

Choral Activities at MSU

2015-2016

Dear MSU Choral Conducting Alumni,

Welcome to our annual choral newsletter! As a member of our MSU choral family, we are excited to share with you the wonderful things that are happening with our fellow Spartan choral alums.

This year we have a strong group of new conducting graduate students. Zachary Coles, MM student, comes to MSU from Colorado where he taught high school choir for four years after receiving a BA from Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota. Alyssa Cossey has her MM from California State University-Fullerton where she studied with Robert Istad and a BA from California State Polytechnic University where she studied with Iris Levine. Prior to coming to MSU, she taught middle school and high school choir in California. Amy Hall comes to us from Waukeg, Iowa, where she led a large high school program with 10 ensembles and three full-time staff members. Amy earned her MS in educational leadership from Drake University and a bachelor's degree from Simpson College. Jennifer Sengin has a master's degree from Ithaca College where she studied with Janet Galván, and has spent the last five years teaching high school choir in New Jersey.

Performance Highlights

On Tuesday, Sept. 22, 19 singers from the University Chorale shared an all-Vivaldi program with MSU's International Chamber Soloists at an afternoon concert at New York City's Merkin Hall.

At the MSU vs. Maryland home football game on Nov. 14, all the MSU choirs joined the Spartan Marching Band in a halftime performance under the artistic design of Jennifer Wen Ma – the creative director of the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

On Sunday, Dec. 5, the Choral Union, University Chorale, and State Singers joined forces with the MSU Symphony Orchestra in a performance of Handel's *Messiah* under the baton of David Rayl.

On Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 12 and 13, the University Chorale joined the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for Handel's *Messiah* under the baton of Nathalie Stutzmann.

On Saturday, April 30, Kevin Noe will lead the MSU Symphony Orchestra, University Chorale, State Singers,

and MSU Children's Choir in performances of Debussy's *La demoiselle élue* and Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*.

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, 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 Holly Lewis. Thank you, Dale!

Robert Harris Fellowship

Dr. Robert Harris, recently retired 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 recipients are doctoral student Elizabeth Hermanson and master's student Zachary Coles. 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, provides important financial help to graduate students in choral conducting. This year's recipient is master's student Zachary Coles. Thank you to the many donors who have contributed to this endowment over the years!

Choral Society News

Through its dues and fundraising activities, the Choral Society provides scholarship assistance to graduate students in choral conducting. This year, the society provides assistance to doctoral student Elizabeth Hermanson and master's students Zachary Coles and Holly Lewis.

Guest Clinician

Dr. Amanda Quist served as our guest at the MSU Choral Invitational on Nov. 2, where she worked with eight high school choirs from around Michigan. The next day, she worked with our graduate and undergraduate conducting students. Quist is an associate professor and department chair of conducting,

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organ, and sacred music at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey.

Spartans at ACDA Division Conferences

Congratulations to the following MSU choral alumni and current students who will appear at ACDA division conferences this spring: Christopher Aspaas, Jeff Buetner, Ted Brimeyer, Zack Durlam, Derrick Fox, Stuart Chapman Hill, Ryan Kelly, Andrew Minear, Jonathan Palant, Joshua Palkki, Andrea Ramsey and our two favorite alums—Sandra Snow and Jonathan Reed.

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.

- **Christopher Aspaas**, MM'99, has been named the director of choral activities at Texas Christian University in Ft. Worth, Texas.
- 2006 MM graduate, **Patrick Baker**, is the fine arts program coordinator for Joliet Public Schools in Joliet, Ill. He is also the vocal coach for the West Suburban Symphony Chorus in Hinsdale, Ill.
- **Ryan Beeken**, DMA'12 and MM'09, presented a session titled, "Color Outside the Lines, Think Outside the Box: Rehearsal Strategies to Empower Creativity and Collaboration in the Choral Rehearsal," at the 2015 NAFME National In-Service Conference in Nashville, Tenn. In addition to his presentation at NAFME, he presented the session, "Pitch Is a Specific Address, NOT A Zip-code!" at the Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia Music Educators Association State Conferences. Ryan was the headliner at the 2015 Alabama ACDA Summer Conference in Tuscaloosa, Ala. and served as a guest artist at Ohio State University, Ithaca College, and Bowling Green State University. He was guest conductor for the 2014 Louisiana All-State Men's Choir, 2014 Suburban Des Moines Choral Festival, 2014 Pennsylvania Music Educators District 5 Honors Choir, 2015 New York Zone 3 Area All-State Women's Choir, 2015 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Region 1 Choir, and the 2015 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association District VI Songfest.
- **Randi Bolding** completed her DMA in December 2015. She continues on the music education faculty at the University of Louisville.
- Under the direction of **Ted Brimeyer**, MM'10, the Urbandale Singers from Urbandale High School in Des Moines, Iowa, have been invited to perform at the North Central ACDA Conference in Sioux Falls, Iowa.
- Recent graduate, **Wai Leung William Chung**, MM'14, has been appointed assistant to the artistic director of the Hong Kong Treble Choirs' Association and an instructor in that organization.
- **Andrew Crane**, DMA'05, has been appointed associate professor of choral conducting and conductor of the BYU Singers at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.
- **Scott Emelander** completed his MM in the summer of 2015 and has returned to teaching at Shelby (Mich.) High School.
- **Kim Evans-Carson** completed her MM this past summer and remains as the choral director at Truman High School in Independence, Mo.
- **Tom FitzStephens**, MM'10, has recently been hired as the director of choirs at Lakeside High School in Atlanta, Ga. He also serves as the choir director for the Georgia Governor's Honors Program where he conducts the top chamber choir made up of the best students in the state.
- **Derrick Fox**, DMA'13 served as guest conductor and clinician at the International School of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he worked with the three ISKL high school choirs and provided an after-school workshop for the elementary, middle, and high school music faculty at ISKL and Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (C) Kung Man school. He conducted all-state choirs in Conn. and Tenn. as well as area All-State and all county choirs in N.Y. He gave sessions at the NAFME In-Service Convention, NYSSMA Winter Conference, Florida Music Educators Association, and Eastern ACDA Convention. He is also the headliner for the Utah Music Educators Association Convention. Additionally, he published two articles for the NAFME

- educational advocacy blog entitled, “Music in a Minute” and an article entitled, “African American Practice in Shape Note Singing” in the December issue of the *Choral Journal*.
- Current DMA student, **Elizabeth Hermanson**, is the new artistic director of the Cantabile Girls Choir, affiliated with the St. Cloud State University Preparatory Program. As part of this organization, she conducts the concert choir and oversees the entire preparatory choir program.
 - **Zebulon Highben**, DMA’12, has been selected as a 2016 conducting fellow for the ACDA International Conductor Exchange Program with South Korea. In February, he will host one of the visiting South Korean conductors before and during the Central Division ACDA conference. In August, he will travel to South Korea for a two-week residency of lectures, master classes, conducting clinics, and performances. Under his direction, the Muskingum University Chamber Singers performed at the Ohio ACDA Conference. In August 2015, he published, “Fleeing War, Composing Peace: The Evolution of Jean Berger” in the *Choral Journal*. He is also the winner in *The American Prize in Conducting—College/University Division* with the Muskingum Concert Choir and Chamber Singers.
 - **David Howard**, DMA’08, has been appointed associate director of choral activities at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Okla.
 - **Dwight Jilek**, MM’13, is completing his DMA in choral conducting from the University of North Texas. He recently served as an off-stage chorus conductor for the Dallas Symphony performances of Holst’s *The Planets*.
 - **Andrew Kreckman**, MM’10, has been hired as assistant professor and director of choral studies at Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, Ark.
 - Recent graduate, **Christine Le**, MM’15, accepted the director of choirs position at Olympia High School in Orlando, Fla.
 - **Jong Kim**, DMA’95, professor of music and director of choral activities at Lynchburg College, has been selected as the artistic director and principal conductor of the Incheon City Chorale in South Korea.
 - **Kristina MacMullen**, MM’09, contributed to *Freedom*, a three-day summit addressing the topic of human trafficking. Built on the collaborative efforts of campus and community organizations, this forum of expression provided opportunities for education and, ultimately, action. With choral music as its centerpiece, the weekend engaged performers and participants through the visual arts, movement, music, theater, film, fashion, and civil discourse, joining together to fight this most pressing human rights issue.
 - **Marci Major**, MM’07, is assistant professor of music education at West Chester University in West Chester, Pa.
 - **Elizabeth Hogan McFarland**, MM’09, contributed to a three-part article in the *Choral Journal*, “Notes for Success: Advice for the First-Year Choral Teacher.” She recently gave birth to a new member of the Spartan Family, Eleanor “Ellie” Claire McFarland. Congratulations to her and her family!
 - **Tim McMillin**, DMA’10, recently conducted the Des Moines Vocal Arts Ensemble by invitation at the Iowa Choral Directors Association (ICDA) Summer Symposium and presented a workshop, entitled “Vocal Artistry: The Solo Voice in the Choral Aesthetic,” a community choir reading session, and a conducting master class. He also received a research and creativity grant from Simpson College to take part in a short choral experience in England with Paul Spicer during the spring of 2016 and additional grant funding to develop a May Term international travel experience in northern Europe for May 2017.
 - Current DMA student, **Andrew Minear**, was a finalist in *The American Prize in Conducting—College/University Division* for a performance with his DMA Recital Choir.
 - **Kat Mosiman** completed the MM degree in choral conducting in the summer of 2015. She has taken a position as associate director of vocal music at Waukeet (Iowa) High School.
 - **Maggie Blair Owens**, MM’12, recently accepted the position as director of choral activities at Wayne State College in Wayne, Neb.
 - **Jonathan Palant**, DMA’07, will tour with CREDO, Dallas’s Ecumenical mixed choir, on a performance tour to Australia for concerts in Melbourne and Sydney. Now averaging 80-plus singers each week, the

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Keeping Up with MSU Alumni (continued)

- Dallas Street Choir provides a musical outlet for those experiencing homelessness and severe disadvantage. This ensemble presents concerts throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth area and recently collaborated with composer Jake Heggie along with opera stars Frederica von Stade, Joyce DiDonato, Ailyn Pérez in a performance attended by Laura Bush and Margot and Ross Perot. Jonathan is also the editor of “Brothers Sing On:” *The Jonathan Palant Choral Series*, published by Mark Foster Music under the auspices of Hal Leonard.
- The Parker Chorale, a sub-group of the Grosse Isle Chorale under the direction of alumnus **James Parker**, DMA’88, recently appeared at the ACDA-Michigan Fall Conference. In the summer of 2014, Jim toured New Zealand with the Grosse Isle Traveling Chorale and is currently planning a tour of Spain in the summer of 2016.
 - **Ryan Person**, MM’13, is in his first year of DMA studies in choral conducting at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.
 - **Andrea Ramsey**, PhD’13, conducted the Kansas Choral Director’s Association All-State Women’s Honor Choir, Texas Choral Director’s Association JH/MS Honor Choir, and the Children’s Honor Choir at the Voices United ACDA Conference – the annual collaborative Summer Conference sponsored by the Md./DC, Del., and Va. ACDA chapters. In addition to guest conducting, she presented two interest sessions at the Iowa Music Educators Association Conference in Ames, Iowa. Her original composition, “Over Hill, Over Dale,” is included in *Hark, hark, the lark*, a compilation of eight Shakespeare settings for upper voices compiled and edited by Bob Chilcott and published by Oxford University Press.
 - Under the direction of **Eric Rubinstein**, MM’12, the Chamber Singers from Westhampton Beach High School in Westhampton Beach, N.Y., have been selected to perform at the NY-ACDA Conference. Eric has recently been appointed as an adjunct professor of vocal music education at CUNY Brooklyn College.
 - Current DMA student, **Jennifer Sengin**, contributed to “Notes for Success: Advice for the First-Year Choral Teacher,” a three-part article in the *Choral Journal*.
 - **Brigitte Smith** has been appointed the vocal music director at San Marcos High School in San Marcos, Texas, after completing her master’s degree this past summer.
 - The choirs of current summer MM student, **Bryce Thompson**, were selected as the demonstration choir at the Michigan ACDA Conference and for a performance at the Michigan Music Conference.
 - **Chris Thompson**, MM’08, was recently hired as the choir director at Rocky Mountain High School in Fort Collins, Colo.
 - **Jason Thoms**, DMA’05, is beginning his 9th year as the director of choral activities at Concordia College–N.Y. At the end of the 2014-2015 school year, he was awarded the Nehemiah Award (the College’s highest honor for teaching and service to the College), and in July 2015, he was appointed dean of arts and sciences. Jason continues to direct the choirs and will be embarking on two tours in the spring of 2016: Florida during spring break and Germany in May. In July 2016, he will teach a class on creative service through the arts at two colleges in India through Concordia College-New York’s India Project. Jason was accepted to the Conducting 21C: Musical Leadership for a New Century as part of the Yale International Choral Festival at Yale University.
 - **Sean Vogt**, DMA’05, has been appointed as the choirmaster at the Cathedral of Saint Paul in St. Paul, Minn., in addition to his responsibilities as artistic director of the Apollo Male Chorus.
 - **Marcia Wieland**, MM’10, is now the director of choral and vocal programs at Cowley College in Arkansas City, Kan.
 - Current DMA student, **Brandon Williams**, contributed to a three-part article, “Notes for Success: Advice for the First-Year Choral Teacher” in the *Choral Journal*.
 - Congratulations to the following current and former MSU students who have high numbers of students accepted into the Iowa All-State – **Kat Mosiman**, MM’15, at Waukee High School (25 singers), **Rob Williams** at Pleasant Valley High School (23 singers), **Tom Hales** at Sioux City East High School, and **Jeff Knutson** at Iowa City West High School (17 singers).