

## From Your President

*A Gift for Yourself... and Your Choirs. You Deserve It!*

AS THE ACADEMIC and church season wanes, most choral directors face the happy thought of a break—at least a lessening of pressure—and a time to re-charge and prepare for the next season looming on the horizon. You’ve heard me “preaching to the choir” all year, urging every member of OCDA to include our Summer Conference in their plans. When a young member said to me, “New directors see mentorship as an e-mail, and resources as a Google search,” I realized how very important it is for directors of every age to recognize the value of personal contact and professional collegiality. As I’ve stressed in earlier articles, there is no substitute for the educational and personal growth afforded by sharing time with professional friends.

Register now! OCDA Summer Conference, on the beautiful campus of Otterbein University, is scheduled for June 19–21, 2017. Registration materials are herein, and available on the website, [ohiocda.org](http://ohiocda.org). I assure you that participation in this conference will be one of the most valued gifts you give yourself, and your choirs, during summer break. Don’t miss it! Conference chair Christopher Dent has also arranged excellent housing opportunities which can be found on the website—including on-campus housing at an extremely affordable rate.

Our headliners this year will include Stacey Gibbs, one of America’s most dynamic young conductor/composers, who will share his extensive work in African-American choral literature as well as lots of great music. *Stacey has promised to bring us a new, Ohio-dedicated arrangement, which Summer Conference participants will have the opportunity to use pre-publication!* Joining Stacey will be Tim Sharp, ACDA’s national Executive Director and a fabulous conductor. Tim will be available for OCDA members to learn more about our organization; he will direct selected literature with the conductor’s chorus; and he will speak about innovation, in ACDA and in the arts in general. These two dynamic gentlemen are sure to ignite fires of creativity within the minds of all attending.

Registrants will also hear clinics by several renowned Ohio choralists. Ann Usher will share expertise on developing children’s voices, Amy John-



OCDA President Loren C. Veigel

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Registration closes **June 25, 2017**

Payment due first day of workshop by check or credit card

To register or inquire, contact Dr. Marla Butke at [mbutke@otterbein.edu](mailto:mbutke@otterbein.edu) or 614.581.4746



ston Blosser will demonstrate the choice and development of excellent literature with her own Bexley Vocal Ensemble, and Peter Jarjisian will share a unique and exciting setting of MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech. The conference will include seven choral performances. In addition to the Bexley Singers (Bexley High School), we will hear The Cardinal Chorale (Cambridge), a community group of high school students under the leadership of Charles Snyder; The Young Professional Choral Collective (Cincinnati), an adult community choir directed by Kelly Ann Nelson; Summit Choral Society's Children's Performance Choir (Akron), Heather Cooper, director; and, of course, our own Children's Honor Choir, under the direction of Dr.

Ann Usher (Cleveland Orchestra Children's Chorus), and our High School Men's and Women's Honor Choirs, led this year by Dr. Gayle Walker (Otterbein University) and Dr. Peter Jarjisian (Ohio University, retired).

Your registration includes all clinics and performances above; five reading sessions with packets of music provided for all; conference luncheon and meeting, where the OCDA Distinguished Service Award will be presented; the all-conference party, sponsored by Bob Rogers Travel; exhibits; roundtable discussions by interest area; and, of course the chance to share ideas and camaraderie with colleagues from all over Ohio. **A new offering is planned this year for undergraduate choral students**

**and new directors:** during breaks, panels of highly experienced Ohio directors will be available for you to meet. This is a chance to ask questions and to establish further mentorship.

Special thanks to Eric West, our IT coordinator, for always keeping our website up to date; and to Christopher Dent, conference chair, for handling all arrangements at Otterbein. Keith Tankersley sets up all of our exhibits, and Tim Cloeter does a great job editing this state newsletter. Rich Schnipke, President Elect, works with all of our R&R chairs to present great music through our reading sessions.

This represents my final article as your President. Allow me to express my deep appreciation to the

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entire OCDA Board for their invaluable support, and for the extensive work they do to keep our organization in a position of strength and health. We are one of

the most effective and active states in all of ACDA, thanks to you! I also thank all the members of OCDA for this opportunity to serve you. ACDA is my favorite or-

ganization, and its members are precious colleagues to me. I have been honored by your trust.

See you at Otterbein in June! ♦

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## Not Your Grandparents' Choral Concert: Creating Engaging Programs for Today's Singers & Audiences

*Richard Schnipke, President Elect*



*The information found in this article was originally presented at the 2016 OMEA Professional Development Conference.*

FOR DECADES, choral directors have followed fairly standard concert and programming models. Many of us arrange our choirs on risers in a typical formation and have them sing varied programs of repertoire spanning multiple time/style periods. Many programs work in chronological order, starting with an up-tempo Baroque or Classical piece and moving through various selections that demonstrate the choir's ability to interpret this music in the most accurate, historically correct, and expressive manner. Programs often then conclude with a spiritual or a piece of world music that is rhythmically interesting and energetic.

While educationally this model is very sound, one does wonder if it engages contemporary singers and

audiences in a way that is meaningful and relevant. In our current digital world, people are exposed to images and sounds at an unbelievable rate. With this in mind, conductors need to work diligently to create programs that are not only sung beautifully, but also keep our singers and audiences excited about our art. Following are practical ideas to consider when planning your next concert or season.

### Program Order

When something is easily predictable, it is less engaging to people. Think about watching a movie and coming to realize the plot is one more iteration of a story you have already seen dozens of times. Attending a traditionally programmed concert can feel similar. Breaking this mold takes some planning and creative thinking, but it can be done to great effect. A good place to start is by asking the following questions:

- Do we always need to *end* with a spiritual, or could it go elsewhere in the program?
- Can non-traditional sets be created that include multiple tempos, time/style periods?
- If multiple choirs are performing on the same concert, can they all be incorporated throughout the program, instead of having each choir come to the risers, sing a set, and leave?

### Visual Interest

With the incredible number of images coming in and out of our view, contemporary audiences are becoming increasingly visual. Creating a visually interesting concert experience can help to engage attendees and also enhance the music making, therefore allowing the program to have a greater aesthetic impact.

Performances can be enhanced visually in a number of ways. First, consider your venue and how one



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might utilize the entire space. Singers can be placed in various locations throughout the hall to provide audiences with a variety of visual and sonic experiences during the program. Utilizing not only the main stage area but aisles, balconies, a cat walk, the lobby, the back of house, the orchestra pit, etc. can be helpful. Also, having the choir(s) use multiple formations can add a great deal of visual appeal. These varied standing arrangements can also support the choir musically and/or provide a more authentic performance of the selected repertoire. We have all attended concerts when choirs changed from a section formation to a mixed arrangement. Consider ways to make these practical, musi-

cal logistics enhance the program by making it more artistic and interesting. Thinking about the historical or cultural context of a piece of music can also provide great inspiration for choral staging. For example, imagine the possibilities when considering the differences in the original performances of a Baroque double choir anthem, an English madrigal, an African folk song, or an Indian raga. Let the music be your guide and let the choirs' formations help provide the most authentic, expressive performance possible.

With the accessibility of technology in most modern performance venues, the option of utilizing digital imagery in our programs is a reality. Collaborating with art,

digital media, film, and/or theater programs can not only help your concerts become more visually appealing, but also allow for cross-curricular partnerships.

### Themes

Designing thematic concerts can help to engage audiences while providing a rewarding creative outlet for conductors. Themes can be based on whatever inspires you. Consider things like composers, nationalities, texts, life events, animals, relationships, etc. A theme gives you the creative flexibility to program together musically disparate pieces for textual reasons, and also to build interesting musical and emotional arcs. Additionally, these types of concerts can



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help you attract new audience members who may be interested in the specific nature of the concert.

### Tying it Together

One of the keys and biggest challenges of creating programs that are artistically and musically engaging is the logistics. Structuring concerts in a way that provides the audience with the feeling that they are part of an artistic event (not just a choir concert) is of utmost importance. Very few people enjoy the portions of a traditional concert that have to do with watching people and equipment move around the stage. The challenge we face is minimizing these aspects and/or incorporating them into the overall flow of the concert. Considering musical key relationships can

allow you to move seamlessly from one piece to the next without applause or interruption; incorporating narration between selections or sets can provide the audience with crucial information while covering logistical changes of personnel or equipment; utilizing instrumentalists helps to provide variety in both musical timbre and visual picture; creating instrumental (keyboard, wind, string, or percussion) interludes can offer another opportunity for covering logistical changes or for providing a musical transition that prepares for the key or style of the next choral piece.

While rewarding for the audience, musicians, and conductor, putting all of these things together does require a fair amount of planning. Designing concert “flow

charts” that give the performers logistical information about performance order, staging directions, and transitions (both musical and logistical) is crucial. Also, making extra time to rehearse all of the logistics is an absolute necessity. While we may have all of these specifics worked out in our minds, it does take time for the students to understand and internalize our vision. During rehearsal, students often find solutions or offer suggestions for problems that were not anticipated in the original planning.

While creating this type of programming takes time and energy, the effort to provide more artistic, meaningful, and engaging concert experiences for both our students and audiences is a worthy endeavor. ♦

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Tuesday, February 21, 2017 | Saturday, March 18, 2017

**Contact:** Claire Brock, 614-823-1504, [cbrock@otterbein.edu](mailto:cbrock@otterbein.edu)



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## Five Modern Must-Haves for the Choral Director's Bookshelf

*Brandon Moss, Secretary*

IF YOU ARE ANYTHING like me, your shelf is filled with books dedicated to various facets of a choral director's job—choral and vocal pedagogy, conducting gesture, repertoire, intonation, inspiration, etc. I have collected many over my years as a student and a professional, and I have even been given some hand-me-down classics in our field from some of my professors. I go to them often! The last few years have provided no shortage of new books beneficial to our work as choral directors, and I seek here to highlight

five such volumes that I personally recommend as outstanding resources.

### *Finding Ophelia's Voice, Opening Ophelia's Heart* by Lynne Gackle

This amazing resource is a research-based guide to “nurturing the adolescent female voice,” as its subtitle explains. Gackle seems to leave no stone unturned as she explores and explains (in accessible terminology) modern research in both pedagogy and voice science

that addresses the biological and psychological development that adolescent females undergo, the classification and placement of female singers, teaching techniques, and finding quality choral literature for treble choirs. Going into great depth on each topic, Gackle continually brings the focus back to the singers themselves, whom she refers to as “Ophelias,” as in *Hamlet's* tragic heroine Ophelia. Gackle's wish, however, is that all of our singing Ophelias lead empow-



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- Sat, Feb 11
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\*Coming Fall 2017, pending approval

ered, happy lives and that the tools her book gives to those of us who teach young women can greatly help this. One of the book's appendices provides 13 pages of repertoire suggestions for a variety of voicings and difficulty levels. Published by Heritage Music Press, the book also features a DVD which shows Gackle working with young singers, both as individuals in classifying voices and also as an ensemble working on vocal techniques.

***Brothers, Sing On!***  
**by Jonathan Palant**

*Brothers, Sing On!* is the tenor-bass answer to Gackle's book. Focusing on men's choruses, it covers the history of the phenomenon, anatomy of the male voice, categorization and placement of voices (especially at adolescence), choral tone and intonation, repertoire, and even administrative issues such as auditions, fundraising, and travel. Some of the psychological

aspects of singing in men's choruses are mentioned in the chapter on recruitment, which also features many great ideas and tips. Writing in a question-and-answer format, Palant not only provides a lot of content himself, but he also seeks answers from over 30 experts, covering a wide variety of men's chorus experiences at many different age levels. As in Gackle's book, appendices include lists of repertoire both for older and younger choirs,

*OCDA Mentorship Program: Call for Participants!*

HAVING TAKEN THE JOB at the University of Toledo in 2015, I am still feeling like a bit of a "newbie" in the state of Ohio. One of the first things I learned about this state, however, was how kind and generous our OCDA members are with their time and their talents. I immediately felt welcomed to the state and I have already been fortunate enough to make some great friends in the area. This experience has served to remind me of exactly how valuable friends, supportive colleagues, and mentors are in our lives as teachers.

It is with this mindset that I eagerly accepted the chair for the OCDA Mentorship Program this year. I remember well what it was like during my first years in the classroom: I was 22 years old, teaching students only a few years younger than I. I was in a school in a tough neighborhood in North Las Vegas taking over a program that had been largely neglected before my arrival. While I didn't fully understand this at the time, I was completely and utterly unprepared and unqualified to be in that classroom. Now as I mentor pre-service teachers, I am keenly aware that it is impossible for us college professors to equip students with everything they will need to sur-

vive, let alone flourish, in their first years in the classroom.

I will go further and say that one of the best lessons I have ever learned as an educator, and really as a person, is that the more I learn, the more I realize I don't know. There are countless days when I call friends and colleagues, still in search of mentors to help guide me through the multitude of decisions that face me. Who among us doesn't need someone to be there to support and help us along the way?

The OCDA Mentorship Program exists to support not only conductors and teachers in the early stages of their careers, but also all choral professionals who are looking for a boost, some new ideas, or moral support. The program pairs these individuals with mentors who can offer expertise, wisdom, and experience. We are currently compiling lists of OCDA members seeking to serve as mentors or seeking to be mentored. You can register for this program on the OCDA website here: <http://ohiocda.org/interests/mentorshipapp>.

For any questions or additional information please contact me at your convenience: [Bradley.Pierson2@utoledo.edu](mailto:Bradley.Pierson2@utoledo.edu). ♦



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as well as 10 sample concert programs supplied by real directors. The book is published by Hal Leonard.

### *Renaissance Music for the Choral Conductor* by Robert J. Summer

It is my personal opinion that Renaissance music has been neglected in choral programming for a while now. There are many possible reasons for this, but I have heard directors say on more than one occasion that fear is involved. After all, modern research in performance practice of this era is complex, and the way many of us were taught to sing Renaissance music may no longer be accepted as the best way.

Robert J. Summer's book helps to assuage these very fears. He digs through decades of research for us and provides us with concise and accessible information on selecting, rehearsing, and conducting Renaissance music, with historical perspectives, full descriptions of the development of major genres and forms, composer biographies, and even in-depth tips for hosting a madrigal dinner! He highlights his tips on conducting and score study with several example pieces that run the gamut of styles, forms, and time period within the era. Appendices include several rounds and catches to whet your singers' appetites, as well as a discography of excellent recordings of Renais-

sance music. Published by Scarecrow Press, Summer's book is a must-have for any choral director who is intimidated by music from this era.

### *A History of Western Choral Music* by Chester L. Alwes

Actually comprising two separate volumes totaling nearly 1,000 pages, this invaluable resource can be either used as a reference book or read cover-to-cover (if you have a while!). Flexibly organized—often by time period, sometimes by geography, other times by genre—Alwes' books feature countless musical examples, charts, tables, and artwork to illustrate his discussion. He highlights major trends

throughout history (for example, a table of choral symphonies or a list of major compositions based on *Faust*), but he also stops to cover in great detail significant works of choral literature (numerous tables listing movements of extended works with key relationships, cadences, scoring, etc.). I am fascinated each time I pick up these books, whether I am reading about the origins of the mass, the entire chapter dedicated to the choral work of J.S. Bach, or the most modern trends of what Alwes calls “The New Simplicities.” One may expect a work of this magnitude to be inaccessible to most readers, but these books are not. They seem designed for the working choral director so as to inform performance with any number of historical perspectives. Both volumes are published by Oxford University Press.

***A Conductor’s Guide to Choral/Orchestral Repertoire***  
by Dennis Shrock and James Moyer

The concept of this book has been done before, but this is the most complete, wide-ranging, and up-to-date one of its kind I have seen. As its cover page states, the book lists 1,200 works for chorus and instruments by 250 composers from periods throughout history. The meat of the book is organized by composer, listed alphabetically by last name. Each entry features an annotated list of works by this composer for chorus and orchestra, including information on duration, dates of composition and premiere, text, scoring, and publisher, citing multiple editions when applicable. Perhaps of more use to the working conductor are the appendices, which organize the contents of the book by scoring (both choral and orchestral), duration, and textual theme. For example, if I were look-

ing for a work 10–20 minutes long in English, I could turn to p. 258 and scan down the titles, looking for pieces in English and then using the index to look up more information about each piece. Or, if I knew I only had strings available and wanted a piece from the Classical era, I could turn to p. 250 and look through the list of works for just strings and chorus, categorized by era. The text appendix lists works by liturgical season or by categories of psalms, nature, and music about music. This reference book is published by GIA Publications.

Maybe you have some of these books on your shelf already. If not, consider checking one or more of them out. They have provided and continue to provide me with ideas, insight, inspiration, and answers to more questions than I can think to ask. Perhaps they can do the same for you! ♦

*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](http://ohiocda.org). OCDA reserves the right to determine inclusion of materials submitted and to edit all materials proposed for distribution.

**Tim Cloeter, Editor** ♦ [cloetet@bgsu.edu](mailto:cloetet@bgsu.edu) ♦ 419-372-8288 office ♦ 262-527-8151 cell

***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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## CLINICIANS INCLUDE:



**Dr. Tim Sharp, Executive  
Director of ACDA**



**Stacey V. Gibbs, composer  
and arranger**



**Dr. Ann Usher, University of  
Akron, and Cleveland  
Orchestra Children's  
Chorus**



**Amy Blosser, Bexley City  
Schools and National  
Chair for the Committee  
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## 2017 OCDA SUMMER CONFERENCE REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration fees include parking, the Tuesday business luncheon, the Tuesday evening social event, and reading session music (guaranteed only for workshop participants registering by June 9, 2017).

Fill out the registration form and return as indicated below. The registration must be postmarked by June 9, 2017, in order for the pre-registration fees to apply. After June 9, a higher fee structure is in place (see below). Reading session packets cannot be guaranteed for those who do not pre-register by the June 9 deadline. A refund will be made if a written cancellation is received by June 9, 2017. After that date a deduction of \$80.00 will be made.

The option to earn graduate credit through Otterbein University is available **for pre-registrants only**. If you would like to receive graduate credit information, please indicate this in the appropriate space on the registration form below. A current copy of your teaching license must be either mailed in with your registration form or brought with you to the conference.

Mail payment and Registration Form to: Christopher Dent, OCDA Summer Conference Coordinator, 4503 Edgerton Drive, Grove City, OH 43123. E-mail or call Christopher with questions: [ocdaconference@gmail.com](mailto:ocdaconference@gmail.com), 614-208-6778. Make checks payable to the **Ohio Choral Directors Association**.

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### REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

ACDA Membership # \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

School, Church, or Business (to be listed on badge) \_\_\_\_\_

Home or cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ Business phone \_\_\_\_\_

First-Time Conference Attendee?      Yes                      No

Pre-Registration (postmarked by June 9, 2017)	Late Registration (postmarked after June 9, 2017)
_____ \$154 ACDA member	_____ \$184 ACDA member
_____ \$228 non-member (includes membership*)	_____ \$258 non-member (includes membership*)
_____ \$74 retired member	_____ \$104 retired member
_____ \$119 retired non-member (includes membership)	_____ \$149 retired non-member (includes membership)
_____ \$89 non-member spouse (does not include membership)	_____ \$119 non-member spouse (does not include membership)
_____ \$44 student member/1 <sup>st</sup> year teacher	_____ \$84 student member/1 <sup>st</sup> year teacher
_____ \$89 student non-member (includes membership)	_____ \$119 student non-member (includes membership)

\* *New member price reflects \$21 discount, which equals the amount of OCDA dues for one year!*

**Other Items of Interest**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$9.00 I am interested in purchasing a Jersey Mike's box lunch for the Lunch Roundtable Discussions.

**Please circle your meal option:                  Ham                  Turkey                  Roast Beef                  Veggie**  
*(Interest areas include: College/University, High School/Jazz/Show, MS/Jr. High, Elementary/Children's/Boys, Church/Community)*

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in receiving graduate credit information.

#### ON-CAMPUS RESIDENCE HALL LODGING

Rooms are air-conditioned. Linens are optional (see below) and include sheets, a pillowcase, and towels. No pillows are provided.

Select date(s): \_\_\_\_\_ June 19      \_\_\_\_\_ June 20

Select room: \_\_\_\_\_ single occupancy \$39.00 per person, per night

\_\_\_\_\_ double occupancy \$25.00 per person, per night

\_\_\_\_\_ **linens (optional)- please add one-time fee of \$12.00 to total**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL CONFERENCE PAYMENT (Make checks payable to OCDA)

*How did you hear about our conference opportunity?*

\_\_\_\_\_ Website

\_\_\_\_\_ OMEA Conference

\_\_\_\_\_ Referred by current OCDA member \_\_\_\_\_ (member name)

*(Referring member receives a \$10 rebate on registration to the conference.)*

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