

# Choral Activities at MSU

## Fall 2009

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 (in spite of the H1N1 virus) 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 **Ryan Kelly**, who received degrees from Texas Baptist University and the University of Oklahoma and then taught at Kilgore College in Texas; and **Zeb Highben**, who has degrees from Ohio State University and Luther Seminary in the Twin Cities. He has taught at Luther Seminary and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and has done full time church music.

Our MM degree program includes **Jeremy Nabors**, a University of Michigan graduate, who has taught for several years at Chapel Hill High School in North Carolina; **Danny Singer**, who received his undergraduate degree from Northwestern University and worked in the Chicago area for a number of years; and **Marcia Wieland**, a graduate of Oakland University who has taught at Eaton Rapids High School for the past three years.



Our summer master's program welcomed three new students: **Meghan Eldred**, a Michigan State alumna now teaching in DeWitt (Mich.); **Courtney Rowley**, a University of Michigan graduate now teaching in Seattle; and **Roxanne Brunner**, a graduate of Spring Arbor University who teaches at Lumen Christi High School in Jackson (Mich.).

In an effort to save paper and minimize printing costs, we are not including a schedule of vocal-choral events for the 2009-10 season with this mailing. You can find those performances on the College of Music website ([music.msu.edu](http://music.msu.edu)) in the "Ensembles" section under "Choral." It's an amazing list and serves as a reminder of the many fantastic performance opportunities that are available at the MSU College of Music.

### Performance Highlights

On Saturday, November 7, the MSU Choral Union, Chorale, and State Singers will join the Lansing Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Timothy Muffitt, for a program that includes Poulenc's *Gloria* and Holst's *The Planets*.

On Saturday and Sunday, December 5 and 6, the MSU Chorale will join the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and guest conductor Nicholas McGegan for performances of Handel's *Messiah*. That same weekend, on Saturday, December 5, the MSU Men's and Women's Glee Clubs and State Singers, conducted by Jonathan Reed and DMA student Kelly Miller, and the MSU Children's Choir, conducted by the new artistic director Kristin Zaryski, will join forces with Leon Gregorian and the MSU Symphony Orchestra for MSU's Home for the Holidays, a concert of seasonal music for the entire family.

On Sunday, February 21, the University Chorale will perform Palestrina's *Pope Marcellus Mass* along with Gregorian chants appropriate for the day. This iconic work will be performed at St. Mary Catholic Cathedral in downtown Lansing.

On Sunday, April 5, the Choral Union and University Chorale, led by David Rayl, will join members of the Lansing Symphony Orchestra to present a complete performance of Parts II and III of Handel's *Messiah*, including arias and choruses that are seldom, if ever, heard in live performances.

The academic year will conclude with a weeklong, on-campus residency by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Corigliano. The residency will conclude with a gala concert on Saturday, April 25, featuring Corigliano's music. Jonathan Reed will lead the combined State Singers and University Chorale in a performance of *Fern Hill*.

The MSU Opera Theatre will again present two fully staged productions with orchestra this year: Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* on November 20, 21, and 22, and Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* on March 26, 27, and 28. Both productions will be double cast and include many undergraduates, a tribute to the continuing quality of our vocal program.



### Armstrong Wins Alumni Award

**Anton Armstrong** (DMA '87) received the prestigious Distinguished Alumni Award by the MSU Alumni Association at its Awards Dinner on October 15. On Friday, October 16, he met with our graduate students to discuss his approach to the choral art. We in the College of Music are thrilled that Anton is being recognized



*Anton Armstrong, middle, shares his experiences with choral graduate students at the College of Music.*

by MSU. As stated in my nomination letter: "Dr. Armstrong's exceptional career as a choral conductor makes him an exceptional candidate for this honor. He has attained the highest levels of artistic achievement and professional respect and admiration among his peers." Congratulations, Anton!

### Robert Harris Fellowship

Dr. **Robert Harris**, director of choral organizations at Northwestern University and a Michigan State alumnus (PhD '71), continues to fund 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 **Danny Singer**. Thank you, Bob!

### Smith Fellowship Recipient

The Charles K. Smith Endowed Fellowship in Choral Conducting, created upon Smith's retirement in 2002 by members of the MSU Choral Society, has 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, **Ryan Kelly** is partially funded by a scholarship from this endowment.

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](mailto:surian@msu.edu).

### Guest Clinician

Paul Tucker, director of choral activities at the University of Kansas, was our guest for the Choral Invitational on October 20, where 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. The focus was on rehearsing and performing Baroque choral music with particular attention to elements of string bowing.

### Choral Society Sponsors Fundraising Events

The MSU Choral Society sponsored a fundraising Cabaret on Friday, October 9, at the Hannah

Community Center in East Lansing. The evening included performances from a widely diverse group of performers from the Choral Union and Choral Society as well as from the student body. Fundraising activities included a silent auction and raffle. The event raised almost \$6,000.

The Choral Society will also sponsor a “sing along” *Messiah* on Sunday, December 13, at Edgewood United

Church in East Lansing featuring student soloists. This annual event has been well attended and enthusiastically received in recent years and typically raises about \$1,500.

Through its dues and fundraising activities the Choral Society provides scholarship assistance to graduate students in choral conducting. This year, the society is able to provide assistance for DMA student **Mark Gary** and MM students **Andrew Kreckmann** and **Danny Singer**.

~ David Rayl

### 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 online at [my.music.msu.edu](http://my.music.msu.edu).

- **Jessica Allen**, MM '05, spent six weeks this past summer at the AIMS program in Graz, Austria.
- **Ryan Beeken**, MM '09, is now in his 12th year as director of choral activities at Waukee High School in suburban Des Moines. His choir has been selected to perform at the ACDA North Central Division Convention in March 2010. He will enter the DMA program here at MSU next summer.
- **Meg Bragle**, MM '98, is enjoying a very successful career as a solo singer, particularly in early music. Her engagements over the past year include two European tours with John Elliot Gardiner and the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists, and performances with Apollo's Fire, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra in Toronto, Mark Morris Dance Group in London, Dallas Bach Society, Calgary Philharmonic (Canada), the Portland Baroque Orchestra (Oregon), and at Glasgow University (UK).
- **Jeff Buettner**, DMA '05, served as conductor of the Quadricentennial Chorus, made up of students from Vermont, Quebec, and France. The chorus was assembled in celebration of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of Lake Champlain. The group performed in France, Quebec, and Vermont, re-tracing the journey of Samuel De Champlain. This past summer, Jeff again

visited the Ukraine, continuing his research into the music of the Gypsy community there, which was the subject of his DMA document.

- **Andrew Crane**, DMA '05, led the California State University San Bernardino Chamber Singers in an invited performance for the California Music Educators Association Conference in March 2009. As a tenor soloist he has appeared with the Los Angeles Bach Festival in Bach's *B Minor Mass*, with the Loma Linda Symphony as Ernesto in a concert version of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, and in Haydn's *Theresienmesse* in concerts in Vienna and Budapest. He recently received early tenure and promotion to associate professor.
- **Clint Desmond**, DMA '09, has been appointed music director at the recently combined Catholic parishes of St. Thomas and St. John's in East Lansing.
- **Paul Hondorp**, DMA '03, will lead the Chamber Choir of Western Kentucky University in a performance for the Kentucky Music Education Association in February 2010.
- **James Parker**, BM '64, MM '66, DMA '88, retired after 40 years from teaching vocal music and German in the Grosse Ile Township Schools (Mich.) in June of 2006. He continues as music director at the Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church [since 1975], and is active as a private voice and piano teacher and MSVMA adjudicator. His GIPC Lenten Concert Chorale sang at the Michigan Choral Director's Association Fall Conference at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant in November 2008.

## Keeping Up with MSU Alumni (continued)

- **Sarah Graham**, MM '02, DMA '05, conducted the Women's Honor Choir at the Northwest MENC convention in Spokane, Washington, in January 2009. She continues on the faculty at Illinois State University.
- **Michael Hanawalt**, MM '09, has entered the PhD program in music education and choral conducting at Florida State University. His arrangement of *Amazing Grace*, premiered by the MSU Women's Chamber Ensemble at the 2009 ACDA National Convention, is now published by Boosey & Hawkes. Boosey has also published an arrangement of *Auld Lang Syne*, by Michael and Justine Sasanfar, which was written for the MSU Women's Glee Club.
- **Scott Hochstetler**, DMA '08, published "Dona Nobis Pacem: Vaughan Williams's Federalist Manifesto" in the July 2009 issue of the *Choral Journal*. The article is an outgrowth of his research for his DMA document. He continues on the faculty at Goshen College.
- **Elizabeth Hogan** completed her MM degree in 2009 and continues teaching middle school vocal music in the Parkway School District in suburban St. Louis.
- **Joel Navarro**, DMA '04, led the Calvin College Capella in a tour of the Netherlands and France in May and June 2008. In addition to concerts and church services in these countries, the Capella participated in the prestigious Florilège Vocal International Choir Competition in Tours, France, where the group won third-place prizes in both categories in which it competed.
- **Kristina MacMullen**, MM '09, has entered the doctoral program in choral conducting at Texas Tech University.
- **Matt Olson**, MM '09, has been appointed to the music faculty at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids.
- **Rob Stow**, MM '09, has returned to his teaching position in Elk Rapids.
- **Jason Thoms**, DMA '05, led the choir of Concordia College in Bronxville, New York, on a 15-day tour of the southeastern U.S. Their final concert was at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. Thomas has

performed with a number of New York area opera companies as well, singing the role of Leporello with Satori Opera and covering the same role with Dell'Arte Opera. In the coming year he will sing Bach *Cantata #80* with the Baltimore Bach Society and the role of the President in Cesar Cui's opera, *Feast in the Time of Plague*, with the Metropolitan Opera Project.

- **Mark Webb**, DMA '08, has been appointed director of choral activities at Albion College. He recently retired as the longtime director of choral activities at East Grand Rapids High School.
- **Kristin Zaryski**, MM '09, is the newly appointed music director of the MSU Children's Choirs, succeeding Mary Alice Stollak.

Congratulations to the following MSU choral alumni who will appear at the ACDA Central Division convention February 24–27, 2010.

- **Clayton Paar**, MM '87, DMA '90, conducting the DePaul University Singers
- **Lynda Hasseler**, MM '87, DMA '90, conducting the Capital University Singers
- **Steven Lorenz**, MM '02 (music education), conducting the South Lyon (Mich.) High School Lyon Singers
- **Robert J. Ward**, DMA '86, conducting the Ohio State University Men's Glee Club
- **Sarah Graham**, MM '02, DMA '05, presenting an interest session entitled "Permanently Under Construction: Experiential Conducting."

### Visit the Music Alumni Website

The College of Music would like to remind you of the Michigan State University Music Alumni and Development Community Website at [my.music.msu.edu](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 Alumni Board in the news section and register for our next celebratory event.