

From Your President

Updated OCDA Board Structure in Place

AS I BEGIN MY TERM as OCDA President, I first want to express how honored I am to serve our membership in this capacity. ACDA and OCDA have had a huge influence on my life as a choral director since I was a university student. My involvement in these organizations has afforded me countless educational resources, leadership experiences, and personal networking opportunities, and for these I am incredibly thankful. As OCDA President, I hope to maintain the positive direction in which our organization is headed while introducing new initiatives that support and promote our profession both in the short term and the long term. Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this manner.

One of the first projects to which I applied myself as President was the restructuring of our board. This process began over a year ago when Past President Loren Veigel asked me to form a committee to examine possible changes to our board's structure and to make recommendations to the board regarding those changes. Other members of the committee were Brandon Moss, Zebulon Highben, Wei Cheng, and Amy Blosser. I'm happy to say that the committee's work was fruitful and the new board structure is now in place. An explanation of the purpose and scope of the revisions to the board structure follows.

Purpose and Timeline

The changes in the OCDA Board structure were first motivated by changes that were enacted in the national Repertoire and Standards structure within ACDA. The national leadership of ACDA urged us to find a way to adjust our board structure to fit the new national guidelines while still meeting the specific needs of our own state organization.

Our committee within OCDA corresponded via email and telephone and met in person in Columbus on November 27, 2016. Our recommendations were made to the OCDA board at the January 2017 meeting, and the full adoption of the changes was accomplished at the June 2017 Summer Conference Business Luncheon.



*OCDA President
Richard Schnipke*

Contents

From Your President	1
<i>Richard Schnipke</i>	
Sight-Reading Resources for the Public School Choir Director	4
<i>Doug O'Neal</i>	
How to Survive (and Possibly Thrive) as a Choral Director	6
<i>Amy Gelsone</i>	
So Much Music, So Little Time	8
<i>Lynda Hasseler</i>	
Summer Conference Recap	10
<i>Christopher Dent</i>	
Reaching Out	11
<i>Brian Potts</i>	
Upcoming Events	13
Leadership Roster	14

Advertisers

ACDA	12
Bob Rogers Travel	2
CMS Publications	3
Cousins Concert Attire	9
Make Me Dough	5
Otterbein University	7
Soundwaves Recording	11
Stanton's Sheet Music	10



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Structural and Procedural Changes

1. ACDA has replaced the previous chair titles of “Repertoire & Standards Chair” with the “Repertoire and Resources Chair.” OCDA has followed suit by changing “Repertoire & Standards” to “Repertoire and Resources” in all of our official documents, publications, and correspondence.

2. OCDA has organized our newly titled Repertoire and Resources (R&R) area utilizing the following national structure as a basic model, with 4 R&R Coordinators overseeing committees of R&R Chairs:

- The Youth R&R Coordinator oversees the Children & Commu-

nity Youth R&R Chair, the Junior High/Middle School R&R Chair, and the Senior High R&R Chair.

- The Collegiate R&R Coordinator oversees the College/University R&R Chair and the Student Activities R&R Chair.
- The Lifelong R&R Coordinator oversees the Community Choirs R&R Chair and the Music in Worship R&R Chair.
- The Repertoire Specific R&R Coordinator oversees the Contemporary Commercial (formerly Show Choir) R&R Chair, the Ethnic Music R&R Chair, the Men’s Choirs (formerly Male) R&R Chair, the Vocal Jazz R&R Chair, and the Women’s Choirs R&R Chair.

Furthermore, the national lead-

ership in ACDA encouraged states to add specific R&R chairs at their discretion to serve the areas and activities of each state. OCDA has added the following positions to assist in providing repertoire for our reading sessions at the OMEA and OCDA conferences:

- In the *Youth Area*, the Children & Community Youth R&R Chair has been divided into two chairs: *Community Children R&R Chair* and *Elementary School Children R&R Chair*.
- In the *Repertoire Specific Area*, Contemporary Commercial has been divided into two chairs: *Show Choir* and *Contemporary A Cappella*. Ethnic Music has also been divided into two chairs: *Ethnic Music for Developing Singers* and

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Ethnic Music for Intermediate to Advanced Singers.

As per the OCDA Constitution and By-Laws and the ACDA National Guidelines, the OCDA president appoints both R&R Coordinators and R&R Chairs. Also per the ACDA National Guidelines, R&R Coordinators may or may not occupy an R&R Chair in his/her specific area.

3. Since a portion of the restructuring effort at both the state and national level was motivated by a need to streamline what had be-

come a very large OCDA board, OCDA has also made the following changes pertaining to meeting attendance:

- The four R&R Coordinators are expected to attend regular board meetings to represent their area. R&R Coordinators communicate with their Chairs regularly to be sure they are up to date on the activities and needs of the area.
- The R&R Chairs do *not* attend regular board meetings, but will communicate with their Coordinator regularly and will meet with the Coordinators and the President-Elect (both the incom-

ing and the outgoing during election years) annually at the summer conference.

You can find a full board roster, including all of the newly appointed R&R Coordinators and Chairs, at the end of this newsletter. If you have any questions about the new structure, please feel free contact me. I look forward to serving OCDA over the next two years and hope to see you at our OCDA-sponsored reading sessions at the OMEA Conference on February 8–10 and at the OCDA Summer Conference on June 18–20! ♦

Sight-Reading Resources for the Public School Choir Director

Doug O'Neal, R&R Chair for Youth Choirs

AS I START my new position as Repertoire and Resources Chair for Youth Choirs, I thought it would be nice to look at some sight-reading resources for public school teachers and students. Becoming musically literate as well as artistically able is one of the most important skills I can pass along to my students. Yes, they often groan when it is time to work on sight-reading, but the work proves fruitful when a former student proudly sends an email following a college choir audition to share how the college director was impressed that they can sight-read.

To make sight singing as fun and fresh as possible, I try to vary my approach and resources when

teaching sight-reading. While there are many resources available, this article will share some of the texts and supplemental materials I use in my rehearsals.

Method Texts

I like how the following texts develop singer abilities with some fun songs and melodies that can be sung individually or together.

Choral Approach to Sight Singing (Volumes 1 and 2)

Emily Crocker & Joyce Eilers
Hal Leonard

Volume 1 takes students up through dotted quarter note rhythms while Volume 2 begins work on syncopation and sixteenth notes. The book is for three-part choir, but it can

work for SSA alone.

Sight Singing for SSA

Joyce Eilers & Emily Crocker
Hal Leonard

My young ladies love some of the silly songs in this text. This book begins with the basics, but also hits syncopation and sixteenth notes in one text.

Essential Sight-Singing Male Voice (Volumes 1 and 2)

Emily Crocker & John Leavitt
Hal Leonard

There are a couple songs that I skip over in this text, but it is a nice resource for men's voices. I am usually able to do both volumes within a school year.



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Supplemental Materials

Sight Reading Success

Stan McGill & Morris Stevens
SATB and SSA editions available
Hal Leonard

I love this book! The exercises start out in two-measure phrases so they can be sung every day as part of a warm-up sequence. As difficulty grows, so does length. The pages can be duplicated and distributed; a digital component is also part of the purchase, so examples can be projected or sent to tablets. This year, the authors came out with an SSA edition. It is on my purchase list!

Sing at First Sight

Andy Bexk, Karen Farnum Surmani
& Brian Lewis
Alfred

This is a reproducible supplemental resource that I use in addition to my method texts. I do a double-sided copy with the rhythm drills on one side and melodies on the other. After working on the sheet as a class, students can write in the counts and solfège. (Having a written approach is one way to show administrators differentiation in regard to learning styles.) The book also offers music theory tests and aural training! Level 1 will hit foundations up through OMEA AA sight-reading requirements.

Songs for Sight Singing

Southern Music Company

There are many volumes and voicings of this series. It has nice practice materials in preparation for OMEA sight-reading adjudication.

CMS Publications

C.M. Shearer
cmspublications.com

These compositions are former sight-reading selections from OMEA District and State contests. It really helps to work on actual samples in preparation for OMEA adjudication.

Online Resources

sightreadingfactory.com

- Free account lets you try up to 20 free samples
- Unlimited with subscription
- \$39.99 annual subscription for educators

While the free exercises are fixed, subscribers get uniquely composed examples each time the user clicks "Another One." The company offers

student subscriptions for as low as \$2 per student (requires at least 100 subscriptions). My students have used the free account to prepare for choir advancement auditions.

Arizona Choral Educators

<http://www.azchoraleducators.org/festivals/sight-reading-downloads>

Examples of solo line and four-part sight-reading from the Arizona Regional and All-State Choir audition

archives. Students could use a practice-at-home, friendly option at: <http://azchoraleducators.org/sightreading/index.html>

One Final Approach

In addition to the text and the activity-based approach, I give timed solfège quizzes. I project a timer through the TV in my room and challenge the students to write solfège to 10 sight-reading

melodies in a specified amount of time. My hope is to put them in a pressure situation as they often feel during the four-minute sight-reading preparation time during OMEA adjudication.

Do you have other texts or resources that work for you? Please feel free to email me and share, so I can spread the word as I strive to serve our OCDA members. ♦

How to Survive (and Possibly Thrive) as a Choral Director

Amy Gelsone, Historian

MY NAME IS AMY and I'm a Choral Director. . . .

I would like to share a Top-Ten list of things I have learned through trial and error. These may not work for everyone, but they have been helpful to me as I guide my students toward musical growth and achievement.

1. Be kind to the custodians. They are your best friends or your worst enemies. They can help you or hurt you. Thank them for the “thankless” job they do, no matter how good or bad the service may be. One day they just might have your back!

2. Promote your own wellbeing. Don't fool yourself: choral directors put in long hours. But please do not overwork to the detriment of your family life, your home, your faith—in essence, your “real” life. The work will be there when you

return the next day. This lesson took me a very long time to learn, but is vital to choral mental health.

3. Lesson planning is vital! Why is everything due at the same time? Your SLO as well as 2nd quarter grades are due the day of your Winter Concert! The RESA deadline is also looming, you have three IEP meetings after school and musical rehearsal every night this week. We've all been there! Try to pace yourself to meet deadlines. But lesson planning is the *only* way to assure that you will be concert ready.

4. Teacher evaluation work and professional growth plans are not your top priority. Try to create student learning objectives that will actually achieve individual growth in your students. These areas of your job *must* be completed, but it is not your disserta-

tion, so take a basic approach and do what is required. A very wise teacher reminded me that the pay is the same regardless of your rating! Do your best work but not at the expense of your top priority: your students.

5. Plan how to stretch your budget. Every school district approaches money differently, so learn the process. I hope you will be more fortunate than I. My budget is the same today as when I was hired over 30 years ago! Yes, music octavo prices have more than doubled; and yes, my classes have tripled; and no, we do not have textbooks as other classes do—but you can survive! Become familiar with the Choral Public Domain Library. It is your best friend and the music is *free*. There are great pieces in the CPDL for all



voicings, so take advantage. Choir Boosters can also help with additional funds and fundraising. Also, ask and ye might receive! Our music library has grown in my 30+ years and I am happy to share pieces with others. I'm sure many other directors feel the same. To quote that famous Disney musical, "We're all in this together!"

6. Be especially kind to your school secretary. They can really help you (or allow you to fail miserably). Learn how to fill out a requisition correctly as soon as you possibly can. If you make a mistake, ask for forgiveness. I learned very quickly: "it's easier to get forgiveness than it is to get permission!"

7. Attend as many professional conferences as possible. There is a

vast wealth of knowledge that choral directors share in interest sessions, demonstrations, and concerts. Personally, attending ACDA and OCDA conferences helped me grow as a director. I'm not sure if I have a single teaching technique or idea that is an original one! The list of directors from which I have borrowed ideas might fill this entire column. Where else can you learn from the very best?

8. Remember that the students are your focus! Your number one priority is to ensure that they love music. How do you attain that? Love it yourself! If you are passionate about it, they will be encouraged to be also. Challenge them! Even if they don't love a piece of music, most will work hard to pre-

pare it if they believe you love it. Guide them into musical moments through choosing great literature that has stood the test of time. If your students think others across the country in schools like theirs can perform "The Awakening," you have a much better chance of getting them to learn it. With YouTube at your fingertips, it's much easier to help them see what's being sung outside of their hometown as well as around the globe. Show them!

If possible, take them to the music. My students thought they hated opera until we attended a student-night performance of *Madame Butterfly* at Toledo Opera (starring the incomparable Shawn Mathey, son of Ohio's own R.D. Mathey). Those students left with

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an entirely different view of opera! Try to expose your best students to local honor choirs. This is a great way to help them meet other choral students who are leaders in their choirs. Allow your honor choir students to share with their choir when they return to class.

9. Keep order in the classroom.

You must be in charge. Students generally want to please their teachers. Keep them on task. Those who choose to misbehave need to be reprimanded. If you want qual-

ity students who produce quality work, there must be discipline. There will always be moments of fun and laughter, but great choirs require focused work.

10. Success is not measured by the number of Superior ratings you achieve.

For some directors, performing at district events may not be in the realm of possibility. Ratings do not define us. Sometimes success is performing an a cappella piece for the first time! Success may be singing more than two

parts, or even singing beautiful vowels for the first time! Only you can measure success in your students. But it will be worth everything you fought through when it happens.

I hope that at least one of the items above will be helpful to our young music educators and perhaps spark a chuckle from those of you who have been in the trenches. I wish you all a wonderful year of making music and memories! ♦

So Much Music, So Little Time

Lynda Hasseler, Ethnic Music: Intermediate/Advanced R&R Chair



SELECTING MUSIC for each of my choirs and creating concert programs are among the most challenging, important, engaging, creative, and fulfilling parts of my work as a choral conductor. I believe the process is both an art and a science. In this article I would like to share with you some elements of the process I follow when choosing music.

Big Picture/Little Picture

The “little picture” represents the specific ways in which a piece of music suits the ensemble. It’s all the little things we consider: level of difficulty, range, length, instrumentation, text, historical period, composer, etc. The “big picture” is how the piece may fit into larger contexts: a concert program, a season, the entire year and more. How might you group the piece with

other pieces on the program? This consideration of context works only if you have a big picture in mind for your concert year and for the growth of your ensembles.

Pedagogical Value

What can I teach with this piece of music? This question includes a full range of possibilities: vocal techniques, musical skills, musical style, historical time period, poetry, language, global perspective, personal values, and more. While any of these skills can be taught in isolation, the most effective and meaningful way to teach any and all of these things is through carefully selected, well-crafted pieces of music.

Something Old/Something New

With the wealth of beautiful and interesting choral music being

written today and the easy accessibility of this music (complete with recordings and online performances) it’s easy to choose music written by living composers exclusively. In and of itself this is not a bad thing. I love supporting the many outstanding composers who are elevating choral music with their creative and compelling compositions. At the same time, I love helping students discover the beauty of music from a different time period than the one in which they live, and witnessing how they grow musically and personally from that experience. I recommend that you program at least one piece per program by a master composer who represents one of the primary historical style periods.

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their performances. I research the repertoire lists from various choral competitions and festivals. I go to conferences and save all my programs. I look at the programs for conferences I was unable to attend. All of these searches and saved materials become part of my long list of so much music, so little time!

Something Blue

I've got nothing here.

Be Fearless

Let's face it: selecting music we don't know and may not know how to teach is scary. This fear factor can include a range of obstacles: we don't know the language or how to pronounce it, we don't know the style, we don't have any recordings of the piece, we don't know how to manage the instrumentation, etc. These obstacles surface in particular within the ACDA repertoire-specific area in which I serve—ethnic music. Believe me, I am no expert on ethnic music. I do, however, try to approach ethnic music with fearlessness and commitment. What I don't know and am not equipped to teach, I search until I find someone who can teach me. And in the process, my choirs and I have stretched ourselves beyond what we thought we could do. We have met and learned from many interesting people who have expanded our minds and our worldview. Yes, it's a lot of work; and yes, it's totally worth it.

Be Respectful

Being fearless does not mean being careless. When taking on a style of

music that is unfamiliar to you, including historical time period, ethnic, jazz, folk, gospel, spirituals, or anything else, commit to learning all you can to honor that style and the techniques associated with it. Educate yourself before you educate your students.

Be Creative

I encourage you to be creative in your repertoire selection and program creation. Because there is so much high-quality choral music in print available to us, it's easy to select the number of songs needed for the concert and to make sure all those pieces are interesting in some way, and then to leave it at that. But rather than presenting a somewhat "random" list of good pieces sung by each of your choirs, why not create an artful program which communicates a meaningful theme or message? By doing so, you will tap into one of our most basic human functions—story-telling. By creating an artful, narrative program, based on a relevant theme and comprising a varied and interesting range of well-crafted choral music, not only can we maximize our students' musical growth; we can provide them and our audiences with a deeply meaningful and transformative experience.

"To be an artist is not the privilege of a few, but the necessity of us all."

—Robert Shaw ♦

Something Borrowed

A significant part of my search process includes investigating the repertoire of the many ensembles I admire and consequently "borrowing" their repertoire selections. I visit their websites. I purchase their recordings. I scour YouTube for

Summer Conference Recap

Christopher Dent, Summer Conference Coordinator

OCDA'S 2017 SUMMER CONFERENCE was held this year June 19–21, on the campus of Otterbein University in Westerville. This year OCDA welcomed as our clinicians Dr. Timothy Sharp, Executive Director of ACDA; Dr. Ann Usher, from the University of Akron and the Cleveland Orchestra Children's Chorus; Stacey V. Gibbs, composer and arranger; Dr. Peter Jarjisian, Professor Emeritus of Choral Activities at Ohio University; and Amy Blosser, from Bexley City Schools and the ACDA National Chair for the Committee on Repertoire and Resources. Dr. Sharp offered insight

into innovating the arts and innovating ACDA, and led an informative reading session on choral works that would fit a variety of ensemble needs. Ann Usher and Amy Blosser led engaging sessions regarding the rehearsal process and working with young singers. Stacey Gibbs offered attendees insight into the performance of the concert spiritual. Peter Jarjisian led attendees in a two-part session that commemorated the anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. The sessions culminated in a memorable performance featuring everyone who at-

tended his session.

One of the highlights of each OCDA Summer Conference are the high-caliber performances. This year's conference boasted six great performances by a variety of choirs including: the Cardinal Chorale, directed by Charles R. Snyder; The Young People's Choral Collective of Cincinnati, directed by KellyAnn Nelson; and The Summit Choral Society Performance Choir of Akron, led by Heather Cooper.

This year the OCDA High School Men's and Women's Honors



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Choirs were directed by Dr. Peter Jarjisian and Dr. Gayle Walker. This one-day event saw over 100 high school singers join together from high schools across the state and perform several outstanding selections.

The annual Children’s Honor Choir is always a huge part of Summer Conference, with singers in grades 4–8 coming to participate in this rigorous three-day event. This year’s Children’s Honor Choir was directed by Dr. Ann Usher.

This year’s OCDA Summer Conference included two new opportunities for attendees to interact: a chance to talk with veterans of the choral art through “brain-picking” sessions, and the opportunity to enhance the conference experience through the use of the Guidebook app for smartphones and tablets, which allowed attendees to access and view conference materials and supplemental materials, including conference schedules, in real time. Additional con-

ference highlights included jam-packed reading sessions highlighting the tireless work of our Repertoire & Resources chairs who hand-pick the best music to share with you; terrific social events including our annual Gemütlichkeit at Quaker Steak and Lube and the All-Conference Party at Brio; and a crowded exhibit hall with several vendors from across the region.

I look forward to seeing you at our next conference, June 18–20, 2018, at Otterbein University. ♦

Reaching Out

Brian Potts, Southwest Region Chair

THE MOST RECENT ACDA *Choral Journal* paid homage to the legendary choral director Weston Noble. The article contained kind words, memories, and stories from many other conductors, teachers, and friends who had crossed paths with Weston over the years. His ability to draw people inward through his teaching, and to keep his excitement for choral music throughout his life has always in-

spired me. I was fortunate enough to sing under Weston Noble’s direction as part of an ACDA Collegiate Honor Choir during my freshman year of college—an experience that ultimately helped influence my decision to change my major from biology to music education. During the honor choir, I was struck by Weston’s ability to reach out and connect to each person. It was during my freshman

year of college that my professor invited me to travel to Cincinnati and be part of the honor choir. Had he not reached out and given me the opportunity, I might not have switched my major to music education. I think many of us are great at reaching out to our students and choir members, no matter the level. So much of what we do is



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Photo by Sawyer Bengtson

about recruitment and building relationships. How do I get more boys in middle school choir? I need some tenors in my church choir! How do I build this new community choir? Reaching out is what we do. But do we also reach out to other choral directors? And how? OCDA is a great place to start.

I was introduced to OCDA as a student at Otterbein, when I was given the opportunity to be a student worker for the summer conference. Later, it was because Gayle Walker reached out to my wife and me and invited us to serve as the OCDA Summer Conference Co-Chairs that we became involved in the organization as professionals. We likely would not have become involved in OCDA during our first years of teaching if we had not been asked. Because we were asked, we said “yes.” Being involved in OCDA has led to many friendships and funny stories to share, such as hastily vacuuming dog hair out of my car when we found out no one was assigned to pick up the summer conference clinician at the airport, or learning how to shut off a water valve when the conference bathroom was flooding. Because someone asked, I was able to have

a full-circle moment and share dinner with Weston Noble, speaking closely with him, when he headlined one of the OCDA conferences. Most importantly, because someone asked, I have met wonderful choral directors from all around our state and beyond, with whom I can connect professionally and personally.

As Southwest Region Chair, I realize my district is bigger than I knew it to be, stretching beyond areas with which I am familiar. I look forward to reaching out to people in the entire Southwest Region. I also urge each of you to reach out to someone. Start small. Connect with a colleague in a neighboring school district and talk shop—share ideas and resources, or just vent. Plan a collaboration performance with a local

school, church, or community choir. Collaboration is a great experience for your choristers, and a great way to meet and work with other directors. Take on a student teacher and guide them not only in the classroom, but in ways they can be involved and stay connected in the “real world.” Become a mentor or find a mentor for yourself. (Check out OCDA’s mentorship program!) Invite someone to the OCDA Summer Conference, or when you are at the conference, strike up a conversation with someone new and help them feel connected.

There are many ways to connect and OCDA is a great place to begin. Why are you here? Did someone reach out to you? In return, have you reached out to someone else? ♦

Upcoming Events

February 2018

OMEA Professional Development Conference

February 8–10, 2018, Columbus, OH

omeapdc.com

ACDA Central & North Central Division Conference

February 14–17, 2018, Chicago, IL

acdacentral.org

OCDA News, the official publication of the Ohio Choral Directors Association, is published three times annually and is distributed without charge to members of the Association as well as to selected members and officers of the American Choral Directors Association. Distribution is by PDF file that is emailed and posted at ohiocda.org. OCDA reserves the right to determine inclusion of materials submitted and to edit all materials proposed for distribution.

Copy and Ad Submission Deadlines: September 15 for the Fall Issue, January 15 for the Winter Issue, and April 15 for the Spring Issue.

Advertising Rates: a full-page ad is \$135 per issue, a half-page ad is \$80 per issue, and a quarter-page ad is \$45 per issue. A 15% discount is offered on the purchase of three consecutive ads; other discounts are available. Please contact the editor for exact ad sizes and other specifications.

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