



Melisma

Official publication of the North Central Division—American Choral Directors Association

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“Why do I go to the NC Conference?”
Headliner Concert
Music in Worship
Collegiate Opportunities

See inside for interviews
with VOCES8 co-founder/artistic director
and two of our Honor Choir guest directors,
plus details on “This We Pray” and the Collegiate ENGAGE!

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Dr. Angela Broeker, director of choral activities

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Melisma is the official newsletter of the North Central Division of the American Choral Directors Association.

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NC-ACDA reserves the right to edit and approve all materials.

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David Puderbaugh

Happy New Year!

Although 2016 is already a month old, for me it's still quite new, so long as I keep inputting forms and checks with "2015" when asked for the year. In some ways, the year is still new, indeed; universities have just begun the spring term, the choral competition season has kicked off, and honor choir festivals have begun their run through the next several weeks. Once the smoke clears, some of us in the North Central division may already be witnessing the first signs of spring.

In this issue, President **Bob Demaree** provides readers with tantalizing details regarding our upcoming division conference in Sioux Falls. If you are still on the fence about attending, let me help you out: it is going to be a fantastic gathering you won't want to miss! There is something, actually multiple things, for everyone, and it is one of the best opportunities we have to recharge our choral work and learn from respected experts, to reconnect with old friends and make valuable new ones. Moreover, Sioux Falls is a delightful city; my two trips there in preparation for this conference have been eye-opening. Washington Pavilion is a cultural jewel unique to our region and the envy of others.

A detailed view of what is in store for you in Sioux Falls can be found on the division website: www.ncacda.org. This issue of *Melisma* aims to bring aspects of the schedule into high relief. Two conference honor choir conductors, **Vijay Singh** and **Lynnel Jenkins**, talk about their rehearsal techniques and priorities. Lynnel's interview happens to be a transcript of one of the division's R&R Google Hangouts, held last fall. The Hangouts are wonderful opportunities to connect with your R&R chairs as well as top choral experts to exchange ideas and ask questions. Check them out! This issue also features a first for *Melisma*: an audio interview with **Barney Smith**, the founder of **VOCES8**, one the world's hottest vocal ensembles and the headliner performing group at our conference. Pop it on while you're at your desk or on the road...*Melisma* is along for the ride!

In this issue you'll also find information on goings-on from state to state and a list of upcoming Google Hangouts. There is obviously a lot happening in this division—so much, it's easy to miss out. The division conference promises to bring you to the epicenter of it all, in Sioux Falls, the geographical center of North Central! ■

"The secret of a great melody is a secret."

—Dave Brubeck

"What happened between Oscar [Hammerstein II] and me was almost chemical. Put the right components together and an explosion takes place."

—Richard Rodgers

John C. Hughes

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Audio Interview with Barney Smith, VOCES8



Barney Smith

I recently had the opportunity to interview Barney Smith, co-founder and artistic director of the acclaimed VOCES8, our conference headliner ensemble.

In this interview, we discuss the formation of VOCES8, their rehearsal process and performance schedule, and their upcoming performance with Ola Gjeilo at NC-ACDA's 2016 conference in Sioux Falls, SD.

I hope you enjoy learning more about how VOCES8 operates and how the ensemble makes music at such a consistently high level. ■

[Audio Interview with Barney Smith](#)



John C. Hughes

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The advertisement features a photograph of a large group of young people in white robes singing in a choir. They are holding black songbooks and are positioned in front of a large, colorful stained-glass window with a geometric pattern. The background is a bright, sunlit interior.

Bob Demaree

NC-ACDA President
University of Wisconsin-Platteville
demaree@uwplatt.edu



Bob Demaree



Dear Friends,

As I write this, it's three days before Christmas, and I am fully in my "Ghost of Christmas Present" mood. You know this mood—it's the one so beautifully portrayed in the 1951 Alistair Sim version of "A Christmas Carol" by the jolly Francis de Wolff—"Come IN, man!" It's the time for opening the front door and welcoming guests into the house for some hot cider and cookies and a warm fire! It's so great to have two of my four kids coming home for the holidays and knowing that we'll have fun and laughter!

And yet, I also know that two months from now, the Sioux Falls conference will be in our rearview mirrors! Amazing! As you can imagine, this event has been central to my life now for almost four years. Talk about preparing the house for the holidays! While it's been a lot of work, I can honestly say that I feel just like old Francis de Wolff and want to welcome you all in. Our team of conference planners has done an amazing job, and your minds will be sparked and hearts warmed by the sessions and concerts we have in store for you.

Collegiate ENGAGE

In this column, I particularly want to give a "shout out" to **Phillip Swan** and **Eric Barnum**, who have been working to plan the **Collegiate ENGAGE** program for Saturday. To all of my collegiate colleagues out there—**BE SURE TO SEND YOUR STUDENTS** to this event! It is going to be remarkable.

Phillip has planned some new twists into the day for our future music educators. The linchpin of the day remains—the students will have multiple repertoire sessions led by top names in our choral world. These leaders will show students not only pieces that are doable in their positions, but also will show them **HOW** to introduce and teach these pieces. Imagine this as a choral music education master class!

Phillip has also arranged for two other wonderful facets to bring light. First of all, the entire group of collegians will attend the first performing session on Saturday to hear the Sioux Falls Roosevelt High School Concert Choir. Then, they will move to the First Congregational Church across the street, where **Robyn Starks-Holcomb**, Roosevelt's director, will lead a *talk-back about the entire rehearsal and performance*

ENGAGE leaders will show students not only pieces that are doable in their positions, but also will show them **HOW** to introduce and teach these pieces. Imagine this as a choral music education master class!

experience from her perspective. The students will hear this, basically in real time, hot off the stage!

Then later in the day, Eric is enlisting a number of great North Central division *composers* to hold a panel discussion about commissioning and composition in general with the students. The students will get to learn how tremendous it can be to commission a work, to work with a living composer, and, most of all, just how accessible most composers are! I have sent students to both Madison and Des Moines for this collegiate day in the past, and my students are more excited than ever to ENGAGE in this day!

A few hospitality items to bring to your attention:

Walking/Parking

We're definitely experiencing El Niño here in Wisconsin as I write this; let's hope that the weather continues to behave in mid-February. But even if it doesn't, please know that two of the conference hotels (Holiday Inn City Center and Country Inn and Suites) are between *five and ten minutes* walking distance to the Pavilion, First Lutheran, and First Congregational. Phillips Avenue, where there are a host of tremendous restaurants (try to get into the Diner for breakfast!), is just one block east of the Pavilion. If you stay at the Sheraton, don't be concerned either—First Lutheran is kindly providing its large *parking lot* to us for FREE, allowing you to walk across the street to the Pavilion. If that's full, there's a big covered parking garage at 12th and Main on the east side of the Pavilion. Last I knew it was \$3 a DAY to park there!

Getting around

We are working to provide you with student ACDA chapter members who will be in and around the Pavilion, especially on Thursday, to meet and greet you and help you find your way to registration and to the interest session venues. For most of the conference, going from the performance venue to the interest sessions will simply mean crossing South Dakota Avenue! We expect to have excellent signage to help guide you, thanks to the kindness of the Sioux Falls School District!

Exhibits

The exhibits will all be housed in the lobby of the Pavilion, meaning that you can plan your stops around concert and interest sessions and never have to go outside of the Pavilion to do so! We expect to have concessions available in the morning and at noontime (or you can visit Leonardo's, a great little bistro on the main floor) for your convenience.

Please know that the entire staff is at your service to try to help make your visit pleasant and productive. If you need assistance, do not hesitate to flag one of us down and ask! We want you to enjoy the visit and take full advantage of the conference!

I look forward to seeing many, many of you in Sioux Falls. I hope that the beginning of 2016 is already off to a magnificent start and that you are making terrific music! ■

Parking is plentiful, and either free or very reasonably priced, around the conference venues. See: "Walking/Parking."

Maps of conference venues, hotel locations, and layouts for Sommervold Hall and the Washington Pavilion of Arts and Science are available online at neacda.org/maps and in the conference program.

Shannon Gravelle

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Shannon Gravelle

Upcoming Google Hangouts

with your division R&R* Chairs!

Join your NC-ACDA R&R Chairs in **Google Video Hangout** sessions, a type of virtual roundtable discussion. This has been a great chance for colleagues to come together, brainstorm, share, and be inspired! The topics presented in these Hangouts cover a wide range of interests. A Google Video Hangout is a way to talk in real-time. *If you have a computer and a Google ID, you can join any of these sessions.* The links to join these Hangouts are shared through Facebook, email, and the NC-ACDA website as the dates approach. Below is a list of the upcoming topics, as well as their dates and times. Be sure to check them out!

Upcoming Google Hangouts:

- **February 2 at 8:00 pm . . . College & University Choirs R&R Chair Lee Nelson**
Topic: Interview with Eriks Ešenvalds
- **February 7 at 4:00 pm . . . Two-Year College Choirs R&R Chair Rita Stinner**
Topic: Connections and Pathways... to “Serve, Connect, and Celebrate” Choral Music in the Two-Year College Music Program
- **March 6 at 3:00 pm Boychoirs R&R Chair Marco Melendez**
Topic: Honoring the Unsung Hero: Music for Patriotic Moments
- **April 10 at 6:00 pm Vocal Jazz R&R Chair Tina Thielen-Gaffey**
Topic: Demystifying Vocal Jazz at all Levels
- **April 12 at 7:00 pm Show Choirs R&R Chair Lukas Warren**
Topic: Competitive Arts: The Good and the Bad
- **May 1 at 3:30 pm Music in Worship R&R Chair Tom Trenney**
Topic: May God Give Us Faith to Sing

To join a Google Hangout, do ONE of the following:

- 1) Add NCACDAHangouts@gmail.com to your Google+ circle if you have Google+.
- 2) Make sure you have a Google ID and you know your login information to join.
Note: A Google ID does not necessarily have to be a Google account.
- 3) If you have a Google ID, you can email NCACDAHangouts@gmail.com and ask to be added to the event ahead of time.
- 4) Each Hangout link will be sent out via email and Facebook, and will be on the NC-ACDA website. Use the link to join the Hangout at the time of the event.

If the event is “full” (meaning there are already 10 people using video), you can still join, watch, and use the chat function! ■



*R&R is Repertoire & Resources, the new ACDA designation!

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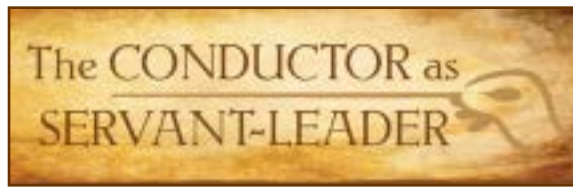


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OF SUMMER
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June 26-July 10, 2016

Tom Trenney

NC-ACDA Repertoire & Resources Committee Chair
First-Plymouth Congregational Church, Lincoln NE
tomtrenney@gmail.com



*Our main Music in
Worship experience
will be centered on
the idea of prayer.
Prayer is a
worshipful
experience for
people in every
faith tradition
around the world; it
is central to who we
are spiritually.*

*Anton Armstrong,
from St. Olaf
College, will deliver
his thoughts on
service in music
ministry, which will
be delivered just
before the program
itself at 11:00 a.m.*

Music in Worship at the NC-ACDA Convention

For the pastoral musicians who come to the conference in Sioux Falls, there are no less than three opportunities to connect with music in worship, in performance order:

1. CHURCH CHOIR PERFORMANCE

Friday, February 19 at 1:00 p.m., Washington Pavilion

It is rare in our regional gatherings to hear offerings by church choirs. The Plymouth Choir from First-Plymouth Church in Lincoln, Nebraska and I will share our congregation's music and message in sacred works by Rosephanye Powell, Alexander Gretchaninoff, and Kenneth Jennings.

2. READING SESSION

Friday, February 19 at 4:15 p.m., First Congregational Church

Join me and the Plymouth Choir from First-Plymouth Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, to read through colorful, expressive music and meaningful, inspired texts of choral music for worship. Many pieces in the packet have been written by composers from our North Central division, and several of the composers will be with us to introduce their works in person.

3. THIS WE PRAY, coordinated by Stephen M. Sieck

Saturday, February 20 at 11:15 a.m., Cathedral of St. Joseph

Our main Music in Worship experience will be centered on the idea of prayer. Prayer is a worshipful experience for people in every faith tradition around the world; it is central to who we are spiritually. The framework of the program is built around the Lord's Prayer, which is an exemplar of how one prays (the Ur-Prayer, so to speak). Within the Lord's Prayer we find specific modes of prayer—a prayer of confession, a prayer of adoration, a prayer of praise. The program will combine readings that reflect different kinds of prayers with musical responses.

continued

Music in Worship, *continued*

The Carthage Women's Ensemble, directed by **Peter Dennee**; Chorale Midwest Chamber Singers, directed by **Bradley Barrett**; and Cedar Falls High School Concert Choir, directed by **Elliott Kranz** will collaborate in leading worship from the choir loft. The program will take place in the stunning Cathedral of St. Joseph. This is, aesthetically and acoustically, a magnificent church, and attendees will love the way the choirs sound. And we will all love singing congregational hymns together there!

As the conference brings back the popular *Thoughts on Music* series that we heard in Madison in 2012, we welcome **Anton Armstrong** from St. Olaf College to deliver his thoughts on service in music ministry, which will be delivered just before the program itself at 11:00 a.m. ■

You're Invited

ALL-CONFERENCE RECEPTION

FOLLOWING FRIDAY'S PERFORMANCE OF THE
Verdi Requiem

Washington Pavilion Art Galleries
Friday, February 19th
10:00pm - 12:00am

*All-conference attendees only, please.
Complimentary hors d'oeuvres will be served
along with a cash bar.*

North Central Division

American Choral Directors Association



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2016 NC-ACDA CONFERENCE

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Pamela Burns

NC-ACDA Repertoire & Resources Committee Chair
Lake Agassiz Girls Choir, Fargo, ND
pcapuch@msn.com



Lynnel Jenkins

Lynnel Joy Jenkins is in her sixth season as artistic director of the Princeton Girlchoir and a choral teacher at the Timberlane Middle School of the Hopewell Valley Regional School District in Pennington, New Jersey.

Special Guest Interview: Lynnel Jenkins

2016 NC-ACDA Conference Elementary Honor Choir conductor

About Lynnel Jenkins...

Lynnel Joy Jenkins is in her sixth season as artistic director of the Princeton Girlchoir and a choral teacher at the Timberlane Middle School of the Hopewell Valley Regional School District in Pennington, New Jersey. Ms. Jenkins' varied conducting and teaching experience ranges from the elementary to collegiate level. She has served as assistant professor of music education at the Westminster Choir College of Rider University and

conductor of the Resident Training Choir at the American Boychoir School in Princeton, New Jersey.

Ms. Jenkins is a choral conductor and music educator of international stature, having lectured and conducted in China, Hong Kong, Iceland, and South Africa. She has served as guest conductor for numerous honor choirs, all-states, and choral festivals in the United States and a clinician for several professional music conferences. She currently serves on the conducting faculty for the Vocal Arts Camp of James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Ms. Jenkins earned degrees from Temple University and Westminster Choir College of Rider University, and at both institutions was awarded the Elaine Brown Conducting Award. She was recently inducted into the Westminster Music Education Alumni Hall of Fame and also received the Westminster Alumni Merit Award. She holds a certificate in Kodály pedagogy from Westminster Choir College of Rider University and Level Two Orff-Schulwerk certification. She is pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral conducting at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

North Central ACDA sponsored a live group interview with Ms. Jenkins via Google Hangout on Sunday, November 22nd. What follows here is the transcript from that interview.

An Interview with Lynnel Jenkins...

PB: *Hello Everyone! Lynnel, have you worked with choirs of all ages? Tell us what you especially love about working with children's choirs.*

LJ: Yes, I have had the pleasure of working with choral groups of all ages. Children bring such an imagination and an exploration to the rehearsal, which is an exciting experience. It is always such a joy for me to collaborate with children and to see what we can create together in the choral rehearsal.

PB: *Lynnel, tell us how you go about building beautiful tone in the young person's voice.*

LJ: I use the choral warm-up process to assess their strengths as vocalists and musicians. I also evaluate how well they respond to various instructional strategies and conducting gestures. I tailor the strategies to suit the demands of that particular choral group. For some groups, modeling is the key to building beautiful tone. For other groups, kinesthetic activities to internalize the vocal technique are the key to building beautiful tone and are most successful. Whatever strategies work best with a particular group; I tend to focus on those strategies to assist singers in developing the choral sound that is desired for a particular piece.

PB: *So, do you strive for a different color, or tone quality, with different pieces with your kids?*

LJ: Yes, I strive to cultivate tone colors to match the appropriate style.

PB: *And they're able to do that?*

LJ: I am hesitant to give a blanket "yes," but I have found that they can make many different and unique sounds. These sounds can be transformed into beautiful tone colors. Each rehearsal, I try to enrich their musical vocabulary with various sounds through vocal modeling and vocal exploration.

PB: *How do you try to describe tone color?*

LJ: I use names of colors or descriptive words to refer to tone color. I may refer to a student with a particular shirt or scarf and ask the choir to sing that color. I also engage their imagination with descriptive phrases

such as, "please sing like you are smelling a red rose" or "basking in the warm sun." I'm not always sure how they will perceive the color in terms of sound.

However, we find the desired sound together through this exploration process. I make note of the color or descriptive words that cultivated the desired sound and continue using this prompt when working with the children.

PB: *Let's talk about repertoire. What do you think is the best way to discover new repertoire for your choirs? What have you found to be the most successful for you?*

LJ: Attending concerts have been my most valuable resource in discovering new repertoire. I am always amazed by the quality of literature that my esteemed choral colleagues perform with their young artists. I attend concerts produced by ACDA and other professional music associations, honor and all-state choirs, community and youth choirs, college choirs and school districts. I am very fortunate to live in an area that is so richly populated with outstanding choral and instrumental ensembles. I also access performances via on-line streaming and YouTube. Additionally, music publishers make their scores available with recordings of real children singing which is extremely helpful. Another great way to discover new repertoire is to view works of living composers.

PB: *I find attending conferences and reading sessions at conferences is a great way to find new repertoire. For those of you listening that are children's choir directors, please be aware of the National Children's Choir Conductor's Retreat being held in New Jersey in January. It's something I've only attended once and it's fantastic! It's the sort of thing where every single minute of the whole conference is applicable to what you do. Check it out!*

LJ: YES, please come to New Jersey to attend the ACDA National Children's Choir Conductor's Retreat, we'd love to see you! It will be an amazing retreat.

continued

Interview with Lynnel Jenkins, continued

PB: *Lynnel, has your organization commissioned any new work?*

LJ: Yes, my community youth choir commissioned Ryan Brechmacher for our twenty-fifth anniversary. We are passionate about offering more wonderful literature for treble choirs and have plans to continue commissioning works in the future.

PB: *Do you feel like you want to talk anymore about the benefits of working with living composers, Lynnel?*

LJ: It's kind of neat when the children have the opportunity to meet the artist behind the music. To be able to meet the composer and ask questions about their creative process, really brings the music to life.

PB: *I agree. They think about it differently once they've worked with a composer in that context. I know that, for some programs, it can be tricky to find the dollars to commission new works. I have found it to be a life-changing experience for my singers, though, so I would just encourage conductors whose groups cannot afford a commission to explore the possibilities of a consortium where several organizations join together to fund the commission. Keep in mind, if it's not practical for all of the participating choirs to meet and work with the composer, a Skype or FaceTime chat with the composer could be the next best thing.*

PB: *Lynnel, how did you go about selecting your repertoire for the NC-ACDA Conference coming up in February?*

LJ: I considered pieces that were successfully performed with my own students. These pieces embody great artistic qualities as well as a range of tone colors. NC-ACDA commissioned Deanna Wehrspann to write a piece for the Elementary Honor Choir, which enhances the repertoire with a newly composed work. I found pieces that share commonalities, offering mutual rehearsal strategies and warm-ups that can be used for several pieces as transitional material, moving from the Baroque piece to the newly composed piece to the global piece. This provides economical and musical strategies for addressing limited rehearsal time.

PB: *What is your approach to sight singing with the Girlchoir, or even your middle-school choirs?*

LJ: For my middle-school choir, I use a synergy of the Kodály and Orff approaches to musicianship building. For the Girlchoir, we use a Kodály-inspired approach to musicianship building. Tools such as solfege, hand signs, and rhythm syllables are a constant in rehearsals to develop aural skills and music reading. We have a six-tier choral program in which we begin laying the musical foundation in the introductory choir, Grace Notes. As girls progress through the intermediate and advanced levels, they build their musical, aural, and vocal skills. The goal is to become an independent musician by the time they reach the most advanced group, Cantores, the high school choir.

PB: *So with your most advanced group in the girl choir program, you don't necessarily do group sight-singing?*

LJ: They are sight-singing all the time. Sometimes they sight-sing using solfege or an intentional syllable, with a consonant and a vowel to cultivate the color of the piece and/or the style of the piece.

PB: *Sure, that makes a lot of sense. What are some rehearsal techniques that you use to build artistry in your children's choir, acknowledging that in any choir every single piece might not be performed at the highest artistic level, so measuring artistry in moments if necessary? What are some of your techniques?*

LJ: I approach building choral tone in the same manner as building beautiful tone. I assess their vocal and musical strengths during the choral warm-ups. I tailor the rehearsal strategies to the ones that engender the desired choral tone. If it's just watching my gesture and allowing them to respond to what they see, then I would use that particular strategy to build the artistry. If it is listening to other performances and then critiquing the performance then I would lean towards that strategy.

PB: *Thank you. How do you plan and pace your rehearsals with today's over-scheduled children in mind?*

LJ: Keeping the pizzazz and excitement as well as keeping things moving is the key. I change the pace often to keep them engaged.

PB: *What are your best recruiting techniques? Do you have any special recruiting techniques for recruiting boys, specifically?*

LJ: They love musical theater and they love singing together. Any platform that will allow them to sing show tunes and to sing with other boys it is a great way to keep them singing.

Another strategy is allowing them to know that that they are valuable to the choral group. That has been my strongest strategy for recruitment. Sometimes they just need to know that they are valued and appreciated for their talent and their ability, and that you just can't do it without them.

PB: *Yes, I think that works with girls too. How about through the Princeton Girlchoir Program, do you have some recruiting strategies you could share for the community choir?*

LJ: The best recruitment strategies are the girls! The girls are excited about their Girlchoir experience, which attracts others to the choral program.

PB: *You don't really need to do anything else?*

LJ: Yes, of course. We recruit as well as connect with the community through advertisements, outreach concerts and events, open rehearsals, bring-a-friend events, etc. All those connections we continue to do, but I still think the strongest recruitment strategies are the girls and their love for singing at the Princeton Girlchoir that attracts others.

PB: *What are a few of the bigger challenges you've faced as a children's choir conductor?*

LJ: Attendance. I would say that's the biggest challenge because we collaborate with young musicians who are highly committed to various activities. Having a very firm attendance policy and enforcing that policy protects the quality of performances. Meaning, if you miss more than the allowed absences, you may not be eligible to

participate in that particular performance.

PB: *Does anyone else have a question for Lynnell?*

Tom: I have a miscellaneous question with a small group; maybe it's a little specialized. I have a community choir, fourth through eighth grade, about sixty kids. We're going to sing with a local symphony orchestra for a Christmas concert. We have one rehearsal and then the concert. What can I do to prepare those singers for that change in the sound when they rehearse with a piano all the time?

LJ: Wow. I think that the hardest thing is watching a different conductor. If you're familiar with the orchestral conductor, it would be good to imitate their gesture, or introduce different conducting styles in rehearsal. This will allow your singers to prepare for watching a different conducting gesture and ictus. During the orchestral rehearsal, it would be great if they had a chance to run it all the way through once or twice before addressing particular sections. This will allow the children to adjust to the orchestral sound and become more familiar with the experience.

PB: *Tom, in my experience, the kids tend to just oversing when they suddenly have all the additional sound and color in the accompaniment. I guess there's not a lot you can do to prepare them for that, except to go ahead and explain it. Explain that their tendency will be to oversing and that they might lose their good tone quality and intonation if they give in to that.*

Tom: My other question for you, Lynnell, is you're like twenty-two years old, it seems. You have all this knowledge! Where did that come from? In other words, what kind of professional development opportunities have you taken advantage of to get all this knowledge that you have?

LJ: I run myself ragged, attending all the professional development workshops that are happening in my tri-state area. Additionally, I observe master conductors and teachers, and critically reflect on their pedagogical process. These are the best resources for me.

continued

Interview with Lynnel Jenkins, continued

PB: *Tom, you should seriously think about checking out that Children's Choir Conductor's Retreat in January. It's such a great one. I love national and division ACDA conferences, where you can get a little bit of everything. But this particular one is so concentrated in this specialty area that you come home with tons of new things to use.*

PB: *Lynnel, how important do you think it is to include team-building activities for your choirs? Do you do that intentionally, in rehearsal, or do you do it at retreats, or how do you guys accomplish that?*

LJ: It is funny you should ask because I recently became aware that the girls still do not know each other. Being that we are well into the third month of the season, it is crucial that they develop community. Team-building is a great way to develop a choral community that sings with a cohesive tone.

PB: *What are some of your strategies for personal growth as a conductor and for avoiding burnout? I believe that you are currently pursuing a doctorate while you're teaching.*

LJ: I think burnout is something we try to avoid all the time. I've found in this year that walking has been the best way for me to relieve stress.

For my own personal growth, my goals are to grow as an artist, pedagogue, and as a leader. I have grown tremendously through my professional commitments and academic work.

I always try to invest in my own professional growth as much as I possibly can. The biggest challenge is just trying to balance it all. The walking really allows me to manage the stress.

PB: *That's really interesting. I was at a symposium here in North Dakota, at North Dakota State University awhile back, and Tim Sharp was one of our guest speakers. He talked specifically about managing time. He quoted some composer/artist journals as well as biographical information about some composers and artists. Walking comes up over and over again in these resources. It seems to be a common thread among artists. You must be one of the geniuses!*

LJ: I do feel like a weight has been lifted after my walk—very therapeutic.

PB: *Does anybody have another question for Lynnel? We have a little time left.*

Tom: I was going to ask: your Girlchoir, how far in advance do you plan your rep? Do you plan for the whole year in the summer?

LJ: Yes, I do try to plan during the summer.

Amanda: What exactly is your role with Princeton Girlchoir?

LJ: My role is twofold. One, I am responsible for the artistic vision of the group. My second role is as a conductor. I conduct two of the advanced groups, Concert Choir and Ensemble. Concert Choir, the fourth-tier choir, is comprised of 65 girls, mainly in grades 6 through 9, and Ensemble, fifth-tier, is a chamber group comprised of 25 singers. Girls advance throughout the choir levels by musical and vocal ability and not by grade level. Therefore, we have a mixture of grade levels in each choir level, but the mean of my larger group is mostly middle school girls.

Amanda: With the group that I have right now, we have such varying ages and abilities, which has been a challenge. When I started this, I was hoping we would have 10 or 15 singers to start. We have 22, which is great. I'm really happy with that. It's really just a grassroots effort trying to start something. My struggle is ... [and] I felt like this at the schools that I've taught at before... but I think it's very different because they all are coming from different schools, so they're getting very varied. Some of them are home-schooled, some of them go to private school where they really don't even have music, and some of them have a lot of musical background. So there is just a really wide variety and putting them all together and trying to figure out what works for everyone is challenging. I had chosen the repertoire in advance, but was also flexible with it since I had never heard them before. I have no idea what their ability is. I find that it has been really difficult for me to try to navigate [this].

LJ: Yes, it is extremely tough to meet the educational needs of a group with various musical experiences and a wide range of grade levels. Currently, our Girlchoir's early intermediate group is comprised of grades 3 through 8. The conductor ingeniously devises instructional strategies that supports their learning as well as engages their elementary and middle school interests.

He uses musical games to assess their aural training and their overall musical abilities. The musical games are so much fun that the singers do not know that they are being assessed. He finds common denominators and builds on that to develop musicianship and choral tone. I would say that he has the same struggles you have as far as repertoire. He uses folk songs, rounds, and simple melodies to get them excited about making good sound and music. I have to say, it is a difficult job and he is a master at it. Fred Meads will be presenting a workshop at the ACDA National Children's Choir Director's Retreat, which will be a great opportunity to see his work. He will be using his training choir from the American Boychoir as the demo group. It'll be a great time to see him in action.

PB: *That sounds great. I've been there, too, Amanda, and I know that it will get so much easier for you when your program grows and you can divide them. Just keep in mind that even if you have to simplify your repertoire you can consider little solos, ostinatos, descants, and things like that for your older kids. You probably thought of that already?*

Amanda: Yes. We're kind of doing that right now. I'm doing a lot in unison and then having a couple of kids that have more experience, and are a little bit more advanced, doing little descant things that I've just added in. Things like that.

LJ: That's awesome.

PB: *That's pretty much all you can do for now.*

LJ: You're doing all the right pedagogical steps. It just gets frustrating at times. Hang in there!

PB: *Lynnel, do you have any parting advice for us?*

LJ: At my school district, we recently had an amazing presenter encourage teachers to return to joy. Whatever allows us to return to that joy, our equilibrium, we should do. Returning to joy for me is my walking. I am able to clear my head, pray, take in the beautiful scenery, breathe, meditate... and be able to reboot, if you will. Finding spaces in our day to return to joy so that we can give our students and our choirs the best of who we are as artists and pedagogues is paramount.

PB: *That is great advice! Our time is up, so we will close with that. Thanks for joining our Google Hangout and have a joyful season, everyone! ■*



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Desiree Bondley

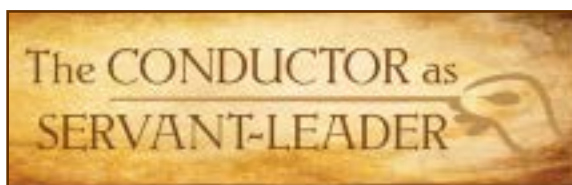
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Vijay Singh

“I believe everyone can improve their musicianship by involving rhythm, melody, and harmonic awareness simultaneously.”

—Vijay Singh



Special Guest Interview: Vijay Singh

2016 NC-ACDA Middle-Level Girls Honor Choir conductor

This fall, I was fortunate to interview Vijay Singh, guest director for the . Vijay is professor of music at Central Washington University where he teaches voice, choral arranging, jazz pedagogy, directs the University Chorale and CWU Vocal Jazz 1, and oversees the vocal jazz program consisting of three jazz choirs. He is an active performer, composer, teacher, conductor, and clinician.

DB: *Was there a specific experience or time in your life when you first realized that you wanted to be involved in music — more specifically, in choral music?*

VS: I knew I wanted to be involved in music from a young age. I started piano in 2nd grade, clarinet in 5th, saxophone in 9th, percussion in 8th. I knew in high school that I wanted to do something with music. I never sang in an organized choir until my senior year of high school. At first, it was not as exciting as being in band, but I later came to appreciate it much more. As a college undergrad, I sang in two choirs and realized it complemented my instrumental pursuits. When I went to grad school, I focused exclusively on singing and choral music and have never regretted the decision!

DB: *How do you select music for honor choirs? Are there “go-to” pieces you find yourself going back to? How did you decide on music for the February NC-ACDA Girls Honor Choir?*

VS: I select music carefully! I ask for input from the contacts/folks who hire me, which pieces worked well in the past, etc. I also try to vary the styles, tempi, tonality, meter, lyric/text ideas, and such. I do have a file of “go-to” pieces that I like to use to teach various styles or favorites that “edu-tain” both the singers and audience.

DB: *In visiting with other honor choir directors, some of them say their greatest goal for the students participating is that it is a memorable and positive experience. What are some of your goals in working with honor choirs?*

VS: Some of my goals for the participating students are to challenge themselves musically, experience different rehearsal techniques, be open minded about interpretation, concentrate on artistry, make a lot of new friends, and obviously have fun while doing it!

DB: *As the director, what is your most memorable honor choir experience?*

VS: My most memorable honor choir experiences are all of them! Each group is different and rewarding in its own way. Some groups are memorable for their performance, others for the journey we take during the short rehearsal time together, others for the unique personalities of the students. One recent honor choir experience that comes to mind was conducting the South Dakota High School All-State Choir a few years ago because we performed our concert in an ice hockey arena; it was the only space large enough to handle all the people! I stood on the floor, the choir was in the stands, and there were ad posters for beer/hot dogs/sponsors on the wall. Right in the middle of the concert, the clock timer/buzzer went off. I thought, “Oh no! I just got a penalty for conducting that phrase!” The choir and folks were wonderful!

DB: *Any advice to the students that will be participating in the Girls Honor Choir during the North Central Division Conference?*

VS: Come prepared with a positive attitude, work ethic, and be ready to make great music, meet people from other schools, make new friends, and have fun! Be open-minded and respectful to each other and your conductor. Take musical risks, think about the text/poetry/lyrics, and commit to making the experience the best!

DB: *When working with middle level singers, what do you find to be the biggest challenge? How do you work with those challenges or overcome them?*

VS: Biggest challenges: shorter attention spans, vocal technical limitations, limited experience, lack of choral references; however, this age has a wonderful energy and purity about them! If you can get them on your side and “hooked” they will try anything and have fun doing it!

DB: *You contributed to the 2006 book *The Choral Director’s Cookbook* in the section “Rehearsal Appetizers: Three Musical Skills to Tempt Your Rehearsal Tastebuds.” Can you share some of the information from that?*

VS: My contribution to that book was a “recipe” for musical multi-tasking in rehearsals. I believe everyone can improve their musicianship by involving rhythm, melody, and harmonic awareness simultaneously. I make my students physicalize time, conduct, walk the groove, do our

vocalizing/warm ups in all tonalities (not just major!), practice solfeggio / count singing / scale degree numbers, and improvise their own harmonies, rhythm accompaniments, and counter-melodies. It’s fun, engaging, and sharpens everyone’s musicianship.

DB: *Moving to your own personal composing and arranging, how do you come up with ideas for your music compositions?*

VS: My compositions often spring from the text/lyrics, but I don’t have one way I compose. Sometimes the lyric guides my melodic and harmonic ideas; other times the musical ideas are already formed and I experiment with variations. Rhythmic ideas are almost always tied to the text. Harmonic density and rhythmic complexity, accompaniment, range, tessitura, and dissonance are often dictated by the age group or level I am composing the piece for; sometimes thematic material is used, other times I use word painting. I sing every part I write and change things if they are too dull.

DB: *What is your favorite composition to date?*

VS: Favorite composition of mine? That’s like asking a parent which of their children is their favorite! We don’t go there! There are a couple recent works I’m currently fond of; one is a piece I wrote called “Carpenters of God” which was inspired by my friend and mentor Weston Noble. It is quite simple, but that is what makes it so powerful. It is almost folk-like and very “American.” The other piece is one titled “Oft Have I Vowed,” which is very personal. I wrote it for myself. My colleague at CWU, Gary Weidenaar, performed it with CWU’s excellent Chamber Choir and they recorded it and posted the concert video on YouTube. Check it out! It is an intense lyric and piece that moves me deeply.

DB: *Thank you so much for taking the time and allowing me to interview you. Speaking on the behalf of NC-ACDA, we are excited for the Girls Honor Choir to have you as their director!*

VS: I look forward to seeing/meeting everyone at NC-ACDA! ■

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special events in
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Contact
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Phil Hesterman

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“Celebrate” Initiative: **State-by-State News January–May, 2016**

IOWA

Sunday & Monday, January 31–
February 1

Wartburg College Meistersinger Honor Choir Festival

Featuring composer in residence,
Eriks Ešēvalds
Wartburg College
Waverly, IA

<http://www.wartburg.edu/music/fest.a.spx>

*This two-day festival brings together
250 of the Midwest’s top high school
singers to perform the music of Eriks
Esenvalds.*

Sunday & Monday, January 31–
February 1

University of Iowa Honors Choir Festival

University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA

Contact: timothystalter@uiowa.edu
or (319) 335-1677

*A two-day festival open to high
school sophomores, juniors, and
seniors*

Monday, February 15

Iowa State University Honor Choir

Music Hall, Iowa State University,
Ames, IA

http://www.music.iastate.edu/events/_1HonorChoir/index.php

*A two-day event for high school
singers, selected from 25 high
schools, via live auditions with
Dr. Rodde*

Saturday, April 23

Dalcroze Workshop

Lincoln Elementary School,
Cedar Falls, IA

Contact:

childrenschair@iowachoral.org

*An all-day workshop featuring Dr.
Kathy Thomsen, a certified Dalcroze
music specialist. This workshop will
be co-sponsored by ICDA, KEI, and
IMEA.*

MINNESOTA

Thursday, February 11, 5:30 p.m.

State 9–10 Honor Choir Concert

Central Lutheran Church
Minneapolis, MN

<http://www.mnhonorchoirs.org/>

Friday, February 12, 10:30 a.m.

MMEA All-State Choir Concerts

Orchestra Hall
Minneapolis, MN

<http://www.mmea.org>

Sunday, April 19

Choral Arts Finale

Orchestra Hall
Minneapolis, MN

<http://www.acda-mn.org>

*A day-long event featuring six
auditioned high school choirs*

Saturday, May 7, 3:30 p.m.

ACDA of Minnesota Children’s Choir Forum

St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church
Mahtomedi, MN

<http://www.acda-mn.org>

Saturday, May 7, 5:30 p.m.
State 4-5-6 Boys' and Girls' Honor Choir Concerts
St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Mahtomedi, MN
<http://www.mnhonorchoirs.org/>

NEBRASKA

Friday, February 5
NCDA Show Choir Festival
Central City High School
Central City, NE
<http://www.nebraskachoral.org/events/ncda-show-choir-festivals/>

Saturday, February 6
Sing Around Nebraska Festival Choirs
Locations:
Midwest Theatre, Scottsbluff NE;
Lincoln NE; First-Plymouth
Congregational Church
Grand Island, NE
Grand Island Sr. High School, NE
<http://www.nebraskachoral.org/events/sing-around-nebraska/>
Festival Choir for students in
Grades 4, 5, and 6

Monday, February 8
NCDA Show Choir Festival
Chase County High School
Imperial, NE
<http://www.nebraskachoral.org/events/ncda-show-choir-festivals/>

Saturday, February 13
Sing Around Nebraska Festival Choirs
Central City Performing Arts
Center, Central City NE
<http://www.nebraskachoral.org/events/sing-around-nebraska/>
*Festival Choir for students in
Grades 4, 5, and 6*

Saturday, February 20
Sing Around Nebraska Festival Choirs
Locations: Merryman Performing
Arts Center, Kearney NE;
Wheeler Central Schools,
Bartlett NE
<http://www.nebraskachoral.org/events/sing-around-nebraska/>

*Festival Choir for students in
Grades 4, 5, and 6*

Tuesday, February 23
NCDA Show Choir Festival
Bellevue East High School
1401 High School Drive
Bellevue NE
<http://www.nebraskachoral.org/events/ncda-show-choir-festivals/>

Saturday, February 27
Sing Around Nebraska Festival Choirs
Locations:
Lexington High School,
Lexington NE
Grace University, Omaha NE
<http://www.nebraskachoral.org/events/sing-around-nebraska/>
*Festival Choir for students in
Grades 4, 5, and 6*

Monday, March 21
**NCDA Vocal Jazz Festival, with
guest clinician Rosana Eckert**
Columbus High School
2410 16th Street
Columbus, NE
<http://www.nebraskachoral.org/events/vocal-jazz-festivals/>

NORTH DAKOTA

Friday–Saturday, February 5–6
North Dakota ACDA State Conference
Legacy High School
Bismarck, ND
<http://www.ndacda.com/>

Friday, February 26
7th Annual NDSU Women's Choral Festival
North Dakota State University
Fargo, ND
For more information call
(701) 231-7932

Brandon Dean

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Brandon Dean

Although the majority of activities associated with ENGAGE are for collegiate students only, the Composer's Forum, led by Eric William Barnum, is open to all conference participants.

College Quarterly

Connecting collegiate students with professionals in the choral field.

In this installment of *College Quarterly* we will take a detailed look at the exciting opportunities for collegiate students at the upcoming North Central ACDA division conference in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. In addition to hearing outstanding performances, being exposed to new repertoire, networking with future colleagues, and attending informative workshops, collegiate ACDA students have the opportunity to engage with master teachers and renowned choral composers.

ENGAGE (Equip, Nurture, Guide, Aspire, Grow, Empower) is a very special conference event taking place on Saturday, February 20 for collegiate ACDA members. ENGAGE has been organized by Phillip Swan (Lawrence University, Appleton, WI), who is building on the success of past collegiate conference events. According to Swan, ENGAGE “puts a new spin on an excellent event that was established by Laura Diddle for the last two conferences. We are hoping the day will provide practical tips and insights that will inspire and empower young conductors as they prepare to enter our profession. **As with past symposiums, this is a unique opportunity for collegiate members to gain fresh insights about the conducting/rehearsal process in a concentrated and intimate setting.**”

- Participants in this daylong event will read and rehearse selected repertoire during sessions led by Paul Nesheim (Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD), Rhonda Fuelberth (University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE), and Stephanie Trump (Robbinsdale Armstrong High School, Plymouth, MN).
- Participants will also have the unique privilege of going “behind the scenes” with one of the performing choirs at the conference! ENGAGE participants will first attend the Roosevelt High School Concert Choir (Sioux Falls, SD) conference performance and then have a follow-up discussion with members of the choir and their conductor, Robyn Starks Holcomb.
- Nationally renowned composer Eric William Barnum will lead a panel discussion with four North Central ACDA composers who will provide insights into the compositional process, commissioning, and performance objectives.
- Participants will have the opportunity to meet and interact with other collegiate ACDA students (and future colleagues), making professional and personal connections that will last a lifetime.

Although the majority of activities associated with ENGAGE are for collegiate students only, the Composer's Forum, led by Eric William Barnum, is open to all conference participants.

continued

Barnum will be joined by Daniel Kallman, Elizabeth Alexander, Timothy Takach, and Connor Koppin. The Composer's Forum will take place on Saturday, February 20, 2:00–3:00 p.m., at First Congregational Church.

Swan also notes, "Conducting requires a commitment to life-long learning—an inquisitive mind. To this day, I still gain so many insights from observing master teachers working with choirs in performance and rehearsal settings. For a young conductor entering the profession, we are providing this special opportunity to observe and interact with talented, skilled, highly respected conductors from our region. Participants will get an intimate snapshot view of these amazing conductors and see their 'process' for teaching a composition to a choir. Interacting with these role models is an opportunity of a lifetime!" ■

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American Choral Directors Association



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[mmelendez@milwaukeechildre
nschoral.org](mailto:mmelendez@milwaukeechildre
nschoral.org)

Children's & Community
Youth Choirs

Pamela Burns

Lake Agassiz Girls Choir
Fargo, ND

pcapuch@msn.com

College & University Choirs

Lee Nelson

Wartburg College
Waverly, IA

lee.nelson@wartburg.edu

Community Choirs

Jonathan Nero

Black Hills State University
Spearfish, SD

jonathan.nero@bhsu.edu

Ethnic & Multicultural
Perspectives

Eduardo Garcia-Novelli

Carthage College
Kenosha, WI

egarcianovelli@carthage.edu

Junior High/Middle School
Choirs

Desiree Bondley

Watcher Middle School
Bismarck, ND

[desiree_bondley@bismarcksch
ools.org](mailto:desiree_bondley@bismarcksch
ools.org)

Male Choirs

Andrew Robinette

South Dakota State University
Brookings, SD

andrew.robinette@sdstate.edu

Music in Worship

Tom Trenney

First-Plymouth Congregational
Church, Lincoln, NE

tomtrenney@gmail.com

Senior High School Choirs

Christopher Fettig

Bemidji High School, MN
Bemidji, MN

chris_fettig@bemidji.k12.mn.us

Show Choirs

Lukas Warren

St. Francis High School
St. Francis, MN

lukaswarren@icloud.com

Two-Year College Choirs

Rita Stinner

Western Nebraska
Community College
Scottsbluff, NE

rstinner1@gmail.com

Vocal Jazz

Tina Thielen-Gaffey

ttg7967@gmail.com

Women's Choirs

Phillip Swan

Lawrence Conservatory of
Music, Appleton, WI

phillip.a.swan@lawrence.edu

Youth & Student Activities

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*Repertoire & Resources is a
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