan some time after the visit to talk shop

Don't over plan the visits – K.I.S.S. ("Keep It Simple Stupid Singers")

Again, much of this we already know, but as is often that case it falls by the wayside in our fast and frenzied march to the concert stage. Give it a try...I believe the benefits will outweigh the logistics and hassle. If you're short on places to visit, my rehearsals are always open and my choirs would welcome a break from the regular craziness of you-know-who. Best of luck visiting and having visitors!



Going Beyond Pretty Songs and Fun Pieces: Adding Social Justice Themes to Concert Programming

Ryan Olsen, Newsletter Editor, Colorado State University

This year I had the opportunity to conduct a full-time Women's Choir for the first time. I have conducted Women's Choirs in rehearsals, honor choirs, and single concerts, but never for a full academic year; never from "beginning to end" with a new group of students to watch them gel over the course of the year. I've conducted numerous Mixed and Men's choirs, but this was new territory for me. As a result, I polished off my database and folders of repertoire to pick pieces from my "bucket list" for whenever I conducted a Women's Choir, many of these pieces had little more than a cursory examination before they were filed for "someday" use. As conductors of Women's Choirs probably know, I was surprised by the themes of many of the standards and pieces being published for young women to sing. Yes, many were about love, rainbows, flowers, lullabies, etc. and I had to wade deeply into the repertoire to find pieces with themes that I wanted to share. I also thought about my five-year old daughter and the kinds of messages I wanted her to hear or theoretically sing about.

While I've always been proud of the repertoire I've programed over the years, since coming to Colorado, I've found myself moving away from merely pretty songs and fun pieces and tried to develop an overall message or theme to my concerts. I've begun challenging my students and singers with themes on various aspects of social justice, be they war and peace, our reactions to violence and oppression, or giving a voice to those who often struggle to be heard and under represented populations. This year it manifested in helping the young women in my choir to find their voice and be heard in a world that still says girls are inferior to boys in certain things, girls constantly need to value their worth on their appearance, and many other themes that they brought up over the course of the year.

The centerpiece of this social justice theme was a series of seven pieces by Linda Tutas Haugen entitled, *Anne Frank: A Living Voice*, which we performed as part of CSU's Holocaust Awareness Week. All of the text came from the *Diary of a Young Girl* and was chosen by the composer as a way to help young women share the poignant voice of another young woman during one of the darkest times in Western History: World War II and the Holocaust. I was amazed at how much some of my students knew about the events of WWII and the Holocaust, but I was more amazed at how little many of them knew as well. We spent considerable rehearsal time discussing the historical events and impact of the war, met with the composer, a local Rabbi, a history professor, and heard an Auschwitz survivor speak on campus. The music was extremely challenging (no key signatures throughout, all modes used extensively, and meters change regularly to reflect the text), but the theme was even more challenging for these young women. During our debriefing after the two concerts, many students commented on how they felt after this "journey" (their word) and how these pieces wouldn't "let go" of them after the performance and how they influenced them to see the events in Syria and other parts of the world through a new perspective. We all truly felt how art and music can change our lives and perspectives, and why they are essential parts of the human and educational experience. You can learn more about *Anne Frank: A Living Voice* by visiting <http://lindatutashaugen.com/AnneFrank.htm>.

In the fall semester we also performed "Famine Song" by Matthew Culloton, which is about the plight of women in Africa during the drought season, "Moon Goddess" by Jocelyn Hagen with a poem by a Sumerian priestess written around 2300BCE (one of the oldest existing texts and by a woman!) about a strong woman finding her voice in ancient history, and "Tree of Peace" by Gwyneth Walker, which we presented as a response to the struggle for LGBTQ equality in various communities. The CSU Men's Chorus is preparing a concert that features music from Islamic traditions as an attempt to help bridge the understanding and alleviate the fear from lack of understanding of Muslim culture through music. As a conductor/teacher who has now worked in three states with large Spanish-speaking populations (AZ, TX, and now CO) I'm amazed at the lack of good and accessible choral repertoire in Spanish and by Latin American composers. This does a tremendous disservice to a large population of students in our schools and people in our communities, limiting participation and diversity in our ensembles and audiences.

The music is out there, and I'd be happy to share some of my favorites pieces if you email me at Ryan.Olsen@colostate.edu, if you take the time to program pieces that go beyond "pretty songs and fun pieces." I promise you that the experience will be well worth the extra effort and time, and will touch you, your singers, and your audiences in poignant ways. Happy programming!

Meet the Summer Conference Headliners



Charles Bruffy, conductor of the Grammy Award-winning Kansas City Chorale and Phoenix Chorale

One of the most admired choral conductors in the United States, the Grammy Award-winning conductor Charles Bruffy began his career as a tenor soloist, performing with the Robert Shaw Festival Singers in recordings as well as concerts in France and at Carnegie Hall. Shaw encouraged his development as a conductor, and in 1996 he was invited by American Public Media's "Performance Today" to help celebrate Shaw's 80th birthday with an on-air tribute. In 1999, The New York Times named him as the late, great conductor's potential heir.

Bruffy has been artistic director of the Kansas City Chorale since 1988, the Phoenix Chorale since 1999, chorus director for the Kansas City Symphony Chorus since 2008, as well as the director of music at Rolling Hills Church since 1994.)The Grammy award-winning Kansas City Chorale evolved from a group initially assembled for a choral director's University of Missouri-Kansas City doctoral recital.) Bruffy conducts workshops and clinics across the U.S., including teaching at the Westminster Choir College Summer Conducting Institute since 2006. In the summer of 2013, Bruffy was involved with The Anúna International Choral Summer School in Dublin, Ireland, and in 2014 conducted the Kansas City Chorale in performance at the Association of Canadian Choral Communities convention in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Bruffy is a member of the Advisory Boards of the Atlanta Young Singers of Callenwolde and WomenSing in the San Francisco Bay area, and has served on the Board of Chorus America for seven years. Bruffy holds a Masters Degree in Conducting from the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Bruffy is renowned for his fresh and passionate interpretations of standards of the choral repertoire, and for championing new music. He has commissioned and premiered works by composers such as Ola Gjeilo, Matthew Harris, Anne Kilstofte, Libby Larsen, Zhou Long, Michael McGlynn, Cecilia McDowall, Stephen Paulus, Stephen Sametz, Philip Stopford, Steven Stucky, Joan Szymko, Eric Whitacre and Chen Yi. Under his supervision, the Roger Dean Company, a division of the Lorenz Corporation, publishes a choral series specializing in music for professional ensembles and sophisticated high school and college choirs.

Bruffy's eclectic discography includes six recordings with Nimbus Records and seven recordings with Chandos Records. The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences has recognized five of these recordings with a total of 13 Grammy nominations and five Grammy wins, most recently in 2015 for Best Choral Performance for Rachmaninoff's "All-night Vigil" with the Kansas City and Phoenix Chorales.



Ann Howard Jones, Director of Choral Activities, Boston University

Ann Howard Jones is professor of music and director of choral activities at Boston University. She conducts the Symphonic and Chamber Choruses, supervises conducting students in the Concert Chorus and the Women's Chorale, teaches graduate choral conducting, and administers the MM and DMA programs in Choral Conducting. Dr. Jones is also the conductor of the BU Tanglewood Institute Young Artists' Vocal Program Chorus, an auditioned ensemble of high school singers who rehearse and perform at Tanglewood in the summer. Recognized as a distinguished clinician, adjudicator, teacher and conductor, she has led many all-state and regional choruses, workshops and masterclasses in the U.S., Europe, South America, Canada and Asia. She has been invited to teach and conduct at North Texas, Michigan State, Missouri, the University of Miami, San Diego State, the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Southern Methodist University, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, the University of Kentucky and the University of New Mexico. From 1984 to 1998, Dr. Jones was the assistant conductor to the late Robert Shaw and the Atlanta Symphony choruses, where she was the assistant conductor for choruses, sang in the alto section, assisted with the Robert Shaw Chamber Singers and helped to organize the Robert Shaw Institute. She sang and recorded with the Festival Singers both in France and in the U.S. The Festival Singers were also represented in performances of major works for chorus and orchestra at Carnegie Hall in a series of performance workshops. After Shaw's death in 1999, Jones was invited to conduct the Robert Shaw Tribute Singers for the American Choral Directors Association conferences in San Antonio and Orlando. Choruses at Boston University have been invited to appear at conventions of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) in Boston and New York City. Jones has traveled with a group of BU graduate students to Padua and Venice, Italy, to perform and to study. A similar trip was made to Oslo and Bergen, Norway. In the spring of 2009, the graduate conducting students joined Jones at the national convention of ACDA in Oklahoma City, where she was invited to prepare and conduct the world premiere of a work by Dominick Argento. The conductors sang in the chorus and assisted in the preparations for the performance. Among the honors that Jones has received are the coveted Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching from Boston University, a Fulbright professorship to Brazil, and a lectureship for the Lily Foundation. At the National Conference of the American Choral Directors Association in 2011, she was named the recipient of the Robert Shaw Choral Award for distinguished service to the profession, the highest award given by the association. Ann Howard Jones is a native of Iowa, and her degrees are from the University of Iowa

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Colorado American Choral Directors Association

c/o Dr. Ryan Olsen, newsletter editor
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Send us your performance information

We would like to include upcoming performance information in newsletters and as monthly e-blasts to members. Please send basic information including ensemble name, performance dates/times, venue and address, and a website where members can find more information to ryan.olsen@colostate.edu and we will include these as part of our regular communication for free. Please inquire about larger print or electronic advertisements.