

Choral Activities at MSU ~ Fall 2011

- **Meghan Vollbach Eldred** completed her MM this past summer. In October she will lead the Chamber Choir of DeWitt High School in a performance for the Michigan ACDA Fall Conference.
- **Tom FitzStephens**, MM '10, has taken a position as director of vocal music at Holy Innocents' Episcopal School in Atlanta.
- **Trey Jacobs**, DMA ABD, has been appointed interim artistic director of the Turtle Creek Chorale in Dallas.
- **Michael Hanawalt**, MM '09, joins the faculty of St. Olaf College in spring 2012 as the sabbatical replacement for Chris Aspaas (MM '97).
- **Lynda Hasseler**, MM'87, DMA '90, will lead the choir of Capitol University in Columbus, Ohio, in a performance for the biennial conference of the National Collegiate Choral Organization in Ft. Collins, Colorado, in November. The choir toured South Africa in May 2011 and will compete in the World Choir Games in July 2012.
- **David Howard**, DMA '08, has had an article on the artistic patronage of the Reverend Walter Hussey accepted for publication by *Musical Times*. He continues on the faculty at Stephen F. Austin University.
- **Kristina MacMullen**, MM '09, has been named visiting assistant professor of choral music at Ohio State University. She is completing a doctorate at Texas Tech University. She placed second in the graduate conducting competition at the national ACDA conference in Chicago in 2011.
- **Kelly Miller**, DMA '10, served as guest clinician at the University of Kentucky, the University of Nebraska-Omaha, and at the Florida Music Educators Association conference and on faculty at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp during the past year. She continues on the faculty of Western Illinois University.
- **Marci Morrow**, MM '07, received a PhD in music education from Ohio State University and is in her second year as a faculty member at the University of Missouri-Columbia.
- **Chris Redfearn**, MM '04, is pursuing doctoral studies in choral conducting at the University of Northern Colorado.
- **Courtney Rowley** completed her MM this past summer. She continues as vocal music director at Ballard High School in Seattle.

- **Daniel Singer** completed his MM last spring and has accepted a position as vocal music director at The University School in Cleveland.
- **Jason Thoms**, DMA '05, is conference chair for the "Building Communities with Song" mini-conference, focusing on therapeutic and service choirs, held as part of the ACDA Eastern Division Conference in Providence, Rhode Island, in February 2012. Last year he sang with the Santa Fe Desert Chorale for their winter season and performed as bass soloist with the Calvin College Oratorio Society, with the Metropolis Opera in New York, and at Carnegie Hall in David Child's *Festival Te Deum*. He will return to Santa Fe and Calvin in 2011. In December he will conduct the premiere of his *Messiah* for soloists, chorus, and orchestra at Concordia College in New York, where he continues as director of choral activities and music area chair.
- **Sean Vogt**, DMA '05, published articles on English carols in *The Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland* and *The Diapason*. The American Prize named him and his choir at Mt. Marty College as semifinalists in the college/university choral conducting and the college/university choir categories respectively. Con Brio Recordings will release Mt. Marty's annual Vespers performance on iTunes, Amazon, and other media websites later in 2011.
- **Mark Webb**, DMA '08, has been named director of choral activities at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids.
- **Brent Wells**, DMA '07, has accepted the position of director of choral activities at the College of Idaho. In recent months, the *Choral Journal* has published two of his articles on the music of Percy Grainger (the topic of his DMA document), and he will be the guest editor for an upcoming issue of the *CJ* focused specifically on Grainger's music.
- **Kristin Zaryski**, MM '09, will prepare the MSU Children's Choir for performances of John Adams' *On the Transmigration of Souls* with the Detroit Symphony in February 2012. She will also appear as a presenter at ACDA's North Central Division conference.

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From David Rayl
Professor of Music, Director of Choral Programs and Associate
Dean for Graduate Studies and Research

Dear MSU Choral Alum,

Welcome to our annual choral newsletter—our yearly reminder that you are still a part of the MSU choral family.

I am enjoying my first sabbatical after more than 30 years of teaching. Technically, it's a "research leave," and I am indeed working on a number of projects while the choral area is in the extraordinarily capable hands of Jon Reed, Sandra Snow, and our graduate students. I understand that the year at MSU is off to a good start and hope yours is as well.



We have an excellent group of new and continuing graduate students in choral conducting. We have two new DMA students. **Joel Tranquilla** received degrees from Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada, and the University of Michigan and is currently serving as chorus master of the Windsor (Ontario) Symphony Orchestra and as artistic director of the Windsor Classic Chorale. **Frank Watkins** holds an undergraduate degree from Jackson State University and master's degrees from the University of Arkansas (in piano) and Northwestern University (in choral conducting). He previously taught at John Tyler High School in Tyler, Texas, and at Jarvis Christian College. Our new MM students are **Dwight Jilek**, a graduate of Concordia College, who comes to us after leading the choral program at Northfield (Minnesota) High School; **Barbara Lamont**, who has completed her seventh year of teaching at Vienna Middle School and Northeastern High School in South Vienna/Springfield, Ohio; and **Kyle Zeuch**, who has been teaching at Rivera High School in Brownsville, Texas. Both Barb and Kyle are graduates of Capitol University in Columbus,

Ohio, where they were students of our DMA alumna Lynda Hasseler. Our summer master's program continues to attract students from Michigan as well as other parts of the country. This summer we welcomed six new students: **Maggie Blair**, a graduate of the University of Kentucky, who teaches at Bowling Green (Kentucky) High School; **Christy Elsea**, a graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia who teaches in Rolla, Missouri; **Ben Henri**, who holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and currently teaches at Grosse Pointe (Michigan) North High School; **Christopher Nickelson**, who received his undergraduate degree from Ithaca College and now teaches at Winchester High School in Boston and serves as music director at First Congregational Church of Stoughton, Massachusetts; **Ryan Person**, a Luther College alum who is the choral director at West High School in Iowa City, Iowa; and **Garth Starr**, a graduate of the University of Michigan-Flint who teaches at Seymour Elementary School in Flushing, Michigan, and directs the Lapeer County Concert Choir. In addition, **Brandon Ulrich**, vocal music teacher at Stoney Creek High School in Rochester, Michigan, has been accepted into our DMA program and began his studies this summer.

In our continuing effort to save paper and minimize printing costs, we are not including a schedule of vocal-choral events for the 2011-12 season with this mailing. You can find those performances on the College of Music website (music.msu.edu) in the "Ensembles" section under "Choral." Or, I'd be happy to send you a PDF of the schedule on request (rayld@msu.edu). It's an amazing list and serves as a reminder of the many superb performance opportunities that are available at the MSU College of Music.

Performance Highlights

On Saturday, November 5, 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 Mozart's "Coronation" Mass. On Saturday, December 10, the same ensembles, along with the MSU Children's Choir, conducted by artistic director Kristin Zaryski, will join forces with Leon Gregorian and Jonathan Reed and the MSU Symphony Orchestra for MSU's "Home for the Holidays," a concert of seasonal music for the entire family. On Sunday, April 15, the University Chorale will perform Britten's *Cantata Misericordium* (conducted by Sandra Snow) and Bach's motet *Der Geist hilft* (conducted by David Rayl) and will then join with the Choral Union

for a performance of the Fauré *Requiem*. The academic year concludes on Saturday, April 28, when the combined forces of the Choral Union, Chorale, and State Singers join the MSU Symphony Orchestra and faculty soloists for a performance of the Beethoven *Ninth Symphony*. This will be Maestro Gregorian's final concert before retiring.

The MSU Opera Theatre will again present two fully staged productions with orchestra this year: Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* on November 18, 19 and 20; and Offenbach's monumental *Tales of Hoffman* on March 30, 31, and April 1. Both productions are double cast and include many undergraduates, a tribute to the continuing quality of our vocal program.



ACDA Division Convention

I hope you will be able to attend the ACDA Central Division Conference in Ft. Wayne on March 8-10, where you will be able to enjoy performances by the Northwestern University Chorale, conducted by Robert A. Harris (PhD '71); the Goshen College Men's Chorus, conducted by Scott Hochstetler (DMA '08); and the choir of Stoney Creek High School in Rochester, Michigan, conducted by DMA student Brandon Ulrich. Unfortunately, neither Dr. Reed, Dr. Snow, nor I will be able to attend the convention, so there will be no MSU reception. But we look forward to seeing you at the National Conference in Dallas in 2013.

Gifts in Action

Helen Bartlett Fellowship in Choral Music Established

Dr. Dale Bartlett, retired College of Music faculty member, MSU alum (BM '55; MM '56), and current conductor of the Lansing Arts Chorale, endowed a fellowship in memory of his late wife, Helen, who was a long-time member of the Choral Union. This year's recipient is master's student **Dwight Jilek**. Thank you, Dale!

Robert Harris Fellowship

Dr. Robert Harris, director of choral organizations at Northwestern University, a Michigan State alumnus (PhD '71), and former MSU director of choral activities, 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 doctoral student **Zeb Highben**. 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, is now fully endowed and provides important financial help to graduate students in choral conducting. This year's recipient is master's student **Kyle Zeuch**. Thank you to the many donors who have contributed to this endowment over the years!

Guest Clinicians

Karen Kennedy, newly named director of choral activities at the University of Miami, will be our guest for the Choral Invitational on October 24, where she will work with eight high school choirs from around the state. She will spend the following day working with our ensembles and graduate and undergraduate conducting students.

David Wordsworth, music director of England's Addison Singers, was our guest on October 3-4. He is especially noted for his performances of new works by contemporary British composers. This repertoire was the focus of his presentations to our graduate students during his residency.

The appearances of both Dr. Kennedy and Dr. Wordsworth were partially paid for with funds from the Paul and Martha Niland Endowed Lectureship in Choral Music to Honor Charles K. Smith.

Choral Society News

The Choral Society sponsored a Cabaret Evening on Saturday, October 1. This was a relaxed, informal evening of fun, food, and fellowship with entertainment by Choral Union members as well as some of our graduate conducting students.

The Choral Society will again sponsor a "sing along" Messiah on Sunday, December 4, at Edgewood United Church in East Lansing featuring student soloists. This annual event has been well attended and enthusiastically received in recent years. That was even true last year, when we had eight inches of snow but still managed to attract a good crowd.

Through its dues and fundraising activities the Choral Society provides scholarship assistance to graduate students in choral conducting. This year, the society provides assistance for DMA students Zeb Highben and Ryan Beeken and MM students Megan Boyd, Kyle Zeuch, and Dwight Jilek.

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. It's a very impressive list of accomplishments and demonstrates that our graduates are leaders in our profession. The list is obviously incomplete, so please contact me if you've recently changed jobs or want to share some aspect of your professional life with our alums.

- **Jessica Allen**, MM '04, conducts the Women's Glee Club at Middlebury College, in Vermont. Last fall she taught voice and performance skills at Kharkiv State University of Arts, Ukraine.
- **Ross C. Bernhardt**, DMA '97, won first prize in the Amadeus Choral Composition Competition for "Salmo 23," which will be published in Spain by Coro Amadeus. Another of his compositions, "The Gift Disguised," won first place in the Ithaca College Choral Composition Competition ("Salmo 23" won one of the six finalist slots in the same competition, making Bernhardt the first composer ever to have two compositions in the finals.) A third composition, "How Clear, How Lovely Bright," won special commendation in a competition sponsored by the Phoenix Singers of Shrewsbury (England), who performed its premiere.
- **John Bragle** completed his MM degree this past summer. He continues as director of choirs at the Interlochen Arts Academy.
- **Marella Briones**, MM '05, is employed by Mozart Systems, an information technology firm in St. Louis. She is a paid member of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus and regularly performs as a soloist on their outreach programs.
- **Roxanne Bruner** completed her MM degree this past summer and has taken a new position as director of choirs at Shrine Catholic High School in Royal Oak, Michigan.
- **Jeffrey Buettner**, DMA '05, spent part of last year as a Fulbright Scholar at Kharkiv State University of Arts, Ukraine, where he conducted and taught American choral music. He also was the recipient of a grant from the Marion and Jasper Whiting Foundation to study seventeenth-century contrapuntal vocal music in Leipzig and London. He remains on the faculty at Middlebury College in Vermont.
- **Jennifer Tompa Burkemper**, MM '06, will direct the Hinsdale Central High School Chamber Choir in a featured performance at the Illinois Music Education Conference in January.
- **Andrew Crane**, DMA '05, has accepted the position of director of choral activities at East Carolina University. This past summer he sang with the Santa Fe Desert Chorale. In March he will present an interest session on vocal instruction for inexperienced singers at ACDA's Southern Division conference.
- **Jerry Custer**, DMA ABD, conducted the Nassau County (New York) All-County Chorus, lectured on rehearsal techniques and Renaissance choral music to the doctoral conducting students at the University of South Carolina, and assumed music directorship of the Seaway Chorale and Orchestra (Trenton, Michigan). His symphony for chorus and orchestra on poems by Walt Whitman, "Everything Indicates," was premiered by the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra and Chorus of New York at Carnegie Hall.

