

Choral Activities at MSU

2016-2017

Dear MSU Choral Conducting Alumni,

We are excited to share our annual choral music newsletter with you. This has been a great year for MSU alumni and we would like to share some exciting updates about our MSU choral music family.

Introducing New Students

This year, we welcome four talented individuals to the Spartan family in our year-long program. Chelsea Berner, MM student, hails from Houston, Texas where she taught high school and sang with the Houston Symphony Chorus. She received her bachelor's degree in music education from Baylor University. Lydia Lane Stout, Oberlin '12, joins the MM program from Chicago, where she served as an In-School Conductor with Chicago Children's Choir as well as created and directed several choirs for adults. David Mann, a master's student from Northern Virginia, received his bachelor's degree from James Madison University. He served for three years as choral director at a large high school program and conducted the choirs of Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church in Ashburn, VA. Shawn Cody Miller, DMA student and Ohio native, comes to us from Texas where he taught middle school and high school choirs in Houston and Waco. He holds an MM in conducting from Baylor University and a BM in music education from St. Olaf College.

We would also like to introduce four students who started our summer MM degree in 2016. Matt Carlson teaches high school choir and fourth grade general music near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He frequently collaborates with the Gettysburg Children's Choir and Gettysburg College Concert Choir as a conductor and composer. He will conduct the Gettysburg College Concert Choir during spring 2017. Darin DeWeese, MSU alumnus, currently teaches choir at Tecumseh High School in Michigan. Jess Edelbrock

is the Community Outreach Director and Associate Conductor of the Tucson Girls Chorus in Arizona. She also teaches music at Tucson Hebrew Academy and is the music director of Capilla de Sol Christian Church. McKenna Stenson joins the program from Woodbridge, Virginia, where she teaches choir at Charles J. Colgan High School. She received her BME and BA in Vocal Performance from Ohio State University where she studied conducting with Dr. Andrea Ramsey and Dr. Kristina Caswell-MacMullen.

Performance Highlights

On Friday, November 4, the MSU choirs shared the stage with the Lansing Symphony Orchestra and conductor Tim Muffitt for a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

On Saturday, December 10, the combined choirs will perform Messiah with the MSU Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Jonathan Reed.

On Saturday, April 29, we will perform Carl Orff's Carmina Burana with the MSU Wind Symphony, under the direction of Kevin Sedatole.



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Edward D. Anderson Scholarship

This past year, Don Anderson funded a scholarship for choral graduate students in memory of his late father, Edward D. Anderson, who passed away in July 2014, just two weeks shy of his 96th birthday. Dr. Anderson received his master's degree from Michigan State University and was the longtime director of choral activities at Colorado State University. This year's recipient is master's student David Mann. We are grateful to Don Anderson for his generosity and honored to help celebrate the musical legacy of his father.

Helen Bartlett Fellowship in Choral Music

Dr. Dale Bartlett, retired College of Music faculty member, MSU alum (BM'55; MM'56), and current conductor of the Lansing Arts Chorale, has endowed a fellowship in memory of his late wife, Helen, who was a longtime member of the Choral Union. This year's recipient is master's student Chelsea Berner. Thank you, Dale, for your generous contribution!

Robert Harris Fellowship

Dr. Robert Harris, retired director of choral organizations at Northwestern University, an MSU alumnus (PhD'71), and former MSU director of choral activities, continues to fund the Robert A. Harris Award for Choral Excellence in Choral Performance to be given annually to outstanding choral musicians. This year's recipients are master's students Lydia Lane Stout and David Mann.

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, provides important financial help to graduate students in choral

conducting. This year's recipient is master's student Chelsea Berner. Thank you to the many donors who have contributed to this endowment over the years!

Choral Society Scholarships

Through dues and fundraising efforts, the Choral Society has provided scholarship support to over forty graduate students in choral conducting over thirty years. In 2016-17, the Choral Society provides funding assistance to master's students Chelsea Berner, Zachary Coles, Lydia Lane Stout, and David Mann.

Guest Clinician

Christopher Aspaas, MM'97, served as our guest at the MSU Choral Invitational on November 7, where he worked with eight high school choirs from around the state of Michigan. In addition, he worked with our graduate conducting students in several master classes.

Aspaas serves as Director of Choral Activities at Texas Christian University and most recently served as the Robert Scholz Endowed Chair in Music and Associate Professor of Choral/Vocal Music at St. Olaf College.

He received his PhD in Choral Music Education at Florida State, his MM in Choral Conducting from MSU, and his BM in Voice Performance from St. Olaf College. Dr. Aspaas has served on the faculties of Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington and Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts and travels extensively as a guest conductor. Dr. Aspaas has produced more than forty arrangements and compositions for mixed, men's and women's choirs. His works are published by Augsburg Fortress, earthsongs, Hal Leonard, and Aspen Hill Music, a publishing house Dr. Aspaas co-founded with his wife Nancy in 2013.

Spartans at ACDA National Conference

We are proud to share that several of our alumni will be make significant contributions to the ACDA National Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota in March 2017! Congratulations to Anton Armstrong, Tom FitzStephens, Kristina MacMullen, Joshua Palkki, Sandra Snow, and Bridget Sweet.

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. Each year, the list of accomplishments becomes more impressive and demonstrates that our graduates are leaders in our profession. The list is obviously incomplete, so please contact me if you have recently changed jobs or want to share some aspect of your professional life with our alums. We particularly welcome information from those of who you received your degrees under the mentorship of Dr. Smith.

- **Melissa Arnold**, MM'13, began a DME at Indiana University with a minor in Cognitive Science.
- **Ross Bernhardt**, DMA'97, had his composition, Prayer of St. Patrick performed by the Kentucky All-State Mixed Choir under the direction of Meg Frazier. In addition, two of his compositions, The Colour of His Hair and How Clear, How Lovely Bright were finalists in the Ithaca College Choral Composition Contest with The Colour of His Hair receiving second place.
- **Randi Bolding**, DMA'15, served as a guest conductor for honor choirs in Kentucky and Indiana. She presented at the Michigan Music Conference, Texas Music Educators Association Conference, and the Nebraska Music Educators Association Conference and recently published "Capture, Hold and Incentive the At-Risk Student" in the Southwestern Musician. She continues as a faculty member at the University of Louisville.

- **James Borst**, MM'90 & PhD'02, completed his eighth year teaching vocal music at East Grand Rapids High School where he directs a program that includes 160 students in five separate choirs.

- **Meredith Y. Bowen**, DMA'16, has been appointed Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education and Director of Choral Activities at Radford University in Virginia, where she conducts three ensembles and teaches choral conducting, vocal pedagogy, and choral methods. She recently conducted the Kansas All-State Treble Choir and gave presentations at music education conferences in Kansas and New Jersey. Under her direction, the Holland Chorale performed at the Michigan ACDA Fall Conference in 2016.

- **Megan Boyd**, DMA'16, recently accepted a position at Concordia University in Ann Arbor as conductor of the Women's Chorale.

- **John Bragle**, MM'11, teaches at Interlochen Arts Academy where his choirs worked with composer Nico Muhly, the King's Singers, and premiered six new choral works, including a co-commissioned work entitled, The Longest Nights by Timothy Takach. The Academy Choir performed John Corigliano's Fern Hill for a Composers-In-Context festival. During the Interlochen Arts Camp's 89th season, he welcomed Joseph Flummerfelt to conduct the Interlochen Festival Choir and Philharmonic in a performance of Mendelssohn's Elijah.

- **Matthew Callaghan**, MM'16, continues to serve as the Director of Choirs at Hastings High School in Michigan. He also serves the Region B/State SATB Coordinator for MSVMA Honor Choir and as Director of Traditional Music at the First Presbyterian Church of Hastings.

- **Andrew Crane**, DMA'05, recently made his Carnegie Hall debut conducting the premiere of A Prayer for Mother Earth by Ivo Antognini with a combined choir of singers from Texas, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Switzerland. At Brigham

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Young University, he conducted the BYU Singers in two combined pieces with the King's Singers. In November, he will prepare the BYU Singers for combined performances of Messiah with the British professional choir, Tenebrae, and their conductor Nigel Short. He served as a vocal clinician with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and conducted the South Carolina All-State Choir. He also performed as tenor soloist with the Santa Fe Desert Chorale in their performance of Rachmaninoff Vespers.

- **Gerald Custer**, DMA'12, has been commissioned and premiered pieces with the Men's Glee Club of the University of Oklahoma (MSU alum David Howard, director) and the choir of the Interlochen Arts Academy (MSU alum John Bragle, director). He recently published his third book with Blake Hensen, *Arranging: A Beginner's Guide*, by GIA Publications and published new choral octavos with GIA and Heritage Music Press. He presented at the Minnesota ACDA state conference and Montclair State University in New Jersey.
- **Clinton Desmond**, DMA'09, was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor at Dakota Wesleyan University. As a vocalist, he performed a solo vocal recital entitled, "Nothing like You've Ever Known: Lesser Known Lloyd Webber."
- **Kevin Dobreff** serves as the Director of the Music Department at Grand Rapids Community College and as a member of the Commission on Accreditation for NASM and a visiting evaluator and consultant for schools that are striving to achieve accreditation.
- **Zach Durlam**, DMA'10, published "Glimpses of Handel in the Choral-Orchestra Psalms of Mendelssohn" (derived from his DMA document) in the May 2016 issue of the *Choral Journal*.
- **Megan Eldred**, MM'11, was recently hired as the Artistic Director for Sistrum, Lansing Women's chorus. Under her direction, both the DeWitt High School Chamber Singers and Men of Chamber, were chosen to perform at the Michigan Youth Arts Festival in 2016.

- **Melissa Elser**, MM'16, serves as choral director at the Vanguard School in Colorado Springs where her choirs have been selected to sing at the Colorado Music Educators Association conference in January 2017.
- **Elizabeth Fisher**, DMA'16, recently completed her DMA and was appointed Assistant Director of Choral Activities at the University of Minnesota-Duluth.
- **Tom FitzStephens**, MM'10, now serves as the Music Department Chair of the Georgia Governor's Honors Program. He also sings with the Atlanta Master Chorale, which will perform at the ACDA National Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- **Derrick Fox**, DMA'13 recently took a position as Director of Choral Activities at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Last April, he conducted All-State Choirs in Connecticut and Tennessee. He has done clinics and adjudicated for organizations/festivals around the country including the Deer Creek Chorale of Baltimore, the University of Colorado-Boulder choirs, the University of Central Florida Choral Invitational and the MICCA Festival in Boston. He recently traveled to Lithuania where he was the guest conductor for the Lithuanian Professional State Choir Polifonija and a featured soloist at Siauliai Big Band Festival and the Siauliai University/UNO showcase recital. He also collaborated with artists from the U.S. and Latvia to present a 9/11 memorial recital hosted by the U.S. ambassador to Latvia. His arrangement of My Spirit Looks to God Alone was published by Hal Leonard and his article on assessment was recently featured in NAFME's publication *Teaching Music*.
- **Sarah Graham**, DMA'05, has been appointed as Assistant Professor of Music in the Humanities Division of Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho. She also serves as the Music Director of the Palouse Choral Society.

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- **Stuart Chapman Hill**, PhD'16, started a new position at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, as Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education, where he teaches music education methods courses and conducts the Women's Chorus. He was awarded the Excellence-in-Teaching Citation at MSU this past February. He recently presented a session on circle singing at the ACDA Central Division Conference with Josh Palkki (PhD'16). In addition to teaching, Stuart has had two choral octavos released this year: Don't Be Seen (Hinshaw) and Sing Me to Sleep (Andrea Ramsey Choral Series with G. Schirmer). Both were selected as part of J.W. Pepper's "Editor's Choice" promotion.
- **Scott Hochstetler**, DMA'08, continues to teach as a tenured professor at Goshen College in Indiana. He was a guest conductor for the 2016 Mennonite Schools Council Choral Festival, where he led over 450 high school students from the U.S. and Canada. In February, the GC Chamber Choir appeared in concert with Bobbie McFerrin. That followed a May 2015 appearance on A Prairie Home Companion, a show that Garrison Keillor called one of his favorites of all time. In 2016 he conducted Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil with the GC Chamber Choir, St. Joseph Valley Camerata and guest bass, Glenn Miller.
- **Paul Hondorp**, DMA'03, Director of Choral Activities and Professor of Music at Western Kentucky University, directed the Delaware High School SATB All-State Chorus and has been selected as one of twelve American representatives for ACDA's 2017 International Conductor Exchange Program in Central and South America. He continues to sing in the Dallas-based professional chamber choir, Vox Humana.
- **Sean Ivory**, MM'00, conducted two performances of Messiah with the Calvin College Oratorio Society, prepared the Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Chorus for three performances with the Grand Rapids Symphony, and prepared the Calvin College Campus Choir for a performance of Fauré's Requiem

conducted by Joseph Flummerfelt. He also toured Trinidad in April with the Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Chorus. This summer, he conducted the Sing a Mile High Choral Festival Choir in Denver, Colorado, as well as the 4th-6th grade Honor Choir for the Missouri ACDA conference. Sean completed two commissions with Paul Caldwell – Fancy, a setting of the famous Shakespeare text for SSA, piano and clarinet (for Robyn Lana and the Cincinnati Children's Choir), and Ain't Gonna Study War No More for SSA and piano (for the Sing a Mile High Festival).

- **Dwight Jilek**, MM'13, is the new Director of Choral Activities at Bemidji State University in Minnesota. Last spring he completed his DMA in choral conducting from the University of North Texas.
- **Ryan Kelly**, DMA'12, is the co-author with Jason Paulk, of Handel's 'Messiah: Warm-Ups for Successful Performance, published by Hal Leonard. He also co-authored "A Guide to Improving Student-Led Section Rehearsals" published in the *Choral Journal*. He presented at the AGO National, ACDA Southwestern Division, ACDA Voices United, and Pennsylvania Music Educators Association conferences. His WCU chorus, Cantari Donne, performed at the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association conference, and he guest conducted the Maryland Jr. All-State Chorus. His CD Honegger's King David was released by Mark Custom Records. Several of his compositions and editions were published by Augsburg Fortress Publishers and Boosey & Hawkes.
- **Barb Lamont**, MM'13, defended her doctoral document, "The Choral Music of Rhona Clarke" and received a DMA in Choral Conducting from Texas Tech University. She was recently appointed as Assistant Professor and Director of Choral Activities at Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.
- **Kristina Caswell-MacMullen**, MM'09, recently conducted the Georgia All-State Treble Choir, Virginia

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District 14 Treble Choir, Organization of American Kodaly Educators National Treble Honor Choir, and Texas All Region Treble Choir. She also adjudicated at the Vancouver Kiwanis Choral Festival in British Columbia and the Kentucky State Choral Festival.

- **Andrew Minear** was recently appointed as Interim Director of Choral Activities at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.
- **Jeremy Nabors**, MM'10, participated in a 40-choir commissioning consortium and gave the North Carolina premiere performance of Tim Takach's song cycle, *The Longest Nights*, a seven-movement work for choir and piano. His chamber choir was invited to sing Karl Jenkins *Gloria* with the UNC-Greensboro Chamber Choir and University Orchestra. He recently served as a guest clinician for the Women's Glee weekend hosted by Sisters Voices, a local community youth choir. His community men's chorus, *Vox Virorum*, celebrates its 5th anniversary and is recording a CD and commissioning a work by MSU alum, Ryan Kelly.
- **Matthew Olson**, MM'09, was recently appointed Assistant Director of The Singers—Minnesota Choral Artists. He currently serves as Artistic Director of the Oratory Bach Ensemble and as Director of Choral Ministries at Westwood Lutheran Church. In addition to his work with choral ensembles, he also serves as an Instructor of Voice at North Hennepin Community College. He recently published several works, including *In Paradisum*, *The Peace of Wild Things*, and *The Want of Peace*.
- **Maggie Owens**, MM'12, recently accepted a position at Bellarmine University where she directs the Women's Choir and teaches voice.
- **Jonathan Palant**, DMA'07, continues his work with the Dallas Street Choir and Credo Community Choir. In the coming year, both groups will tour to New York and Washington, DC, where they will perform in Carnegie Hall and the National Cathedral with Frederica Von Stade, Jake Heggie, and Stephen Schwartz.

- **Joshua Palkki**, PhD'16, accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University, Long Beach where he leads the University Choir. In 2016 he presented sessions at the ACDA Central Division Conference, LGBTQ Studies in Music Education III, and the Michigan Music Conference and conducted the Nevada Middle School All-State Choir.
- **Clayton Parr**, MM'89 and DMA'90, conducted the state men's honor choir for MSVMA in 2016 and served as conductor of the high school choir at Blue Lake this past summer. The teachers' men's group, MEME (Michigan Educators' Male Ensemble) performed at the Intercollegiate Men's Choruses National Seminar in Illinois in March 2016. Clayton co-authored a collection of 18 Gregorian choral folk songs that has been published by Hal Leonard.
- **Holly Lewis Pemberton**, MM'16, accepted a position as the Director of Choirs at Worthington Kilbourne High School in Columbus, Ohio. In 2016, she presented "Systems of Sight-reading: Building music literacy in the choral classroom" at the Michigan Music Conference and will present "Passionate Preparation: Effective Warm-ups in the Choral Classroom" at MMC in 2017.
- **Ryan Person**, MM'13, is in his second year of DMA study at Texas Tech University where he serves as the graduate associate conductor of the University Choir, graduate assistant conductor of Matador Singers, and a TA in Undergraduate Choral Conducting. He will be the instructor of Undergraduate Choral/Vocal Pedagogy in the spring.
- **Todd Prickett**, DMA'03, recently accepted a new position as Director of Music/Choirmaster at University Christian Church, a 5000-member congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Fort Worth, Texas.
- **Andrea Ramsey**, PhD'13, conducted honor choirs for ACDA's Southwest and Eastern Divisions and

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all-state choirs in South Carolina and North Carolina. She also led choirs at the New England Music Festival, Pacific International Choral Festival, the Let Freedom Sing Festival in Philadelphia, and the Festival of Voice at the University of Montevallo. She was the featured composer for the Heartland Youth Choir Meet-the-Composer Festival in Des Moines and recently finished commissions for Florida Music Educators Association, Chorus America Fundraising Consortium, Crescent City Choral Festival, Children's Chorus of Washington, DC, *Voca Lyrica* (Michigan), and the Southwest Division of ACDA.

- **Christopher M. Redfearn**, MM'04, serves as the Chair of the Music Department and Director of Choral Activities at Valley City State University in North Dakota where he was awarded the Junior Faculty Excellence Award in May 2015. He recently conducted the North Dakota 7/8/9 All-State Honor Choir and presented sessions on pedagogy and literature at the Montana Music Educators Conference.
- **Eric Rubinstein**, MM'12, has begun a DMA in choral conducting with a graduate assistantship at Louisiana State University. Under his direction, the Westhampton Beach HS Chamber Singers were selected to perform for the New York ACDA Conference last school year.
- **Kristopher Schave**, MM'16, was recently hired as a general music teacher at Riverdale Elementary School in Orlando, Florida.
- **Daniel Singer**, MM'11, teaches chorus and orchestra at the University School in Cleveland, works with the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus, and serves as the Director of the Contemporary Youth Orchestra Chorus. He sings with Apollo's Fire, Cleveland's Baroque Orchestra and Quire Cleveland.
- **Rob Stow**, MM'09, completed his seventh summer teaching at the Interlochen Camp for the Arts in the High School Division as the Musical Director of the High School Musical Theatre workshop. He is in

his 14th year teaching choral music and drama at Elk Rapids High School and continues to be a clinician with MSVMA and consults with choirs throughout the state of Michigan. He recently became involved with OnStage4Kids, a program that is committed to bringing world-class musicians into K-12 Michigan classrooms.

- **Bryce Thompson**, MM'16, continues to serve as the Director of Choirs at Lake Orion High School in Michigan.
- **Jason Thoms**, DMA'05, led his Chamber Choir from Concordia College—New York on a tour of Germany. This, their first international tour, resulted in a CD recorded live in the castle and town churches in Wittenberg.
- **Joel Tranquilla**, DMA'13, is in his third year as Director of Choral Activities at Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia. He is also the Artistic Director of the Valley Festival Singers and the award-winning Coastal Sound Youth Choir. In March, the TWU Chamber Choir toured to Ottawa and New York City where they performed at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and Carnegie Hall. In April, Joel led the joint choirs of TWU and the Sea to Sky Symphony in a rare performance of Mendelssohn's *St. Paul*. He was nominated for a Juno Award (the Canadian equivalent of the Grammy Awards) in the category of Classical Album of the Year (Vocal or Choral) for the CD *Sacred Reflections of Canada*.
- **Frank Watkins**, DMA'16, has been named Director of Choral Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.
- **Brent Wells**, DMA'07, performed the *Rachmaninoff Vespers* with the Santa Fe Desert Chorale in summer 2016 and will perform again with this ensemble in December. He was recently appointed music director of Treasure Valley Millennial Choirs and Orchestra, a 300-voice interfaith community

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organization with five choirs ranging from youth to adult and full symphony chorus. Last year, this group toured to Washington, D.C. where they performed in the Strathmore Music Center with Grammy-nominated violinist, Jennie Oaks Baker.

- **Brandon Williams**, DMA'16, was appointed Assistant Professor of Choral Music and Choral Music Education at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. This past summer he conducted the All-State Men's Chorus for the Kansas Choral Directors Association and presented at the summer MSVMA conference. His SSA arrangement of Lorelei is published by Hal Leonard.
- **Robert Williams**, MM'16, continues to serve as a member of the vocal music faculty at Pleasant Valley High School in Bettendorf, Iowa.
- **Tamara Grove Williams**, MM'14, will direct the Michigan State Vocal Music Association SATB Honor Choir in January 2017 at the Michigan Music Conference. She will also conduct on a Thursday evening concert at MMC featuring music students from

grades 5-12 from the Traverse City Public Schools. This past summer she presented two sessions at the summer MSVMA conference.

- **Henry Windham**, MM'16, recently accepted the Head Choral Director position at Kempner High School in Sugarland, Texas.
- **Kristin Zaryski**, MM'09, continues her work at Ithaca (New York) High School where she teaches two curricular choirs, AP Music Theory, group voice lessons, extra-curricular Men's and Women's Choirs and the annual musical.
- **Kyle Zeuch**, MM'13, current DMA student, and director of the MSU Community Music School Children and Youth Choirs, released a professional recording entitled, "We Are One," in coordination with the choirs' European tour to Germany and Austria in June 2016. Under his direction, the MSU Young Women's Chorus performed at the ACDA Michigan Conference and the MSU Children's Choir performed at the Michigan Music Conference. He was named the conductor of the 7-8-9 SSA MSVMA Honors Choir for 2018.

