

From Your President

It's Simply Not the Same....

TEXT MESSAGES NEVER REPLACE a face-to-face conversation. An email stream is just not the same as lunch with a friend. An online search won't provide the sensitive mentorship of a trusted colleague who cares about your success. No technological tool fulfills one's needs like the nod of a head, a responsive and targeted observation, or the sympathetic touch of a friend.

A younger attendee at OCDA Summer Conference said to me, "Today's new teachers think mentorship is an email and resources are Google searches." Consider the experiences our Summer Conference can provide in mentorship and resources! The OCDA Board has observed that attendance at OCDA Summer Conference, while still strong, has shown a gradual but steady decline. Your Board continually makes adjustments and comes up with ideas for invigoration of the conference. Come get your mentorship and resources in person!

Mark your calendar for June 19–21, 2017, planning to attend our terrific Summer Conference on the beautiful campus of Otterbein University. At registration time, speak to several young colleagues, reminding them of the priceless value of camaraderie and personal professional contact (not to mention all the fun we have!), and encouraging them to come with you to conference. Over the many years I've been involved in ACDA, absolutely nothing has been more valuable than the personal contact, friendships, mentorship, and collegiality developed through this organization. Knowing I could pick up the phone to call an OCDA colleague for any need has always provided an indispensable support system. My sincere advice to all my young colleagues would be: Get involved! OCDA can become your most valuable resource, your finest mentors, your favorite colleagues. The personal contact is not to be missed.

I send my best wishes to every OCDA member, as your season begins with your students, singers, children, or worshippers. Remember the beauty of our profession as you change lives for the better every day!

At this time, there are several items I'd like to bring to your attention:

First, I express once again my sincere appreciation for the tremendous privilege of serving my beloved OCDA as your President. Feel free to reach out



OCDA President Loren C. Veigel

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to me at any time. lveig@sssnet.com

The national Sing Up Campaign

has been very successful, and this fall will run for only one month. Doug O'Neal continues as our capable membership chair. Take a moment to think of a colleague who is not an OCDA member. Share with them the great benefits of our organization, especially the personal/professional relationships. Forward new member contact information to Doug at rdohio@gmail.com. Watch ohiocda.org for further information. OCDA has a strong national presence; our Sing Up campaigns have been successful. Your assistance will assure our continued

strength, and allow the next generation of conductors to experience OCDA/ACDA.

I wish to express my personal gratitude to my wonderful Board. You should be proud to be represented by such dedicated and giving choral professionals. There is tremendous energy in our organization right now, and thanks to these people, we have a bright future.

Expect a survey to appear from your OCDA Board, regarding Summer Conference programming and attendance, as well as OCDA News (online vs. print versions). Please take the few moments required to complete this survey; the

data will assist your Board to plan for the future of OCDA.

Over the past few years, Suzanne Walters has worked diligently to establish a great opportunity for elementary school choirs: the OCDA-sponsored Elementary Choir Festivals. Now endorsed also by OMEA, these events are poised to expand regionally across the state. Kudos to Suzanne for her superior work, and our best wishes as she steps aside from her chair position. OCDA is delighted to announce the appointment of Julie Strebler, of Coventry Schools, Summit County, as our new Elementary Choir Festival Chair. If you desire information about this

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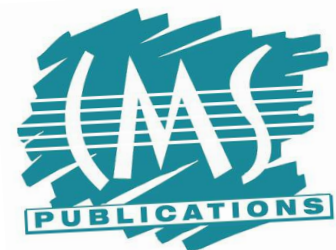
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wonderful new project, or would like to help bring a festival for elementary choirs to your area of Ohio, please contact Julie (jstrebler@coventryschools.org).

OCDA members attending Summer Conference were provided a brief preview of ACDA's fantastic 2017 National Conference, to be held in Minneapolis March 8–11, 2017. This landmark conference

provides the expected limitless opportunities to experience performances, reading sessions, clinics, and composer's sessions, and to meet conductors from across the nation and around the world. Mark your calendar and make your plans to attend.

I'm not yet prepared to announce all the details of our 2017 Summer Conference, but I am very

excited about our plans. I promise that you'll gain great insights from our nationally recognized headliners, as well as hearing from some of our own Ohio experts. Of course, there will be the usual reading sessions and social events. Remember those dates: June 19–21, 2017.

Now, go change lives for the better, my friends! Have a wonderful year. ♦

Rationales for Renaissance Repertoire

Dr. Zebulon Highben, South Central Region Chair

OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS I have become a preacher of the “gospel of Renaissance music.” As we all know, the repertoire we choose for our ensembles becomes the curriculum by which we teach them. Though there are many different genres, categories, and types of music from which we can (and should!) choose, I believe that every choir's repertoire each year should include at least one motet, madrigal, or other work from the Renaissance era. This article details a few of my reasons for that assertion.

Renaissance music is technically and texturally diverse.

As a young conductor I avoided Renaissance music, thinking it was too difficult for my choirs. Certainly many Palestrina motets and Monteverdi madrigals would be daunting for less experienced

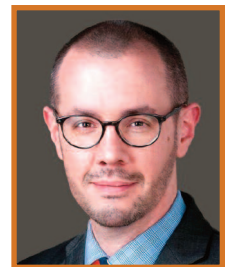
singers, but there are many simpler works with limited ranges that work wonderfully for beginners, regardless of age. Smaller ensembles shouldn't shy away from the Renaissance, either: Many composers such as Dufay, Dunstable, and Praetorius wrote numerous works for 2 and 3 parts as well as pieces with thicker vocal textures.

Speaking of textures: Renaissance choral music does not necessarily mean *a cappella* singing. We know that it was not unusual for instruments to double (or even sometimes replace) vocal parts in the Renaissance, and modern conductors should feel free to include instruments in this way. Wind and string instruments are particularly lovely timbres for such doubling; with keyboard instruments, the organ or a digital keyboard using a sustained sound are preferable to the piano because of the difference

in sound quality and production.

Renaissance music makes better, more independent musicians.

The largely polyphonic nature of much Renaissance repertoire encourages good breath support, energized phrasing, and confident, independent singing. There are very few cases of “altos get the left-over notes” in Renaissance composition; each part gets aurally interesting melodic material that is enjoyable to sing and hear. Consider also that the staggered, imitative entrances of a Josquin motet or the chromatic tension of a late Italian madrigal require careful listening and responsiveness to other voices. Such attentiveness helps singers develop an intuitive understanding of how other parts interact with their own.



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The foundational principle of the steady, constant *tactus*—as opposed to modern meter signatures and metronome markings—like-wise builds musical independence. Singers learn that musical pulse and tempo aren't always dictated by the conductor, but can be internalized by individual performers. In the case of Renaissance music this internalization is explicit, since the concept of *tactus* is related to the range and speed of the human heartbeat.

A great experiential way to teach Renaissance *tactus* is to allow the ensemble to help establish and determine its speed in a piece. First, ask students to tap their own *tactus* individually on their sternum or knee; then, invite them to

whisper or audiate the text while they tap. Finally, have the whole choir sing together while trying to find and agree upon a uniform pulse. It may take a few tries, but you'll be surprised how quickly your chorus will settle into a tempo, and how often that tempo is the same (or perhaps better) than what you might have chosen.

Renaissance music builds musical literacy.

Notation, melodic contour, intervals, rhythm and duration, modal tonality—all these musical elements that might seem dull in the average sight-singing text can be taught contextually with Renaissance repertoire. Solfège works wonderfully with many Renaissance works,

and there's no better way to challenge a group's sight-singing skills than to pull out an unfamiliar motet and read through it.

Renaissance music also allows us to teach our choirs about musicality. The expressive qualities of Renaissance compositions are built into their structure; performers make expressive changes based upon melodic contour, texture changes, length and/or speed of notes, etc., rather than any dynamic markings or other indicators in the score. By teaching these ideas to our choirs, we can help them learn to be naturally musical.

Take, for example, Hans Leo Hassler's well-known motet "Dixit Maria." (<http://www.cpd.org/wiki/images/sheet/hassler/hass-dix.pdf>)

The motive introduced by the tenors at the beginning of the work (mm. 1–6) has a number of characteristics typical of a Renaissance melody. The stressed syllables fall on the beat and have longer durations than other syllables. Likewise, the energy and volume of the line parallels the direction of the melodic contour. When the other voices enter, they are in strict imitative polyphony (though altos are transposed by a fifth), and in any given moment the voice parts with moving notes become slightly more prominent than the others. A texture change at mm. 22 (“Ecce ancilla Domine”) illustrates a change in the text, as Hassler uses homophony to emphasize Mary’s response to the angel.

You get the idea. The point here is that many of the musical attributes we would like our singers to have and to know can be taught through Renaissance pieces. Put another way: It’s easy for teachers to generate a long list of potential learning objectives from a single Renaissance work.

Renaissance music encourages varied teaching techniques.

Introducing a new Renaissance piece to a choir is an opportunity for creative lesson planning. How you introduce the piece will shape the choir’s understanding and enjoyment of it.

With the Hassler motet mentioned above, I would teach the entire choir the opening tenor motive by rote. I’d ask them to echo me as I sing the first word, then the first two words, then the first four measures, then the entire six-bar motive. Carefully modeling the phrasing and dynamic shaping I want to hear, I would use hand gestures to help show the text stress. Then I would teach the same music “transposed” to the alto’s key. After we had learned that motive together, I would invite the choir to open their scores—at which point, they would find that (thanks to polyphonic imitation) they’d basically learned the notes, rhythms, and expressive qualities of the first ten measures.

Another technique that singers

enjoy is learning part-book style. Like a “real” Renaissance-era chorus, each section receives a copy of only their part rather than the full score. (You can find Finale/Sibelius files for many Renaissance pieces on CPDL and quickly extract the individual parts into separate documents.) Invite the choir to stand in circles by section so they are singing to each other as they learn their parts. This technique is amplified with less experienced choirs if you can introduce their parts via sectional rehearsals before putting them together.

Beyond these rationales for Renaissance music, there is one more that trumps the rest: Singers enjoy this repertoire. Every spring, many of my choir members will say that the Renaissance compositions we performed in the past year were among their favorites.

I hope this brief article has provided you with some inspiration to pull out and dust off your Renaissance scores. Your choirs will thank you for it. Happy programming! ♦

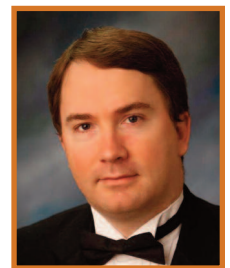
Summer Conference Recap

Christopher Dent, Summer Conference Coordinator

OCDA’S 2016 SUMMER CONFERENCE was held June 20–22 on the campus of Otterbein University in Westerville. This year OCDA welcomed Rodney Eichenberger and Andrea Ramsey as our headlining clinicians. Eichenberger presented sessions on a variety of topics in-

cluding “the conductor’s mirror,” multi-purpose vocalises, and the artistic rehearsal, while Ramsey presented sessions on the high school men’s chorus, the non-auditioned middle school choir and the meaning of the choral experience for grades 7–12. Ramsey offered

insight into her own works in a session titled “Compositions and Conversations: the choral music of Andrea Ramsey.” Eichenberger offered an opportunity for several conductors to receive feedback as part of a con-



ducting masterclass, with attendees serving as the choir.

The conference boasted seven great performances as well, including the Ohio Northern University Singers, directed by Dr. Ben Ayling; Lancaster Chorale, directed by Dr. Stephen Caracciolo; Cappricio Columbus, directed by Larry Griffin; and the Dempsey Middle School Choir, directed by Tracy Cinereski.

The OCDA High School Men's and Women's Honor Choirs were again directed this year by Lynda Hasseler and Frank Bianchi. This one-day event saw over 100 high school singers join together from high schools across the state to

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 a rigorous three-day event. This year's Children's Honor Choir was directed by Fred Meads from the American Boychoir School.

Other conference highlights included jam-packed reading sessions, thanks to the tireless work of our Repertoire & Standards chairs who hand-pick the best music to share with you; terrific social events including our annual Gemütlichkeit at Quaker Steak and Lube (a new location this year) and

the All-Conference Party at Brio; a crowded exhibit hall with several vendors from across the state; and the presentation of this year's Distinguished Service Award to Eric Richardson, who spent five decades inspiring students at Olmstead Falls Middle School, Strongsville High School, Westlake High School and Heidelberg University. Eric also serves as director of music at Bethesda on the Bay Lutheran Church and has served as Worship R&S Chair for ACDA Central Division.

I look forward to seeing you at the 2017 conference, June 19–21, 2017, at Otterbein University. ♦



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“What’s That Squiggly Thing?": Integrating Musical Literacy in the Volunteer Choir

Daniel Parsley, Music and Worship R&S Chair

CHARLENE'S WEEKLY AGENDA includes rehearsing with the chancel choir for two hours each Thursday at the First United Methodist Church in her hometown. Charlene gets up bright and early every Sunday morning to rehearse at 10:00 AM in preparation for the 11:00 AM service. Charlene has been doing this every week since she was 18 years old and has established this routine for the past 30 years.

Charlene has a beautiful soprano voice. She is conscientious and a dedicated chorister who always comes to rehearsal with a great attitude. In addition to her beautiful voice, Charlene clearly values the role of education in her life, as she is a gifted high school English teacher. Charlene had a wonderful experience singing in the high school glee club where she learned solfège and key signatures, but she has not been invited to utilize that knowledge since those formative years. Charlene has since lost the ability to identify a notated pitch on the staff by name after leaving her college women's choir. At chancel choir rehearsal every week Charlene asks, “What is that squiggly 8 looking thing?” which begins every page of her music. No one has taught Charlene that the marking *mp* doesn't mean “mega pitch.” Amidst all of this, every time Charlene asks a question her sincere desire for musical knowledge is undeniable.

Have you come across this situation before? It's likely that most of us have come face-to-face with something like this, though maybe not to the ridiculous extreme of this hypothetical scenario. Even though the severity may vary, the sentiment remains true: standards for instilling musicianship in the volunteer choral ensemble often fall short in comparison to standards for the academic choral ensemble. As music educators, we realize that our choristers all have expertise in their day to day lives—they are profoundly literate in many areas of life. Why shouldn't musical literacy be included in their arsenal of skills?

As community and church choir directors, we are called to build up musicianship skills in all settings. Even when individuals come from a well-rounded, musicianship-centered choral upbringing, the issue at hand remains that outside of the primary, secondary, or collegiate realm, the invitation for musicianship training often falls to the wayside due to real, valid time constraints.

This plea for musicianship building may seem like a grandiose ideal. Reality may be a little different. When push comes to shove, pounding out pitches and relying on choral “regurgitation” becomes the needed course of action to get those two pieces concert-ready for the program next week, or to make

sure the anthem doesn't fall apart for this upcoming Sunday. Certainly, the “regurgitation” method of teaching has a sense of necessity in the volunteer choir, but far too often it becomes the norm rather than the exception during rehearsal. I find myself a culprit of the spoon-feeding method more often than I'd like to admit!

As music educators, we owe it to our choristers to provide tools that better invite musical literacy, whether they are volunteers or experienced musicians. I realize that that this is not new information. Take the following words of encouragement as a nowhere-near-exhaustive list of ideas that simply scratches the surface for nurturing capable, well-rounded choristers in your community and church choirs.

Music: an Art *and* a Science

Music as an art and expression alone simply isn't enough. Teach your choristers to experience music as both a beautiful art, but also as a calculated science, and you will have a much easier time creating an environment focused on musical literacy. Know that this focus on music as an art *and* a science is intended to complement, and not downplay or dismiss, other valuable areas found within choral music such as community building, mental and physical wellness, spirituality, and countless other benefits





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gained from collective choral singing.

Understanding that musicianship skills are a building block of the science of sound—what we consider the analytic categorization and specific calculation of pitch in relation to a greater tonal and musical context—is key to convincing your choristers that musical literacy is a science. Principles must be understood and then applied in order for concepts to be fully integrated into a wholly engaged experience. Utilizing musicianship tools can be equated, in some sense, to the practice of a chemistry or physics lab; we must experiment and use these tools to understand the whole concept.

To put it bluntly, music can't be relegated to only art or only sci-

ence—it is the perfect marriage of the two. If choristers believe fully in this union, they will be more apt and dedicated to expand their musicianship skills while fully embracing the artistic elements of music making.

Creativity

Make musicianship skills a game, even for adults. When an activity is enjoyable, we might not even realize that we are learning—this is the best kind of learning.

Simple activities are worth their weight in gold. Utilize a rhythm and subdivision exercise with a volunteer leader clapping quarter notes then “directing” the choir to change rhythmic values (i.e. “after the third measure, we change to triplets while the first row keeps

quarter notes”). Allow for a number of choristers to “direct” the choir through Curwen hand signs as each section responds to a different sign without verbal prodding from their leader. The most simple tools and exercises empower your choristers to take responsibility for their own development without them even recognizing their own engagement. Don't discount what you would use with middle school or secondary school students—it translates more often than you would think for average volunteer ensembles.

An Open Mind: Try, Try Again!

Assess what works for each group. I've found that my adult chancel choir, with members aged from 18–85 years, responds well to Cur-

wen hand signs. They are a kinesthetic group of learners. We read both new and old hymns with hand signs each rehearsal and tend to refer to intervallic issues in rehearsal through kinesthetic means. On the other hand, I've found that my auditioned chamber ensemble works better with solfège and can switch within seconds between neutral vowels and solfège syllables, especially when they are attempting to read through a new piece without keyboard support. In rehearsals with my upper elementary children's choir, students relish using numbers, solfège, and hand signs interchangeably.

Find what works for the ensemble and don't be stuck with just one way of exploring musicianship. Don't be afraid to "crash and burn"

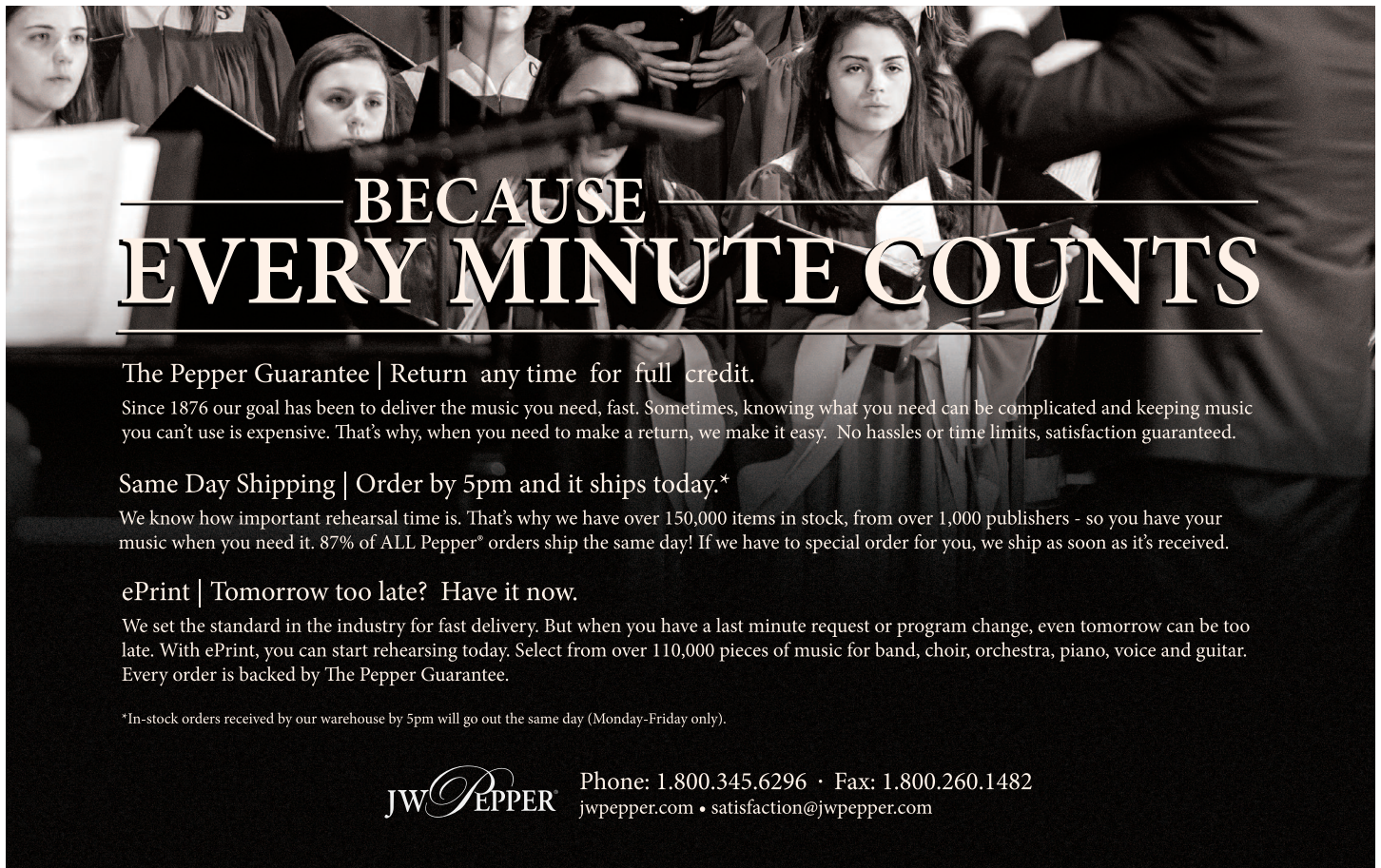
in experimenting with your ensembles; when something doesn't work as well as you had hoped, re-group, re-think, and re-envision. Most importantly, don't let individuals become too frustrated with their musicianship journey. Frustration can be a powerful tool for progress; unregulated frustration, however, can turn choristers off to new approaches entirely. When a method works, celebrate and encourage your ensembles in their successes.

Literature as a Tool for Teaching

Sometimes we program pieces because we truly love the music and wish to invite our choristers to share that love. Sometimes we program because the anthem fits the theme of worship for that morning. Sometimes we program in order to

teach certain musical principles and literacy. Try programming several pieces that have specific, attainable literacy content areas and clear literacy goals. The focus could be understanding mixed meter, relating dynamic contrasts, sight reading within basic harmonic contexts, teaching articulation, or any other of numerous contexts.

It is important to keep in mind that not all pieces serve the same educational outcome. We might have our "gravy" pieces, but we also need to have a meal for our choristers that includes a protein, a vegetable, and a starch. Our planning must include an entree that is nutritional for the choristers' overall musical development. Each ingredient should serve a purpose. Like a good meal, we wouldn't want just



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steak or potatoes. We need a variety of things on our plate. To answer the question in your head: yes, dessert (and maybe even a little wine) should also be included!

The Big Picture and the Bigger Reward

Time is precious in rehearsals. Make it a personal practice to devote at least 10% of rehearsal time to active musicianship building. As an additional layer, consciously utilize literacy techniques throughout your rehearsal process like solfège, count singing, rhythmic solfège, and flash cards with musical terms and concepts. Though you may feel more pressed for time to “get things done,” the rewards will become clear later down the road with your volunteer ensembles. You will quickly notice how much faster your choristers will correct pitches after reading through a piece the second time, how intuitive they become with style and phrasing, how intonation will improve when choristers understand the context and function of what they are singing, and how much more efficient your rehearsal will eventually run if you stick to the

plan. It is a scary process to devote even 9 minutes of a 90-minute rehearsal to building musicianship, but in my experience this practice is crucial to the overall success for the ensemble. The faster the ensemble takes on the nuts and bolts of a piece, the more time you have to help them create a beautiful, vocally sound product. The more comfortable they are with the science, the better equipped they will be to create the art.

Never Forget: These Are Lifelong Students

Whether we—or they—like to admit it or not, our volunteer choristers are still students. By students, I don’t mean the way we would traditionally view the relationship of teacher and student in academic settings. Rather, we must consider our volunteer choristers as students to encourage lifelong learning.

I recently had a conversation with a tenor in my adult chancel choir at the end of a rehearsal in which we had been trying to achieve a particularly challenging set of musical literacy standards. Because I’m sensitive to the awk-

wardness that can arise when the instructor role is filled by a conductor considerably younger than some of his singers, I braced for discomfort. To my surprise, my 72-year-old tenor said, “I wanted to say thank you for explaining the key signature in ‘Keep Your Lamps’ tonight. It is something I want to know more about. You also mentioned something about a circle of fifths. Can we talk more about what that means sometime?” After we had talked for a bit he ended our conversation with, “I’m a firm believer you can always teach an old dog new tricks.”

I think that sentiment is overwhelmingly true. We must continue to cultivate this understanding of lifelong learning as a necessary and intrinsic principle for our choristers’ musical growth and success. No one is too old, too inexperienced, or too unprepared to begin the journey toward musical literacy. Our duty is to begin or continue this journey for all of the choristers who devote their voices to our craft. To do so will be a blessing to our singers, and to not do so would be a disservice to those we lead. ♦



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Distinguished Service Award

Amy Gelsone, Historian

IT IS MY DISTINCT HONOR to celebrate in this article the latest recipient of the OCDA Distinguished Service Award, Mr. Eric Richardson. Without a doubt, Eric Richardson has proven to be a champion of choral music in Ohio. He has been a successful choral director, clinician, and mentor to numerous Ohio choral musicians.

Nominated by friend and colleague William Zurkey, Eric was presented the award at the business luncheon on June 22 at Otterbein University. In his nomination letter, Zurkey notes “Mr. Richardson’s influence has gone beyond his teaching as he has become both a clinician and an OMEA contest judge. He presently works with many high school choral groups with the goal of assisting directors in building skills in their choirs. He is a mentor to many high school choral directors in the state as he travels to share his passion for choral music.... Over the past 40 years, musicians, students, and community members have been the grateful recipients of Eric’s passion for excellence in choral music.”

Eric taught at Olmstead Falls Middle School, Strongsville High School, Heidelberg University, and Westlake High School, where he set a standard of excellence and superior ratings in OMEA events. In retirement he continues to be active in the American Choral Directors Association, Ohio Choral Directors Association, and the Ohio

Music Educators Association, and he has served in several capacities, most recently as the Worship R&S Chair for the ACDA Central Division. He is currently the Director of Music at Bethesda on the Bay Lutheran Church in Bay Village, Ohio. Eric Richardson has been a major influence on choral music in Ohio. His colleagues, former students, and community members have been inspired by his passion.

I have experienced Eric’s encouragement personally: We were lucky to have him as our Junior High clinician for District 1 Honor Choir a few years ago. My students still remember his techniques and jokes! Eric is kind, caring, personable, funny, and highly respected among his peers. I am thrilled to congratulate him on this outstanding honor! ♦



Treasurer's Report

Kent Vandock, Treasurer



2016 Newsletter Report - Year To Date

1/1/2016 through 9/4/2016

Category	1/1/2016- 9/4/2016
INCOME	
Advertising	1,321.45
Children's Choir Income	23,078.42
Commissioning Consortium	4,849.42
Elementary Choir Festival Income	1,858.84
High School Honors Choir Income	12,835.00
Int Inc	7.68
Member Deposits	3,192.00
Summer Conference Income	24,581.14
TOTAL INCOME	71,723.95
EXPENSES	
ACDA Membership Dues Transfer	859.00
Awards	422.75
Bank Charge	27.94
Board Meetings	680.81
Children's Choir Expenses	20,760.07
Commissioning Consortium Expense	5,021.18
Elections	219.45
Elementary Choir Festival Expenses	1,858.83
Fees	50.00
High School Honors Choir Expense	12,290.70
Insurance	1,825.00
Newsletter	300.00
Office	411.03
OMEA	255.95
Sponsorships	227.21
State Officer Travel	307.44
Summer Conference Expenses	19,980.27
Travel	617.00
Website expenses	652.94
TOTAL EXPENSES	66,767.57
OVERALL TOTAL	4,956.38

Repertoire for Developing Groups: Hugo Distler's *Mörrike Chorliederbuch*, op. 19

Brad Pierson, Mentorship Chair

HUGO DISTLER is considered to be one of the most influential composers of the twentieth century. Alongside contemporaries such as Ernst Pepping and Johann Nepomuk David, Distler helped usher in a new era of music known as the New German Church Music. Motets from his op. 12 (e.g. *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* and *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*) remain favorites among choirs around the world, and larger works such as *Die Weihnachtsgeschichte*, op. 10, and *Choralpassion*, op. 7, are widely recognized for their contribution to the choral canon. Distler's reputation as a composer is so strongly associated with these pieces that many of his smaller works, especially his secular music, are relatively unknown outside of his native Germany.

The music of Hugo Distler is not immediately associated with accessibility. The pieces that rank among his most popular can be quite difficult, even for more experienced ensembles. Further, the immediate association with sacred music may deter public school teachers from considering Distler's oeuvre as a resource. This article aims to introduce the *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch*, op. 19¹ to choral conductors, and to highlight several pieces representative of the collection. A complete table of titles and voicings is also provided.

High Quality and Accessible

Among the most enduring and important musical contributions of Hugo Distler are the forty-eight motets of the *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch*. These secular works remain highly popular in Germany to this day, and for American choral conductors they represent a vast array of under-performed but wonderful pieces. The music of this set includes pieces for male, female, and mixed choirs with a range from unison to eight-part voicing, and the collection has been referred to as "his most beautiful and liberated work."² Pieces such as *Wanderlied* sound similar to the English madrigals of the late sixteenth century, and it is precisely this sort of rhythmic movement within the text and its connections to German folk music which drew Distler to the poetry of Eduard Mörike:

What immediately attracted me as a choral composer to Mörike is first of all his elemental rhythmic power and flexibility, which was remarkable in the 19th century and is unique even in modern times; and next, reminding us of an old German folksong, the objectification of poetic meaning through literary form which, as the literary work of our master proves, thoroughly unites intimate subjectivity and distinctively independent character in every single case.³

The pursuit of high-quality repertoire is a constant concern among conductors and music educators. Reading sessions at conventions which cater to specific ensembles or age groups demonstrate the demand among teachers for new ideas about music that suits their ensembles. For many directors, it is difficult to find repertoire that is both challenging and representative of varied musical eras. This is especially true for those conducting at the junior high level, those with smaller or unbalanced choirs, and those with non-auditioned ensembles. The music of Distler's op. 19 provides an excellent resource for ensembles of all types. Through both text and compositional techniques, connections can be made to a wide variety of already popular musical styles and composers, making these selections very versatile pieces to program.

Whether one conducts a select, auditioned SATB choir, has a smaller, unbalanced SAB high school ensemble, or directs a men's or women's choir, the *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch* offers a piece that will suit your ensemble well. The three books in the collection contain pieces in the following voicings:⁴

Voicing	Frequency
SA	4
SAA	1
SAB	4

Voicing	Frequency
SATB	10
SSA	2
SSAA	5
SSAATB	2
SSATB	4
SSATTB	1
TB	3
TBB	1
TTB	2
TTBB	6
Unison (Canon)	3

I contend not only that the pieces are appropriate for specific

voicings, but also that they are accessible to choirs with less experience. They are not easy, but the challenges they present become simpler when viewed through a more informed lens.

Der Gärtner (The Gardner)

One particularly appealing aspect of the works of op. 19 is the huge variety within the collection. Not only is there great musical diversity which allows for a vast array of moods and sounds, but there are

also opportunities for ensembles of nearly any size and experience level. Choral teachers often must work with unbalanced and/or small choirs, and singers with limited experience. These teachers may struggle to find music suitable for their ensemble while maintaining high musical integrity and challenging their singers. “Der Gärtner” is one of the many unison pieces included in op. 19. Its brevity allows for it to be shown here in its entirety. (See Example 1.)

Example 1. Hugo Distler, *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch*: “Der Gärtner”

Der Gärtner

für gemischten Chor (1. Fassung)

Hugo Distler
aus opus 19

Gemächliche ♩

Der Sopran beginnt, es antworten der Alt im Kanon im Einklang, Tenor in der Oktave, Baß in der Oktave. Jede Stimme singt einmal alle Strophen durch.

1. Auf ih - rem Leib - röß - lein, so weiß wie der
Schnee, die schön - ste Prin - zes - sin reit't durch die Al - lee.

2. Der Weg, den das Rößlein
hintanzet so hold,
der Sand, den ich streute,
er blinket wie Gold.

3. Du rosenfarbs Hütlein,
wohl auf und wohl ab,
o wirf eine Feder
verstohlen herab!

4. Und willst du dagegen
eine Blüte von mir,
nimm tausend für eine,
nimm alle dafür!

The music here, with a range of only an octave, is quite simple. In typical Distler fashion, bar lines do not go through the staff and so do not obscure the poetic or musical intention. In this way, this small piece can serve as a good introduc-

tion to reading Distler’s music. The instructions indicate that the piece should be sung as a canon, and because of this, it can be a nice introduction to harmony for younger singers. While the description indicates that the canon is sung by so-

prano, alto, tenor, and bass voices, Distler includes several caveats in the foreword to the work which allow for flexible realization.⁵ For example, he suggests that transposition of the pieces is possible when necessary (although he does state

that it should only be used in “exceptional cases” so as not to affect the character of the piece).⁶ He also advises that in most cases, equal voice parts can be used rather than those voices indicated.⁷ The simple pastoral poetry of “Der Gärtner” is well suited to singers of any age, and while the additional challenge of singing in a foreign language may be daunting to some singers, the straightforward nature of the piece makes it quite accessible. It should be further noted that despite its simplicity, the beauty of the melody makes this a nice inclusion for choirs of advanced skill levels as well. Several other similar unison pieces are featured in the collection, including “Auf dem Spaziergang” (“On the Walk”) and “Suschens Vogel” (“Darling Bird”).

Wanderlied (Wandering Song)

The work of the madrigalists of the

Example 2. Hugo Distler, *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch*: “Wanderlied,” mm. 1–5

Straffe, nicht schnelle *♩*

1. Ent	- flohn	sind	wir	der	Stadt	Ge	- drän	- ge,
2. Man	la	- gert	sich	am	Schat	- ten	- quel	- le,

Renaissance has become standard repertoire for choirs in America. In fact, many high schools even feature madrigal ensembles of which this music is the hallmark. Conductors are drawn to the simple harmonies and basic polyphony that these pieces offer. “Fa-la-la” sections present fun, rhythmic music that students greatly enjoy, and “Wanderlied” appears to be Distler’s ode to this style.

This piece is written for three voices, SAB. The tessitura for the sopranos and altos lies comfortably within their range with the altos never singing lower than middle C and the sopranos never higher than the F at the top of the treble staff. The baritone range extends from C3 to D4. The text is set as two verses, each followed by a section of “fa-la-la,” a short chorus, and a final “fa-la-la” section. The opening

Example 3. Hugo Distler, *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch*: “Wanderlied,” mm. 44–50

bis der Mor - - gen wie - der graut. Fa - la - la, fa - la -

bis der Mor - - gen wie - der graut. Fa - la - la, fa - la -

Fa - la - la, fa - la - la,

la, fa - la - la, fa - la - la, fa - la - la!

la, fa - la - la, fa - la - la, fa - la - la!

fa - la - la, fa - la - la - la - la - la, fa - la - la, fa - la - la!

of the verses is set homophonically and primarily in 2/2 time. The basic outlining of the B-flat major tonality is quite straightforward. (See Example 2.)

Meter changes throughout compositions are typical of Distler, and here, that includes bars of 3/2 within the verse and a move to 3/4 for the chorus section. This provides added challenge for the singers but is not dissimilar to a changing tactus in pieces of the Renaissance (such as in *Since Robin Hood* by Thomas Weelkes and *El Grillo* by Josquin des Prez). The intervals of the “fa-la-la” sections are made simpler by having the female voices simply outline an F major triad and the baritones similarly either outline this chord or move in stepwise motion. (See Example 3.)

The simplicity of the piece makes it readily accessible to middle school choirs or to those high school choirs struggling with small men’s sections and/or balance challenges. The challenge of learning German is mitigated by Distler’s treatment of the text. As in all of

his work, the close relationship between text and music is ever present, and the language is set such that important words or syllables naturally fall on stressed beats or longer note values. It has been suggested that this is a “direct result of word-painting,”⁸ a reflection of the Renaissance influence. Its clear relation to madrigals makes for simple programming as it would pair well with many similar sounding pieces. Within the collection, *Handwerkerlied* also includes “fa-la-las” and *Schön Rotraut* similarly includes “ha-ha-has.” *Vorspruch* offers a similar feel in its “*musikanten*” section and would be a challenge for more advanced groups. The constant repetition of words in this section, similar to the Renaissance “fa-la-las,” is a hallmark of Distler’s works, and he utilizes this technique to create intense rhythmic activity without obscuring text.

Der Feuerreiter (The Fire Rider)

For choirs who are able to tackle more challenging repertoire, one of the most exciting pieces offered in

the collection is “Der Feuerreiter.” Distler masterfully crafts a haunting sound to pair with Mörike’s poem about the “hellish light” of the fire at the mill and the Fire-rider as he gallops furiously through the town. While the harmonic language of this piece is significantly more challenging than that of those previously discussed, it does feature several aspects that make it quite teachable. First, each verse begins with all voices in octaves. The effect of this unison becomes increasingly powerful as the story unfolds. (See Example 4.)

As the location of the action is revealed, the back and forth of “*hinterm Berg*” (“beyond the hill”) works similarly to the “fa-la-las” previously discussed, albeit with a much darker and more ominous aesthetic. (See Example 5.)

In considering these portions of the music, one has a clear roadmap for presenting the work to singers in a way that makes the challenging harmonic language of the music more readily accessible. Splitting at times into six parts, this is certainly

Example 4. Hugo Distler, *Mörike-Chorliederbuch*: “Der Feuerreiter,” mm. 1–4

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Der Feuerreiter" by Hugo Distler. It consists of four staves of music, likely representing four different voice parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass). The music is written in a 2/2 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The lyrics are in German and are repeated on each staff. The lyrics are: "1. Se - het ihr am Fen - ster - lein dort die ro - te Müt - ze wie - der? Nicht ge - heu - er muß es". The score shows the first four measures of the piece, with the lyrics aligned under the notes.

Example 5. Hugo Distler, *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch*: “Der Feuerreiter,” mm. 15–19

The image shows a musical score for six voices. The lyrics are: "gellt: Hin - term Berg, hin - term Berg, hin - term". The score is written in G major and 3/4 time. The first five staves are for voices, and the sixth is for bass. The lyrics are: "gellt: Hin - term Berg, hin - term Berg, hin - term".

one of the more difficult pieces in the collection but one that is sure to excite singers. The piece would work well either as an opener or as a closer for a program, and will bring a wonderful sense of drama to a concert.

This collection also contains several other more challenging pieces which work well for larger or more experienced ensembles. A director looking for a piece that would be fitting for a larger choir

which can sing in eight-part voicing but which has a less experienced men’s section might consider *Lebewohl*. This piece includes beautiful lyric lines and close harmonies within the women’s voices while limiting the men to a repeated chordal statement well within the grasp of the average high school ensemble. *Die Tochter der Heide* features several “ha-ha” sections and familiar madrigal-like rhythms, but in addition to a six-

part split, it also extends the bass range to a low E. These pieces will push ensembles towards more difficult repertoire through their challenging harmonies and intricate rhythmic relationships.

Conclusion

The music of Hugo Distler stands out for its rhythmic tenacity and unique harmonic language. Though much of his music is quite challenging and might only be considered for advanced choirs, his *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch* provides us with an outstanding collection of secular music which is accessible to a wide variety of ensembles. The quality of the poetry, having also been famously set for solo voice by Hugo Wolf (*Mörrike-Lieder*), is well-established. While some of the music shares similarities with madrigals of the Renaissance, the harmony will set it apart from the music of that era. Distler’s allowance for changing keys or substituting voice parts when possible gives the conductor a great deal of freedom in making this music suitable for his or her ensemble. The sheer number and variety of works makes it an excellent choice for the developing choral program. ♦

¹ Published by Bärenreiter, BA1515.

² George Edward Damp, “The Achievement of Hugo Distler (1908–1942) with Emphasis Upon the *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch*” (Master’s thesis, Cornell University, 1966), 7.

³ Hugo Distler, *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch—Erster Teil: für gemischten Chor*, Kassel, Germany: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1961. Translated by Tim Cloeter.

⁴ A complete table of the pieces included in the *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch* follows this article.

⁵ A translation of the foreword is available in *Hugo Distler (1908–1942): Recontextualizing Distler’s Music for Performance in the Twenty-First Century* (Pierson, 2014).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ John M. Cantanzaro, “A Study of the Schütz *Saint Matthew Passion* and the Distler *Choral Passion*,” Master’s thesis, California State University-Fullerton, 1979, 19.

Complete List of Works in *Mörrike-Chorliederbuch*, op. 19

Title	Voicing	Book	Title	Voicing	Book
Agnes	TB	3	Jägerlied	TTBB	3
An Philomele	TBB + Soloist	3	Jedem das Seine	SATB	1
Auf de, Spaziergang	Unison / Canon	1	Jung Volker (Gesang der Räuber)	TTBB	3
Das verlassene Mägdlein	SSAA	2	Jung Volkers Lied	TTBB	3
Denk' es, o Seele	SATB	1	Kinderlied für Agnes	SATB	1
Der Feuerreiter	SSAATB	1	Lammwirts Klagelied	TTB	3
Der Gärtner	SSAA	2	Lebewohl	SSAT'TBB	1
Der Gärtner	TTB	3	Lieb in den Tod	SSATB	1
Der Gärtner	Unison / Canon	1	Lied eines Verliebten	TTBB	3
Der Knabe und das Immelein	SATB	1	Lied vom Winde	SSAA	2
Der Liebhaber	TB	3	Mausfallensprüchlei	SA	2
Der Tambour	TTBB	3	Nimmersatte Liebe	SSATB	1
Die Soldatenbraut	SSAA	2	Ritterliche Werbung	SATB + 2 Soloists (1 male & 1 female)	1
Die Tochter der Heide	SSA	2	Schön Rohtraut	SAB	1
Die Tochter der Heide	SSAATB	1	Sehnsucht	SAB	1
Die traurige Krönung	SATB	1	Storchenbotschaft	SATB	1
Ein Stündlein wohl vor Tag	SATB	1	Suschens Vogel	SATB	1
Er ist's	SA	2	Suschens Vogel	Unison / Canon	1
Erstes Liebeslied eines Mädchens	SSAA	2	Um Mitternacht	SAB	1
Frage und Antwort	SATB	1	Verborgeneheit	SA	2
Frage und Antwort	TB	3	Verborgeneheit	TTBB	3
Gebet	SA	2	Vorspruch	SSATB	1
Gebet	SSA	2	Wanderlied	SAB	1
Handwerkerlied	SSATB + Soloist(s)	1			
Jägerlied	SAA	2			

Retirees: Relics or Resources?

Jerry Parsons, former Retired Members Interest Area Chair

ONE OF THE FIRST QUESTIONS people ask me is, “how does it feel to be retired?” I have to admit that the first response I give them is an enthusiastic, “it’s great.” And I will tell you, it really is. There are some amazing benefits to being retired: getting to drive to a store between 10:00 and 2:00 without getting stranded in traffic, staying up late to watch a show, or movie of interest, going to movies when it is only

you and a handful of other people in the theatre, taking long rides on my motorcycle without having to come home and grade 4-part harmonizations until 2:00 a.m., looking at Facebook every day to wish a former student a happy birthday or to see a new picture of their children who are now singing, not having to take the red-eye flight home after a gig on the west coast so I can make it to class the next morn-

ing. I have to admit that it truly is a wonderful life.

However, there are negatives to being retired as well. I miss the relationships with the students and colleagues on a daily basis. I miss those conversations with kids who are going through a rough ordeal. I miss the looks on their faces when they get something right for the first time. In other words, not having daily human contact is difficult.

It can actually be lonely at times, if you let it. I had to ask myself, am I a relic, or can I be a resource?

I have been fortunate enough to be living the “retired” life and still have contact with colleagues and students. The only difference is that they are not “my” students. I am afforded the pleasure to go and work with many choirs across the state, usually before adjudicated events though not always. I also have the pleasure of judging adjudicated events, and I continue to learn more about our craft with each experience. I always enjoyed working with my own students. But working with somebody else’s students is just as much fun. Typically, when I walk into a classroom, I am somebody new, which means that even my old (eye rolling) jokes are new to these students. Some of them actually laugh.

Having a retiree work with your students is one of the most rewarding experiences you and your students will have. I was very fortunate to have had some of the best

former teachers come and work with my students when I was teaching. Like all directors, I was afraid to ask because I thought that whoever I brought in was going to judge me as a teacher. It took me a long time to finally get past this fear and ask someone to come in and work with my kids. What I gained was a ton of new tricks for my own “trick bag.” Many of us would like to take sole credit for the successes we have had. However, the reality is that everything we have learned and now do with our choirs has been passed down from our former teachers, professors, mentors and colleagues. As much as we would like to think that we can hear and fix everything, the reality is that we can’t. Even the best of the best of the best of us can miss something crucial in a piece of music. Having another set of ears is invaluable not only to you, but to your students as well. My choral community began to grow rapidly when I let myself get beyond my own insecurities, and

allowed others to work with me and my students.

OCDA is about promoting choral music. We all have so much to learn, and also to give. The best advice I can give is to take advantage of these resources as much as you can. I am retired, but still learn every day about the craft of choral teaching and conducting. I am very grateful to the multitude of colleagues who worked with my students, or gave me the opportunity to hear their choirs, because I learned so much. I would encourage all of you to open your classroom to other professionals. Our “bag of tricks” has a lot of room in it that can be filled with the wisdom of others and those that preceded them. You can bet, the next generation will be calling you to pass along some of those tricks. Kudos to the countless colleagues I have had the pleasure to work with throughout my professional career.

Have a great year. As for me, tomorrow is just another Saturday. ♦

Vocal Jazz: Is Anybody Out There?

Chris Ilg, Vocal Jazz R&S Chair

SO, THE SCHOOL YEAR is in full swing. Has your year already thrown you any curve balls? Have you already created new solutions you’ve never tried before? And did you find yourself having to come up with your new plan on your own, or did you get to pick the brains of others?

I’ve been the OCDA Repertoire & Standards Chair in Vocal Jazz for

a while now. If I were you, I’d probably assume that R&S folks have all sorts of connections in Ohio schools within their musical genre. I picture the Show Choir directors getting together for semi-annual dinner parties and Multicultural folks having monthly jam sessions on exotic instruments.

If those assumptions are true

(and it would be a blast if they were), I envy those folks. To tell you the truth, I have no clue as to whether or not there are vocal jazz programs in any of the other high schools in the state of Ohio (except for GlenOak). I mean, I’m sure there are programs.... I think. I guess I’m not sure. After all, I haven’t ever had an encounter at a

convention where someone said, “I did that piece last year with my jazz group,” or “have you ever heard of this one that I recently used?” I’ve never received an email from any teacher in Ohio that states that they have a vocal jazz ensemble. And there’s no database at OMEA or OCDA that states “this school has a vocal jazz program.”

Well, let’s change that. This is

my shout out to you—let me know you exist by sending me an email at cilg@highlandschools.org and simply telling me your name, your school, and your status as a school that has a vocal jazz program. Let’s collaborate. Let’s perform together. Let’s perform for each other. Let’s have kids eat a meal together telling quirky jokes about major 7ths and different ways to sing the

words “oh yeah” at the end of an arrangement. (Okay, strike that last part—but keep the meal.)

So the ball’s in your court. I look forward to hearing from you, and I think our kids would look forward to spending some time with other Ohio kids singing jazz. At the very least, let’s get together as directors and bounce around some thoughts and ideas. ♦

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. ♦

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Upcoming Events

February 2017

OMEA Professional Development Conference

February 2–4, 2017, Cleveland, OH

omeapdc.com

March 2017

ACDA National Conference

March 8–11, 2017, Minneapolis, MN

acda.org/conferences.asp

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