

From Your President

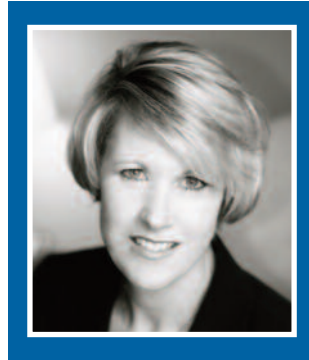
OCDA Summer Conference Is for Everyone!

“SPRING IS SPRUNG, the grass is riz, I wonder where the birdies is?” That little ditty was sung by my mother frequently as I was growing up. I think she got it from my grandfather who was notorious for funny little quips that, although grammatically suspect, would make little children giggle every time.

As we watch the beauty of spring unfold and the academic calendar year come to a rapid close, we begin to think about the summer months. Many of us make vacation plans for ourselves and our families and camp registration deadlines approach for our children. This is also a time when we have the opportunity to feed our professional selves with educational opportunities such as the OCDA Summer Conference. This summer’s conference will be held June 16–18 on the beautiful campus of Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio. As my first year as president of this fine organization comes to an end, I am excited to offer you what I hope will be an invigorating and exciting conference to energize and renew even the most exhausted choral conductor.

Three years ago, when I first assumed the office of president-elect, I was both excited and nervous about the conference planning process that awaited me. (That hasn’t abated much!) I began making a list of clinicians who had never visited our Ohio conference, who would be wonderful assets to our organization. The first name that came to mind was that of René Clausen. I have long wished to attend his summer conducting workshop in Minnesota but have not yet been able to do so. When I began planning for this summer, I thought, why not bring Dr. Clausen to us?! His work as director of the Concordia Choir is world renowned and he is highly sought after as a speaker and clinician. Dr. Clausen’s lyrical, accessible, and beautiful music has been a staple in my library for many years. I feel certain that we will all benefit greatly from his expertise.

Lori Hetzel, Associate Director of Choral Activities at the University of Kentucky and Artistic Director of the Lexington Singers Children’s Chorus, will bring her extensive knowledge in the area of working with children’s and women’s voices. In addition, Marla Butke and Sharon Davis Gratto will



OCDA President Dara Gillis

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share their knowledge of both Dalcroze technique and World Music. The OCDA Children's Honor Choir will celebrate its 10th anniversary under the baton of Dr. Sandra Mathias, Artistic Director Emeritus of the Columbus Children's Choir. Dr. Mathias will open our conference with a session on commissioning works for choirs, and the Children's Honor Choir will perform a commissioned work by composer Phillip Silvey to celebrate their 10th anniversary.

Besides our wonderful Chil-

dren's Honor Choir performance, we will enjoy concerts by the Masterworks Chorale of the Summit Choral Society, the Bexley High School Vocal Ensemble, The Kent State University Chorale, and the Dempsey Singers of John C. Dempsey Middle School. Our second annual men's and women's high school honors choirs will also perform under the direction of James Gallagher, professor emeritus of The Ohio State University, and Richard Mathey, professor emeritus of Bowling Green State

University.

My goal when planning this conference was to provide something for every choral director in our organization regardless of experience or area of interest. When I list here all that awaits us, I wonder to myself how anyone could possibly miss such an incredible opportunity! I encourage you, if you have not already done so, to pre-register online today and save \$30. Visit us at ohiocda.org for more information. I look forward to seeing you in June! ♦

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Finding Your Own Style

Kristen Snyder, High School R&S Chair

After twelve years of teaching, I am still figuring out my teaching style. I have been very fortunate to work with many exceptional choral directors and I have stolen ideas from all of them. Sometimes, though, I have to work with an idea a little until I find my own way of executing it. I have to make it part of my own toolkit and become familiar with it. Sometimes even the best idea fails and I have to find a way to reintroduce it differently. It is all part of finding your own style. Below are a few ideas on how to do this.

Listen. YouTube has everything, good and bad. Listen to it all. Attend concerts at OMEA and OCDA. You will find that you have

a preferred tone quality, or that you develop pet peeves. This is how you train your ear for what you want to hear with your own choirs. The first step to making it *your* choir is to know what you want it to sound like!

Experiment. Take risks! Try an idea a few times and a few different ways until it feels natural to you. There is more than one way to handle expression in music, for example, and it has to work for you or it won't be comfortable. Let's be honest, I am a scrawny white girl, some of the "greats" I admire so much have techniques or ways of explaining a concept that just sound funny when I say them. One of my students even told me once that when

I yell at them it is like their mom doing it so they tune it out! I have even had to find my own way to yell at them that isn't a naggy mom sound...or at least I have found a way to use that to my advantage. Whatever it is—from rehearsal techniques, warm ups, conducting gesture, classroom management, etc.—it also has to work for the students! At the high school level we are still doing a lot of modeling. It is ok to admit that you don't have all the answers, that you honor master teachers and that you never stop learning. Every time I return from a conference, I am all hyped up to try something new. Sometimes they love it, and sometimes I get "Oh, no! She went to a confer-

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ence again!" But I know they love being part of the process. It keeps things new for them too.

Study the masters. Read their books, invite them to come in and work with your groups, attend honors choirs and watch how they work with the students. Steal all of their ideas, but then mix them all up in your own bag of tricks and put your own spin on them. Ohio is full of these master teachers and they are often very open to helping you out. They want the choral art to continue as much as we do.

Put yourself and your group out there for critique. Go to OMEA adjudicated events and other festi-

vals. Bring in visitors or take your choir out to perform in front of people who can help. Think about it—that is how your students learn every day. They sing for you, you give them feedback, they change it, they sing again, you give feedback, etc. Is that not sound teaching? Put yourself through the same thing. I have learned more from this than anything else, hands down.

Consult with others who are doing what you do. I once went to a conference and spent half the time in the coffee shop across the street. I got more out of that conference than I had in a long time! I had just taken a high school level position after nine years of middle school

choir and I was not in a place to receive any more information—I was in survival mode! I sat with several of my fellow choral directors and vented, shared, and collected new ideas. I went back to my class that year feeling both thankful for what I had and empowered to do what I wanted with my new program. The next year I went back to the conference, listened to master groups, and set goals for my own ensembles.

Above all, trust yourself and don't be afraid to fail. We are doing more than just teaching choral music—we are an example for our students. Enjoy your job and have a great end to the year! ♦

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Change Can Be Good

Julie Dewald, East Central Region Chair

Last year I conducted Bizet's "Valse avec choeur" at State Contest.

Next week my kindergartners will perform "E-I-E-I Oops!"

August 25, 2006, was my first day as a member of the faculty at Massillon Washington High School. For me it held significance for many reasons, not the least of which was this: Washington H.S. is my alma mater, and after more than a decade away from my hometown, I was returning not just to teach, but to become a part of the program that first fanned the flame of my love of choral music.

Of course, there is a vast gulf that divides the experiences of a relatively naive high school student from those of a slightly more mature and seasoned teacher. Yet I felt a sense of pride and responsibility that I might not have experienced at any other school; pride in the accomplishments of the program which ultimately shaped my desire to become a choral teacher, and a responsibility to do all within

my power to maintain the level of excellence upon which I had been raised as a student.

Massillon is a proud community with a rich history. Traditions have always been important to my alma mater and I was humbled to add my name to the list of dynamic, inspirational choir directors before me.

I knew these traditions well; they were special memories I held close to my heart, even more so as a teacher. I felt honored to teach at Massillon and thought I would certainly retire from this position. But, after eight memorable years with our fine Massillon choir students, I had a tough decision to make.

Priorities had changed for me. My life was going in a direction that I never thought was in the plan. I had joined the group of "moms" at 42! My husband and I are proud parents of a 2-year old son. He is a blessing and a joy in our lives. But, my determination to balance a healthy marriage, be a devoted mother, *and* be committed to a choral program rich in history

and reputation, had made life a bit overwhelming.

A high school choral program built on excellence; quality time with family: both very important. For nearly twenty years, my passion and fulfillment was with high school level choral music: memorable concerts, domestic and international tours, OMEA adjudicated events, musicals, honors choirs, and on and on. I was nervous about change, and it was not easy to think about leaving a job I loved and held in such high regard. Yet as difficult as my decision to move my focus to elementary music was, I was still looking forward to different challenges at that level. Some people might think this move was somewhat of a demotion, a step backwards, a step down from an esteemed choral program. What I found was that teaching can be an extremely satisfying career full of opportunities for personal and professional development at every level! Few other professions allow you to make such a positive and



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After spending a year teaching elementary music, I found it just as challenging and rewarding as high school, yet on a different level. We've all heard the overused analogy of building a house and how important the foundation is. I have a newfound respect for the importance of this and can see the relation to music education. It is just as important and rewarding to begin to teach a child the love of music as it

is to see them develop into mature, young adults with all of their promising potential. We all know how important the beginning basics are to the smooth transition from elementary to middle school to high school. (All the *ta-ta-ti-ti-ta, do-re-mi, recorder Karate* and *musicals* we work hard on at the elementary level will hopefully come to fruition at the high school program!)

My twenty years teaching high school give me insight into how to prepare these eager beginners for

their experiences at an upper level of choral music. And now I relish the responsibility of building these fundamentals of music from the ground up.

What are the challenges and rewards you're experiencing in your career? We all have obstacles to overcome, decisions to make, and goals to achieve, but each one of us is an essential piece in the future success of our youth. The reality is, change can be good. My reality is: change was good. ♦

What's New?

Peter Jarjisian, Two-Year College R&S Chair

It's a question many friends have been asking since my shift from full- to part-time teaching. I'm likely to say, *I'm aiming to be playful every day. I remember the 8-year-old inside me, and I want him with me more than ever—especially in my learning and teaching.* Here's a result of the kid at play; steal the idea if you wish!

Look at the inside of your LEFT hand. See the spaces between your fingers? Now bring the fourth finger and little finger together. (Use your right hand to help if necessary.) Now at some time you may recall Robin Williams in *Mork and Mindy*, or you'll say, *Captain, live well and prosper!* And I hope you do! But let's get back on task. Looking at your left hand, do you see the space between your index finger and middle finger? And also the one between the middle and fourth

fingers? And the fourth finger as close as possible to the little finger?

You're walking around with a tetrachord there, my friend—one of the most useful tools in the world of music. Whole-step, whole-step, half-step. For example, C-D-EF (WWH). See the spaces for the two black keys? Start another one on a G, (G-A-BC), and you've built a C major scale! Pick any letter name you choose, be sure to refer to the piano keyboard to compute the whole and half steps, and start your own Tetrachord Construction Company. You're gonna be a whiz! (You may be thinking, well I **know** the scale is WWHWWWH. And you're right, of course.) But my students are teaching me that it's much easier to think in groups of **four** than in groups of eight. Just think of the myriad of phrases that include 4-

note groups, many with the half-step in this location. The opening of "Seventy-Six Trombones" marches into my mind!

If you'll play with me here, you'll imagine 1-2-3-4 attached by a whole step to 5-6-7-8. At some point you'll enjoy thinking: So, what if the *first* tetrachord is recast as 5-6-7-8? Then, I'll go to the left—downward—to the *flat side of life*—to find the first step, the one upon which I'll build my 1-2-3-4. Speak the names of the pitches aloud (advanced learners could sing them) as you touch each finger of the tetrachord. (Students learn best when they **say** and **do!**)

Want a little rehearsal refresher? Pull 4 volunteers from the group; have them face the choir and form a tetrachord, space between 1-2, 2-3, and have persons 3 and 4 close enough to touch arms.

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The choir sees 1-2-3-4. Add a second tetrachord of singers in the same arrangement to form a major scale.

Want to convert the major scale to a natural minor scale built on the same letter name? Think the number 367; have persons 3 and 6 move to their right (so they touch the shoulders of persons 2 and 5); and have person 7 move toward person 6, so s/he is now a whole step away from person 8. The result will look like: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8.

Hooray—a natural minor scale! Assign each person a letter name, and have them shift from major to minor. Have the whole choir write the two scales on staff paper. The

fun has just begun! Harmonic minor? Have person 7 go back next to 8!

I can't express how gratifying it has been to see students embracing this handy aid in a Foundations of Music class this year. The tetrachord—in their hand—has led to confidence in constructing scales, understanding key signatures, and relating it all to the Circle of Fifths and to the relationship of primary triads.

For inspiration (and centuries of ideas on creativity), I recommend *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and the Arts* by Stephen Nachmanovitch. ♦

Help the Historian

JOHN S. LONG, HISTORIAN

I am trying to collect data for our historical archives. If you have any type of concert programs, newsletters, conference programs, or pictures that you feel would be of value to the Ohio Choral Directors Association, please contact me. In fact, if you simply have a great story or remembrance about the Ohio Choral Directors Association and would be willing to share it, that would be great, too. Please e-mail me at jslong@inbox.com. Thanks so much!

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René Clausen is professor of music and has served as conductor of The Concordia Choir in Moorhead, Minnesota, since 1986. Additionally, he is the artistic director of the award-winning Concordia Christmas Concerts, which are frequently featured by PBS stations throughout the nation. His success as a composer is demonstrated by over 100 commissioned works. "Life and Breath: Choral Works by René Clausen" is a 13-track recording by the Kansas City Chorale. This CD of compositions by Clausen won two Grammy Awards in 2013, including Best Choral Performance.

Lori Hetzel is the Associate Director of the School of Music, Associate Director of Choral Activities and Professor of Choral Music Education at the University of Kentucky where she conducts the UK Women's Choir and the *a cappella* group "Paws and Listen". Hetzel is a contributing author to the new textbook *Conducting Women's Choirs: Strategies for Success*. Outside of the university, Dr. Hetzel also serves as Artistic Director of the Lexington Singers Children's Choir and conducts the LSCC Chamber Choir.



Marla Butke is Associate Professor of Music at Ashland University where she serves as the Coordinator of Music Education, teaches choral and general music methods courses, and directs the Women's Chorus. She is a frequent clinician throughout the United States with research interests focusing on Dalcroze Eurhythmics and reflective practice. Dr. Butke serves as the head of research for the Dalcroze Society of America and is the Ohio Chapter President.

Sharon Davis Gratto is Professor and Chair of the University of Dayton Department of Music, where she directs the World Music Choir. She came to UD from Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania, where she was Music Education Coordinator, a conductor of three choral ensembles, and Founder/Director of the Gettysburg Children's Choir. Dr. Gratto's PK-12 music teaching has included positions at schools in Germany, Spain, and Nigeria. For six years at Indiana University Dr. Gratto piloted Jay Fern and Mary Goetze's technology for teaching world choral music, *Global Voices*.



Sandra Mathias, this year's Children's Honor Choir Director, is Professor Emerita at Capital University, where she served as Professor of Vocal Music Education and Director of The Kodály Institute at Capital for 29 years. She is also Director Emerita of the Columbus Children's Choir, where she served as Artistic Director for 25 years. She is a Past President of the Organization of American Kodály Educators (OAKE) and served as the R & S Chair for Children's Choirs for OCDA. Dr. Mathias serves as consultant, guest conductor and teacher both nationally and internationally.

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Fill out the registration form and return as indicated below. The registration must be postmarked by May 31, 2014, in order for the pre-registration fees to apply. After May 31, a higher fee structure is in place (see below). Reading session packets cannot be guaranteed for those who do not pre-register by the May 31 deadline. A refund will be made if a written cancellation is received by May 31, 2014. After that date a deduction of \$80.00 will be made.

The option to earn graduate credit through Otterbein University is available this year **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: Brandon L. Moss, OCDA Summer Conference Coordinator, 342 ½ W. 1st Ave., Columbus OH 43201. Email or call Brandon with questions: ocdaconference@gmail.com 614-499-8089. Make checks payable to the **Ohio Choral Directors Association**.

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_____ \$119 non-member spouse (does not include membership)
_____ \$84 student member/1st year teacher
_____ \$119 student non-member (includes membership)

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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.)

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 e-mailed and posted at ohiocda.org. OCDA reserves the right to determine inclusion of materials submitted and to edit all materials proposed for distribution.

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

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June 2014

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June 16–18, 2014, Columbus, OH

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