

Choral Activities at MSU

Fall 2008

Dear MSU Choral Alum,

Welcome to our annual choral newsletter—keeping you informed about the choral program here at MSU. We're enjoying a great start to the year and hope you are as well.

We have an excellent group of new and continuing graduate students in choral conducting. Our new DMA students are Zach Durlam, who received an undergrad degree from Luther College and a master's degree from the University of Iowa while developing an outstanding program, including an ACDA North Central Division performance, at West High School in Iowa City, and Mark Gary, who received a bachelor's degree from Morehouse College in Atlanta and an MM from the University of Illinois. For the past several years his work in the Philadelphia area has included directing Joyful Noise, a choir for mentally and physically challenged adults. They performed at the ACDA Eastern Division convention last spring.

Our MM program includes two University of Michigan undergrads, Tom FitzStephens, who taught in Owosso, and Rob Stow, who taught at Elk Rapids, as well as Andrew Kreckmann, who comes to us with an undergraduate degree from the University of Delaware and several years of high school teaching in New Jersey. Our growing summer master's program welcomed five new students: Sarah Stockton, a Central Michigan University grad who teaches in Grand Blanc; Nathan Rusell, a music faculty member at Tyler Community College in Texas; Ted Brimeyer, an Iowa State alum who teaches in Johnston, Iowa; Wes Stoner, a graduate of the University of Georgia who teaches high school in the Atlanta area; and Kraig Scott, who teaches organ at Walla Walla University in Washington.

The BIG NEWS we have to share with you is that the MSU Women's Chamber Ensemble, led by Dr. Sandra Snow, has been selected to perform at the national ACDA convention in Oklahoma City. (See article below.) Not only do we invite you to the WCE's performances on Wednesday, March 4, but we also invite

you to our alumni reception. As this newsletter goes to press we are uncertain of the date and time, but you'll receive an invitation in the mail prior to the convention. If one of your present or former students is looking at graduate programs in choral conducting or voice please bring him or her long with you.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a schedule of all the vocal and choral events for the 2008-09 season. It's an amazing list and serves as a reminder of the many fantastic opportunities we have available at the MSU College of Music.



Women's Chamber Ensemble to Perform at ACDA

The MSU Women's Chamber Ensemble has been invited as featured performers at the 2009 ACDA national convention in Oklahoma City. Hundreds of choirs from across the U.S. submitted performance applications; recordings were peer reviewed at both divisional and national levels for the 50th anniversary of ACDA. Twenty choirs were ultimately selected, and the MSU Women's Chamber Ensemble is the only collegiate women's chorus represented.

The ensemble was formed five years ago when Sandra Snow joined the MSU faculty. The group is comprised of undergraduate



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and graduate students from the College of Music and the wider campus, by audition. A focus of the ensemble is performance of 20th- and 21st-century exemplars of repertoire written specifically for women, with a focus on new works by important North American composers. The WCE performed last year at the ACDA Central Division convention in Grand Rapids and at the Michigan Music Conference in Grand Rapids in January 2007.

The WCE will present a world premiere by noted composer David Brunner. Based on ancient texts by the mystic Mirabei, *All I Was Doing Was Breathing* features 4-part women's voices, Indian tabla and percussion instruments, and cello. Dr. Brunner has a large body of works devoted to the treble instrument and is highly regarded for his imaginative and lyric voice.

Other works featured on the program include the Tarik O'Regan *Laus et Alleluia*, Kirke Mechem's *You Say There Is No Love*, and Paul Caldwell/Sean Ivory's *Lay Earth's Burden Down*. Caldwell will join the MSU Women's Chamber Ensemble in the performance of this work on djembe.

The MSU choral program has now been represented by three different choral ensembles at national ACDA conventions. We believe we are the only university in the country with that record of success. Led by Charles K. Smith, the University Chorale appeared at national ACDA conventions in 1983 and 1989, and, under the direction of David Rayl, at the national ACDA convention in 2007. The Men's Glee Club, conducted by Jonathan Reed, appeared in 1999 and 2001.

Performance Highlights for 2008-09

On Saturday, November 1, the MSU Choral Union, Chorale, and State Singers will join the Lansing Symphony Orchestra under the baton of David Rayl for a program entitled "American Journey," featuring works by William Billings, William Schuman's *New England Triptych*, both sets of *Old American Songs* by Aaron Copland, and Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. Featured soloist in the Copland will be MSU faculty member, Rod Nelman.

On Saturday, December 6, the MSU Men's and Women's Glee Clubs, conducted by Jonathan Reed and DMA student Kelly Miller, and the MSU Children's Choir, conducted by Mary Alice Stollak, will join forces with Leon Gregorian and the MSU Symphony Orchestra for *Home for the Holidays*, a concert of seasonal music for the entire family.

On Sunday, April 5, the Women's Chamber Ensemble, led by Sandra Snow, and the University Chorale, led by David Rayl will join members of the Lansing Symphony Orchestra to present "An Evening of Sacred Music" at St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral in downtown Lansing. Repertoire includes settings of *Dixit Dominus* by Galuppi and Handel and Bach Cantata #131: Aus der Tiefen rufe ich.

On Saturday, April 25, the University Chorale, State Singers, and Choral Union and the University Symphony Orchestra under the batons of Leon Gregorian and David Rayl will present the world premiere of *The Silver Sword: An Ancient Fairy Tale*, by MSU faculty member Jere Hutcheson and Vaughan Williams' *Dona nobis pacem*.

The MSU Opera Theatre will again present two fully staged productions with orchestra this year: Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* on November 21, 22, and 23, and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and the premiere of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* with music by DMA student William Withem and libretto by MSU faculty member Melanie Helton. Both productions will be double cast, a tribute to the continuing quality of our vocal students. Additional vocal activities include numerous faculty and student recitals, the fourth MSU-China Collaboration and the seventh annual Celebration of the Beautiful Voice.

Men's Glee Club European Tour

This May, the MSU Men's Glee Club will be touring throughout Eastern Europe. Beginning in Warsaw, Poland, the Glee Club will travel through Krakow, Wroclaw, and finish with multiple days in Prague. This tour will also take the Glee Club to places such as the infamous Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Highlights of the tour will be formal concerts in some of the finest venues of Eastern Europe.

All MSU Men's Glee Club members and alumni are welcome on this tour. Please contact MSUMensGlee@gmail.com for more information.

Robert Harris Fellowship

Dr. Robert Harris, Director of Choral Organizations at Northwestern University and an MSU alum (PhD '71), has established *The Robert A. Harris Award for Excellence in Choral Performance* to be given annually to an outstanding choral musician. This year's recipient is master's student Andrew Kreckmann.

Dr. Harris has enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a choral conductor, composer, clinician, and adjudicator. Prior to moving to Northwestern, he served as Direc-

tor of Choral Activities at MSU where he founded the University Chorale. At Northwestern he received the Bienen School of Music Exemplar in Teaching Award and Alumni Association Excellence in Teaching Award. His compositions for chorus have been published by Oxford University Press, Boosey and Hawkes, Walton Music, Mark Foster, Alliance Music, and J. S. Paluch.

Cole and Sandra Tyrrell Endowment for Men's Glee Club

Cole Tyrrell, long-time choral director at South Haven High School, and his wife Sandra have established an endowment that will be funded through an estate gift. The endowment will support the activities of the MSU Men's Glee Club by providing undergraduate scholarships and/or funding travel for travel to competitions and performances nationally and internationally.

Smith Fellowship Recipient

Last year, the Charles K. Smith Endowed Fellowship in Choral Conducting, created upon Smith's retirement in 2002 by members of the MSU Choral Society, reached its initial goal of \$30,000 in gifts and pledges. The scholarship is now fully endowed and provides important financial help to graduate students in choral conducting. This year, Andrew Kreckmann is partially funded by a scholarship from this endowment. Last year's recipient was Matthew Olson.

Thank you to the many donors whose generosity made this endowment possible. Although the scholarship is fully funded, additional gifts are needed to increase the principal, thus providing additional scholarship dollars to our graduate students. If you would like to make a contribution, please contact Rebecca Surian, Director of Development in the College of Music, at surian@msu.edu.

Guest Clinician

C. Thomas Brooks was our guest for the Choral Invitational on Monday, October 20 when he worked with eight high school choirs from around the state. He spent the following day on campus working with our ensembles and graduate conducting students.

Professor Brooks is chair of the music department at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts where he leads the choral program and teaches conducting. He has performed throughout the United States, Canada and Europe, including such venues as Carnegie Hall in New York City, Victoria Hall in Geneva, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and the Hall of Five Hundred in Florence.

Brooks received a bachelor's degree from Houghton College, an M.M. from the New England Conservatory, and an Artist's Diploma from the Hartt School of Music. In 1971 he founded and conducted the Mercyhurst College Choir and Chamber Singers, and in 1972 was named conductor of the Symphonic Singers of Erie, Pennsylvania, posts he held until 1974. In 1974 he moved to the Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Connecticut, where he conducted the Hartt Chorale, the Collegiate Singers, the Hartt Touring Opera Theatre, and the University Civic Chorus and Chamber Choir. While in Hartford, Professor Brooks also conducted the Arts in Unison Bel Canto Opera Company, Connecticut Light Opera on the Sound, the America's Youth in Concert Program, and was cofounder and musical director of the New Lyric Theatre.

Choral Society Sponsors Sing-Along Messiah

The MSU Choral Society will sponsor a "sing along" *Messiah* on Sunday, December 7 at Plymouth Congregational Church featuring student soloists. Last year's "sing along" was well attended and enthusiastically received. Through its dues and fundraising activities the Society provides scholarship assistance to graduate students in choral conducting. This year, the Society is able to provide assistance for DMA student Clint Desmond and MM students Michael Hanawalt, Andrew Kreckmann, Matthew Olson, and Kristin Zaryski.

Keeping up with MSU Alumni

This section of the newsletter is intended to help you keep up with the careers of our MSU choral alumni. The following is obviously incomplete, so please contact us if you've recently changed jobs or want to share some aspect of your professional life with our alums. You can submit your information on line at <http://my.music.msu.edu>

John Bragle, MM student in choral conducting, has accepted a position in vocal-choral music at the Interlochen Arts Academy. He had been teaching at Williamston High School.

Aaron Bouwman, MM '08, continues on the faculty at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids.

Meredith Bowen, MM '06, has been named music director of the Battle Creek Girls' Chorus. She continues on the music faculty at Lansing Community College and as conductor of Sistrum, a community-based women's choir in Lansing.

Nichole Brenna, MM '08, is director of choral activities at Orono High School in the Twin Cities area.

Andrew Crane, DMA '05, was selected as Outstanding Faculty in Teaching for 2007-08 at California State University, San Bernardino. The CSUSB Chamber Singers have been chosen to perform a featured concert at the California Music Educators Association Professional Development Conference in July 2009.

Sarah Graham, DMA '05, has accepted a position in choral music education at Illinois State University.

Michael Hanawalt, MM student, was a conducting fellow at the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, where he worked with Simon Carrington.

Scott Hochstetler, DMA '08, has accepted a position on the music faculty of Goshen College in Indiana.

David Howard successfully defended his DMA document during the summer of 2008. He continues as assistant director of choral activities at Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

Jeff Kitson, MM '05 (composition) has been selected to present an interest session at the national ACDA convention in Oklahoma City. His session, entitled "From Zero to Sixty: Recruiting and Revitalizing in the Two-Year College," derives from his recent faculty position at Central Community College in Columbus, Nebraska.

Stephen Lorenz, MM '02 (music education) and **Kristina MacMullen**, MM student, will lead the South Lyon High School Lyon Singers and the Brighton High School Bel Canto, respectively, at the annual Michigan Music Conference in Grand Rapids in January.

Tim McMillin, DMA student, has been appointed Artistic Director of the Des Moines Vocal Arts Ensemble. He continues on the faculty of Simpson College in Indianola and served as guest conductor/clinician for five different festivals throughout the state of Iowa during the 07-08 school year.

Joel Navarro, DMA '05, was reappointed with tenure as Associate Professor of Music at Calvin College in Grand Rapids. One of his ensembles, the Capella, was featured at the fall convention of ACDA-Michigan and toured Europe in May 2008. He frequently does workshops on conducting and church music in Asia during the summer months.

Jonathan Palant, DMA '07, is the arranger of Da Hai ah, Gu Siang, a traditional Chinese song, published for TTBB by Alliance Music Publications.

Jong-Won Park, DMA '97, is now in his fifth year as Director of Choral Activities at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. The UWRF Concert Choir performed at the ACDA North Central Division Convention in March 2008.

Christopher Thompson, MM '08, has accepted a choral position at Haltom High School in Fort Worth, Texas.

Jason Thoms, DMA '05, recently had three Christmas carols published by GIA Music of Chicago (Christmas Bells, By-By Lullay, and King of Kings). He continues as director of choral activities at Concordia College in Bronxville, New York.

Mark Webb completed his DMA degree during the fall of 2008. He is the long-time director of choral activities at East Grand Rapids High School, a faculty member at Aquinas College, and choral director and choral/opera coordinator at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp.

Michael Wheaton, MM '08, teaches music in the Webberville Schools and conducts Gold Company II at Western Michigan University.

Kate Wolfe, MM '08, is director of choral activities at Pewaukee High School in the Milwaukee area.

Gary Weidenaar, MM '88, is beginning his second year as director of choral studies at Central Washington University.

Visit the New Music Alumni Website

The College of Music is proud to remind you of the Michigan State University Music Alumni and Development Community Website at <http://my.music.msu.edu/>. The interactive website is designed to serve you – our distinguished and valued alumni. Find out about the latest happenings of your College of Music, alumni activities, and the newly established Alumni Board with the latest news section and register for our next celebratory event.