

## Choral Activities at MSU

### 2019-2020

Dear MSU Choral Conducting Alumni,

Welcome to our annual choral music newsletter, our effort to keep the members of the MSU choral family connected. My apologies for getting this out so late. We were just about ready to distribute it when COVID-19 intervened and delayed its completion. I'm just now getting back to it. I hope this finds you healthy and safe. The current pandemic presents a great challenge to choral musicians, but I know our Spartan conductors will be at the forefront of meeting that challenge.

### Introducing New Students

This year, we welcomed two talented doctoral students. Cera Babb completed her master's degree at the University of Oregon. Prior to that, she received her undergraduate degree from the University of Delaware, taught at the Sanford School, and directed the University of Delaware Children's Choir. Jennifer Heder came to us after teaching at Spanish Fork (Utah) High School. Her undergraduate and master's degrees are from Brigham Young University, where she was a student of MSU alum Andrew Crane.

We also welcomed two incoming master's students. Prior to joining us, Randi Simons-Miller received her undergraduate degree from Valparaiso University and taught middle and high school in Bluffton, Indiana. Jack Rifkin graduated from the University of Delaware and came to MSU after teaching at Edgewood (Maryland) High School for a number of years.

We are happy to introduce three students who started our summer master's degree in 2019. Miles Finn received a bachelor's degree from Wartburg College and currently teaches at Indianola (Iowa) High School. Kelsey Hendler teaches at Haverford (Pennsylvania) High School. She holds an undergraduate degree from Penn State University. James Pecar graduated from Stetson University in Florida and serves as the vocal music director at Chippewa Valley High School in Clinton Township, Michigan.

### Performance Highlights

On Saturday, November 2 the combined forces of Choral Union, Chorale and State Singers joined the Lansing Symphony Orchestra for a performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 2 under the baton of LSO music director Tim Muffitt.

On Saturday, December 9, the Choral Union and Chorale joined the MSU Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Jonathan Reed for a performance the Poulenc Gloria and Part I of Messiah.

Two major performances planned for April had to be postponed: Craig Hella Johnson's moving oratorio Considering Matthew Shepard and Beethoven's Mass in C. We hope to perform these great works when the situation permits.

### Guest Clinician

Brian Schmidt served as our guest at the MSU Choral Invitational on October 21. He worked with seven high school choirs from around the state of Michigan, led master classes with our graduate conducting students, and worked with the undergraduate conducting class. Schmidt serves as Associate Professor of Choral Music at Baylor University and Artistic Director of the GRAMMY-nominated South Dakota Chorale, a professional choir based in Sioux Falls.

### Spartans at ACDA Regional Conferences

Congratulations to the following MSU faculty, alumni and current students who appeared at the ACDA regional conferences.

#### Central/North Central

Featured performance: Anton Armstrong and the Joining Voices Festival Choir

Auditioned choirs: Frank Watkins, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Concert Choir; Zachary Durlam, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Concert Chorale  
Interest sessions: Zachary Durlam, Colleen McNickle, and Jessica McKiernan

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### Western

Featured performance: Andrew Crane and the Brigham Young University Singers

Interest sessions: Joshua Palkki, Eric Rubinstein, and Andrew Crane

### Eastern

Auditioned choir: Brandon Williams, Rutgers University Voorhees Choir

Interest sessions: Stephen Paparo and Ryan Kelly

### Southwestern

Featured performance: Sandra Snow and *mirabai*

Auditioned choir: Christopher Aspaas, Texas Christian University Concert Chorale

Interest sessions: Andrea Ramsey, Carolyn Cruse, and Ryan Beeken

### Southern

Auditioned choir: J. Christine Le, Olympia High School Bella Voce

Interest session: Andrew Minear

## Institute for Choral Teacher Education (CME)

The annual Institute for Choral Teacher Education (CME), led by Artistic Director Sandra Snow and Institute faculty, will be held in an online format June 15-19, 2020.

The Institute for Choral Teacher Education is an intentional community of conductor teachers and performers with a focus on exemplars of choral repertoire in a variety of musical practices. Repertoire forms the basis of instruction in conducting, score study, and rehearsal pedagogies. Participants come from around the United States and as far as Canada and Europe to share best practices, participate in a professional learning community, and leave refreshed and renewed for the upcoming year. As one 2019 participant said, “This was amazing. The immediate feedback I received was personalized and met me where I was in my professional career in an environment of support and caring instruction.”

2020 registration is open:  
[www.choralmusicexperience.com](http://www.choralmusicexperience.com).

## *mirabai*

The *mirabai* ensemble, led by Founder and Artistic Director Sandra Snow, performed for the opening concert of the ACDA Southwest Region Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas March 4, 2020. *mirabai* is a professional ensemble featuring alumna of the MSU Women’s Chamber Ensemble with a focus on the lived experiences of women through text and composition, often in the voice of women poets and composers.

The program examined the concept of “home,” the need for belonging and community, the fracture when a sense of home is compromised. The centerpiece of the program was Philadelphia-area composer Andrea Clearfield’s “Home in me,” the first of three works she will compose on the theme. The program will feature repertoire that will culminate in *mirabai*’s second recording, released in 2022.

Alumna of the MSU Women’s Chamber Ensemble are eligible to become a part of the ensemble roster of *mirabai* by successful audition. Contact Dr. Snow if interested and learn more, including how to support the work of the ensemble, at [www.singmirabai.org](http://www.singmirabai.org).

## J. Jeanette Shaffer Memorial Endowed Fellowship for Choral Music

This past year, Iris Linder, a member of the MSU Choral Union, established a fellowship honoring her mother, J. Jeanette Shaffer. One of the requirements of the fellowship is that the recipient conduct a performance of a choral work from the Jewish tradition some time during the school year. The inaugural recipient was master’s student Coty Morris who planned to lead State Singers in a performance of Part II of Bloch’s *Sacred Service*. Thank you, Iris!

## Edward D. Anderson Fellowship

In 2017, Dr. Donald Anderson funded a fellowship 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. The elder 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 was doctoral student Clelyn Chapin. We are grateful to Dr. 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, endowed a fellowship in memory of his late wife Helen, who was a longtime member of the Choral Union. This year's recipient was doctoral student Carter Smith. Thank you, Dale!

## Robert Harris Fellowship

Dr. Robert Harris, 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 were master's student Coty Morris and doctoral student Carter Smith. Thank you, Bob!

## Charles K. Smith Fellowship

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 was doctoral student Clelyn Chapin. Our gratitude goes out to the many of you who have contributed and continue to contribute to this endowment!

## 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 2019-20, the Choral Society provided funding assistance to master's students Coty Morris and Kylie Ng and doctoral students Clelyn Chapin and Carter Smith.

## Keeping Up with MSU Alumni

*This section of the newsletter is intended to help you keep up with the careers of your fellow MSU choral alums. 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 or personal life in next year's newsletter.*

- **David Baxter** completed his MM in choral conducting from MSU this past summer. He continues as associate vocal music director at Pleasant Valley (Iowa) High School.
- **Ryan Beeken**, MM '09, DMA '12, began a new position as director of choral activities at Wichita State University. He was formerly on the faculty of Indiana University of Pennsylvania and led the IUP Chorale in a performance for the 2019 NAFME Eastern Division Conference where he was also a featured presenter. His guest conducting engagements included all-state and honor choirs in Kansas, Nebraska, West Virginia, Alaska, Florida, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, and Pennsylvania. In 2019 he received the Citation of Excellence in Teaching from the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association.
- **Meredith Bowen**, MM '06, DMA '16, is in her fourth year at Radford University in Virginia. She presented on the music of 17th- and 18th-c. northern Italian nuns at the ACDA national conference in March 2019 and guest conducted at the University of Oklahoma Women's Choral Leadership Workshop, the Huntingdon College Choral Invitational, and the Blacksburg Master Chorale's performance of *Messiah*. She has been awarded a grant from the ACDA Diverse Voices initiative and to spearhead a treble chorus consortium in partnership with *mirabai* and National Concerts for a new commission for treble chorus by Andrea Clearfield. She continues to serve as Virginia ACDA Student Activities R & R Chair, Artistic Administrator for *mirabai*, and on faculty for the Choral Music Experience Institute and the Virginia Governors School for the Visual and Performing Arts.

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- **Meghan Boyd**, MM '12, DMA '16, is director of choral activities at Xavier University in Cincinnati and associate director of Young Professionals Choral Collective. The YPCC Chamber Choir sang at the 2019 Ohio Choral Directors Association Summer Conference. She has been appointed Resource & Repertoire Chair for Women's Choruses for Ohio ACDA.
- **Matthew Callaghan**, MM'16, accepted the position of vocal music director at Haslett High School.
- **Karyl Carlson**, DMA'97, is in her fifteenth year as director of choral activities at Illinois State University. Last year, she conducted the ISU Concert Choir and Symphony Orchestra in a performance of Sir Michael Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*. Carlson serves ACDA as Central Region President and is co-chair of the upcoming Central/North Central Region Conference in Milwaukee.
- **Matt Carlson**, MM'18, is in his seventh year at Bermudian Springs School District in York Springs, Pennsylvania, where he teaches high school choir and 4th grade general music and choir. In the fall of 2019, he served as the Interim Artistic Director for the Gettysburg Children's Choir. His compositions were performed by many schools, community groups, and festivals throughout the area in the past year, including the PMEA Districts 5 and 7 Songfests and the Wingate University Middle School Choral Celebration.
- **Kim Carson**, MM'15, is in her 8th year as the vocal music director at Truman High School in Independence, Missouri. She recently completed her second term as the Kansas City Metro District Choir Vice President and was awarded the McDaniel Outstanding District Director Award this past summer at by the Missouri ACDA chapter. This year, her choirs collaborated with Charles Bruffy and the Kansas City Chorale for a Christmas performance and the Heritage Orchestra for a performance of Randall Thompson's *Testament of Freedom* at the Kauffman Center.
- **Zack Coles**, MM '16, began a position at Fairview High School and Southern Hills Middle School, part of the Boulder Valley (Colorado) School District.
- **Alyssa Cossey**, DMA '17, is in her 3rd year as a faculty member at the University of Arizona. In the past year she presented at NAFME Northwest Conference in Portland, California Choral Directors Association Indiana Music Educators Association Conference Arizona Music Educators Association Conference and guest conducted at the 7th Annual Kantorei Summer Choral Institute in Kansas City.
- **Andrew Crane**, DMA '05, conducted the Brigham Young University Singers in a performance at the ACDA National Conference in Kansas City. At the ACDA Western Region Conference in March conducted the BYU Singers and BYU combined choirs and orchestra and presented an interest session on choral/vocal technique. He performed as a member of Seraphic Fire at the Aspen Music Festival under the direction of Robert Spano, conducted the Utah Junior High School All-State Choir, and began a two-year term as president of the Utah chapter of ACDA.
- **Gerald Custer**, DMA '12, had a busy year as a composer. His setting of the medieval text, "This Endrys Night," was commissioned and premiered by Sean Vogt (DMA'05) and the Choir of Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church in Atlanta and has been accepted for publication in James Jordan's *Evoking Sound Choral Series* through GIA Publications along with his arrangement of "O Freedom," premiered by Andrew Crane (DMA'05) and the BYU Singers last year. His arrangement of the Polish Christmas carol "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" will be published by Hal Leonard Music. Ireland's two national youth choirs commissioned and premiered his new work, "Where Love Dwells (There Are No Strangers in this House)," published by Heritage Music Press. In May 2019, Jerry received the Alumni Merit Award from Westminster Choir College and conducted the recessional music at the WCC Commencement in Princeton University Chapel. He is in his 13th year on the theory and composition faculty at Wayne State University.
- **Zach Durlam**, DMA '10, is director of choral activities at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he was promoted to associate professor with tenure this past June. The UWM Concert Chorale performed at the ACDA North Central/



Central Region Conference, where he also co-presented on adapting concepts from the private voice studio into choral ensemble settings. His work was featured in several categories by the American Prize competition: he was awarded 3rd prize in the Collegiate Choral Conducting division; the UWM Concert Chorale was a finalist in the College Choral Division; and the UWM choirs and symphony orchestra under his direction were finalists for the Ernst Bacon Memorial Award for the performance of American music. He conducted the 2019 Wisconsin Honors High School Mixed Choir and was the keynote speaker for the South Dakota ACDA state conference. He also presented at the Wisconsin Music Education Conference and was elected President Elect of the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association.

- **Jess Edelbrock**, MM '18, continues her work as associate conductor and community outreach director for the Tucson Girls Chorus. She and her husband Tom had a baby boy in January 2019.
- **Brett Epperson**, MM '17, began coursework towards the Ph.D. in music education-choral conducting at Florida State University, where he serves as assistant conductor of the Tallahassee Community Chorus. This summer he was assistant conductor for the Midwest American Touring Honor Choir, conducting select high school and collegiate choir students in performances across Europe.
- **Elizabeth Hermanson Fisher**, DMA '16, was recently named artistic director of the Steel City Men's Chorus, Alabama's only gay men's chorus. She serves on the faculties of Samford University and the University of Alabama-Birmingham.
- **Derrick Fox**, DMA '13, conducted the Middle School/Junior High Honor Choir at the ACDA National Conference in Kansas City, presented at the Midwest Clinic International Band and Orchestra Convention, travelled to South Africa as an ACDA International Choral Exchange Program Fellow, and conducted at the KUESTA Collegiate Choral Festival in South Africa. He recently launched the Derrick Fox Choral Series with Music Spoke, which will feature works by composers from underrepresented and marginalized communities. He continues as director of choral activities at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.
- **Michael Hanawalt**, MM '09, is in his first year as director of graduate choral activities at Florida State University and artistic director of the Tallahassee Community Chorus. He served as guest conductor for the Wichita Symphony Orchestra's "Spirit of the Season" holiday concert.
- **Lori Hetzel**, DMA '95, serves as professor of music and associate director of the School of Music at the University of Kentucky, and as artistic director of the Lexington Singers Children's Choirs. The organization's Chamber Choir performed with the Vanderbilt Children's Choir and Pensacola Children's Choir on the President's concert at the ACDA Southern Region Conference. In the past year she conducted the New York All State SSAA Choir and conducted the Florida All State SSAA Choir in January 2020.
- **Zeb Highben**, DMA '12, was awarded the 2019 William Rainey Harper Award for Outstanding Scholarship by the faculty of Muskingum University. In July, he began a new position as director of chapel music at Duke University Chapel in Durham, NC. Most recently, he planned and led the Duke Chapel music program in a Christmas special that aired nationally on CBS television on Christmas Eve.
- **Stuart Chapman Hill**, PhD '16, is in his fourth year at Webster University in suburban St. Louis. Aurelia, his treble choir, performed at the Missouri Music Educators Association In-Service Workshop/Conference in January 2019. He published an article on teaching a collegiate songwriting course in *Research Studies in Music Education* and co-authored a chapter with Cindy Taggart in *The Oxford Handbook of Preservice Music Teacher Education*. He also published two new choral octavos, "Two Moon Songs" and "The Light That Will Lead You Home," the latter of which was selected for J.W. Pepper's "Editor's Choice" promotion.
- **Paul Hondorp**, DMA '03, led a performance of the Western Kentucky University Chorale at the Kentucky Music Educators Association State Conference in February. The ensemble was scheduled to be featured performers in the first International Choral Festival of ACDA Costa Rica in May 2020. Paul conducted Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* at Carnegie Hall for Mid-America Productions in June 2019.

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- **Sean Ivory**, MM'01, conducted his 6th and final *Messiah* with the Calvin Oratorio Society in December—the 100th anniversary of the Society. Following that he takes up an appointment as the new conductor of the Calvin Alumni Choir. His setting of “The Peace of Wild Things,” recorded by Sandra Snow and *mirabai*, was published by Walton Music.
- **Dwight Jilek**, MM '13, continues as director of choral activities at Bemidji State University and as artistic director of Magnum Chorum. The ensemble performed the Duruflé *Requiem* with orchestra for an All Souls Day Mass and concert at the historic Cathedral of St. Paul in November.
- **Andrew Kreckmann**, MM '10, is director of choral activities and choral graduate studies at Sacramento State University and on the conducting faculty of the Delaware Choral Symposium in Aix-en-Provence, France. He recently conducted the Delaware All-State Mixed Choir and has been appointed to the College Music Society Advisory Council for Performance.
- **Alison Geesey Lagan** completed her MM from MSU in spring 2019 and was engaged as director of children & youth choirs at the MSU Community Music School. In June she married Brennan Lagan.
- **Christine Le**, MM '15, led Bella Voce, her advanced treble ensemble from Orlando's Olympia High School, in a performance at the 2020 ACDA Southern Region Conference.
- **Kristina MacMullen**, MM '09, joined the choral faculty at the University of North Texas.
- **Marci Major**, MM '07, is chair and associate professor of music education at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Her treble choir Bel Canto (the oldest treble ensemble of the Kennett Symphony Children's Choirs) performed at both the NAFME Eastern Division and New Jersey Music Educators Association Conferences in 2019. She also conducted two honors choirs, presented at five conferences, and was awarded a faculty fellowship to travel to Israel in December.
- **David Mann**, MM'18, David Mann is in his second year as choral director at Stonewall Jackson High School in Manassas, Virginia. During his first year all five ensembles received superior ratings at their Virginia Music Educators Association adjudicated performance. In one particularly MSU-themed week of rehearsals, his students had the pleasure of performing for fellow Spartans Kyle Zeuch, Amy Vorhees, Cody Miller, and Meredith Bowen. Last spring, David served as a guest clinician for VMEA District XII middle school honor choir and made presentations to music education undergraduates in Wisconsin and Georgia. He continues to sing part-time as a baritone at the National Cathedral, National Shrine, and the Oregon Bach Festival.
- **Cody Miller**, DMA'18, began a new position as director of choral activities at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, where he conducts three choral ensembles and teaches secondary choral methods and advanced choral conducting.
- **Andrew Minear**, DMA '17, presented and led rehearsals of the Georgian State Choir, State Conservatoire Masters' Chamber Choir, Tbilisi State University Choir, Tbilisi Women's Choir in the Republic of Georgia and at the Universitas Pelita Harapan, in Jakarta, Indonesia as co-conductor of the Festival Singers of Florida Chamber Choir. The tour included additional performances in Jakarta, Malang, and Surabaya. He also served as conductor of the National Concert Chorus at Carnegie Hall, at the Montreat Worship and Music Conference, and at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. He served as a panelist at the 8th National Conference of the National Collegiate Choral Organization in College Park, Maryland and presented at the ACDA Southern Region Conference in March 2020. He continues as director of choral activities at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and serves as College and University Repertoire and Resources Chair for Alabama ACDA.
- **Jeremy Nabors**, MM'10, is the vocal music director at the Durham School of the Arts. His arrangement of “Dry Bones” published by Hinshaw in October. He writes: “I am enjoying my second year there as well as loving my second year of marriage.”
- **Julie Olson**, MM'06, serves as music teacher specialist and music festival manager for the Anne Arundel County Public Schools in Annapolis, Maryland.



- **Matthew Olson**, MM '09, was appointed director of choral activities at Carleton College in Minnesota and artistic director of Bach Roots Festival. He continues to serve as assistant director of The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists, with whom he will perform at the ACDA North Central/Central Region Conference in Milwaukee. Last year, he presented on democratic rehearsal methodology at the National Collegiate Choral Organization Conference in College Park, Maryland.
- **Robert Oster**, DMA '95, writes: “It’s difficult to believe I’ve been out of the public school classroom now for 10 years, and it’s been 24 years since I graduated with my DMA from MSU!” He is the founding music director of the Lakewood Area Choral Society, which celebrated its 35th anniversary, and serves as part-time organist at the First Presbyterian Church in Hastings.
- **Jonathan Palant**, DMA '07, was promoted to associate professor and director of choral activities at the University of Texas at Dallas. He continues his work as conductor of the nationally recognized Dallas Street Choir and the Credo Community Choir, travelled to the U.S. / Mexico border in January 2020 offering free concerts for asylum seekers on both sides of the border.
- **Josh Palkki**, PhD '16, led the California State University-Long Beach University Choir in a performance at the California Choral Directors Conference. He continues his research on issues surrounding LGBTQ high school singers and their teachers and presented on that topic at the 2020 ACDA Western Region Conference and at PODIUM, the National Choral Conference of Canada. He also presented at the International Gordon Institute for Music Learning Theory Conference.
- **Christopher Redfearn**, MM '04, led the Valley City State University Concert Choir on a performance tour to Italy, performing in Rome, Santa Margherita, Cremona, Scaltenigo, and Venice, including mass performances in St. Peter’s Basilica and St. Mark’s Basilica. In his role as chair of the music department he led the music department in preparing for its NASM re-accreditation visit in April 2019. He has been selected as a member of the 2019-20 Becoming a Provost Academy, an academic leadership development program run jointly by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the American Academic Leadership Institute. The program includes 36 academic leaders nationwide who participate in a year-long program that includes summer conferences in 2019 and 2020, the development of a professional experience plan, increased institutional leadership responsibilities, and networking opportunities.
- **Eric Rubinstein**, MM '12, completed his DMA from Louisiana State University and was promoted to assistant professor of choral music education at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College, in New York City. He also presented an interest session on programming for and empowering women’s/treble choirs at the ACDA Western Region Conference.
- **Karen Salvador**, MM '07, PhD '11, began a position as assistant professor of music education at Michigan State University this past fall. She is serving her last year as past president of the Michigan Music Education Association and is president-elect of NAFME’s North Central Division. In 2019, she contributed a chapter to the *Oxford Handbook of Philosophical and Qualitative Perspectives on Assessment in Music Education* and published articles in the *Music Educator’s Journal*, *Research Studies in Music Education*, and the *International Journal of Music in Early Childhood*.
- **Jennifer Sengin**, DMA '18, currently serves as the interim director of choral activities at Georgia State University in Atlanta, interim choral director at Central Presbyterian Church, and the Repertoire & Resources Chair for Youth and Student Activities for the Georgia ACDA chapter. Under her direction, the newly reinstated GSU Women’s Chorus performed at the Georgia Music Educators Association conference in January 2020. Recently, Jennifer presented at the Georgia Music Educators Association Conference and the Florida Music Educators Association Conference. She is Faculty and Administrator of the Choral Music Experience course at MSU and taught a course at Central Connecticut State University this past summer.

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- **Daniel Singer**, MM '11, is in his third season as assistant director of choruses for the Cleveland Orchestra and director of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus. He prepared members of the Youth Chorus and the Cleveland Orchestra Children's Chorus for performances of John Adams's *On the Transmigration of Souls* with the Cleveland Orchestra and prepared the Youth Chorus for the Cleveland planned premiere of Arvo Pärt's *In Principio* in March 2020. He has been director of music at Cleveland's University School since 2011 where he conducts high school chorus and orchestra.
- **Brigitte Smith**, MM '15, is associate director of choirs at San Marcos High School in San Marcos, Texas. Her tenor-bass choir was selected to perform for the Texas Music Educators Association conference. She writes: "I got to conduct my son his senior year at TMEA! Pretty exciting."
- **Bonnie Borshay Sneed**, DMA '90, appeared as conductor and clinician for the International Symposium on Singing and Song II in St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada in July 2019. She serves on the faculty of McLennan Community College in Waco, Texas.
- **Garth Starr**, MM'12, co-presented at the Michigan School Vocal Music Association Summer Workshop on gender-separated choirs for middle school. He is the choral director for the high school choir at the University of Michigan-Flint Summer Vocal Academy of Music and vocal music director for the Stone's Throw Theater in Lapeer.
- **Rob Stow**, MM'09, and his husband Jeremy recently completed the adoption of two children they have been fostering since 2017. Rob recently celebrated his 15th musical theatre production in Elk Rapids Schools, where he has taught since 2003. He continues to be a clinician with the Michigan School Vocal Association. At the conclusion of the 2018-19 school year, Rob performed a commissioned work with his choirs, *Raise Your Voice*, by Jed and Mandy Scott, spreading the message of activism and diversity in the choral music community.
- **Bridget Sweet**, MM '03, PhD'08, associate professor at the University of Illinois, is the author of *Thinking Outside the Voice Box: Adolescent Voice Change in Music Education*, published by Oxford University Press.
- **Bryce Thompson**, MM '16, began a position as director of choral activities at Columbia International University in Columbia, South Carolina. He was previously at Lake Orion (Michigan) Community High School where his Chamber Choir was selected to perform at the 2019 Michigan Youth Arts Festival and ACDA Michigan's Fall Conference 2019. They were also accepted for the 2020 ACDA Central/North Central Region Conference in Milwaukee.
- **Joel Tranquilla**, DMA '13, is in his sixth year as director of choral activities at Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia (just outside of Vancouver), where he conducts three choirs and teaches music history, lyric diction, and advanced conducting. He is the artistic director of the Valley Festival Singers of Abbotsford and the associate conductor of the Canadian Chamber Choir. Recent projects with that professional ensemble include a performance at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, recording an album entitled *Seasons of Life and Landscape*, and a tour to the Northwest Territories. In February, Joel led the TWU Chamber Choir on a tour to Japan and Taiwan.
- **Sean Vogt**, DMA'05, is director of choral activities at Clayton State University in Georgia, which includes leading the Spivey Hall Masterworks Chorus, and as director of music at Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church in Atlanta. This past year he presented at the CMAA Chant Intensive Workshop at Duquesne University and was selected to perform at the national convention of the Organ Historical Society in Dallas in July. He led the sacred music event and presented at the Iowa Choral Directors Association's Summer Symposium.
- **Francis Vu** completed his MM in choral conducting at MSU this past summer and began doctoral study in choral conducting at the University of North Texas. He served as clinician for the University of Texas Tenor-Bass, the Texas Music Educators Association Region 20 Treble Honor Choir and the TMEA Workshop at the University of Texas at Arlington. In February 2019 he became engaged to Kyle Cathlina.



- **Brent Wells**, DMA '07, led his College of Idaho Choir on a concert tour of Italy with performances in Rome, Vatican City, Florence, Pisa, Lucca, Montecatini Terme, Mantua, and Venice. He also leads the Treasure Valley Millennial Choir and Orchestra, which was scheduled to perform three concerts in New York's Carnegie Hall in July. Unfortunately, the third concert was preempted by Manhattan's largest blackout since 1977. Brett reports that "It happened about 90 minutes before showtime in our pre-concert rehearsal, so not horrible all things considered—and the street performance that followed was pretty amazing, so it was all to the good."
- **Brandon Williams**, DMA '16, is in his 4th year on the faculty at Rutgers University, where he conducts the Rutgers Voorhees Choir. The ensemble sang at Carnegie Hall last year in a concert entitled *In Her Words* and performed at the ACDA Eastern Region Conference. He is the co-recipient of a \$10,000 research grant sponsored by NAFME designed to "understand the current state of music teaching and learning at the middle level through a nationally representative survey of music teachers working in schools serving grades five through eight." His guest conducting engagements included the Charleston (South Carolina) Gospel Choir and Orchestra Christmas Concert, the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus, and the New York ACDA Treble Choir Festival. Several of his arrangements have been published by Hal Leonard and Colla Voce. He was recently appointed as the New Jersey ACDA Women's Treble Choir Repertoire & Resources Chair.
- **Robert Williams**, MM '16, celebrated "having our first twelve Iowa All-State Choir members this year" at the recently opened Liberty High School in Iowa City, where he is the founding vocal music director.
- **Tamara (Grove) Williams**, MM '14, continues as director of choirs at Traverse City's Central High School. She helped to facilitate the first annual Michigan School Vocal Music Association Choral Student Leadership Conference as part of the annual summer workshop. After fifteen years teaching choral music at the secondary level, she and husband, Lloyd are thrilled to embark on the life-long rewarding journey of parenthood! She will continue teaching in the fall of 2020.
- **Kyle Zeuch**, MM'13, DMA'17, is in his second year as director of choral activities at Lebanon Valley College, where he conducts choirs and teaches courses in conducting and music education. He is also the music director and conductor of the Harrisburg Choral Society. In the summer of 2019 he returned to the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp conducting staff. This past year he presented at the Michigan Music Conference, Ohio Music Education Association Conference, and the Maryland Music Education Association Conference.

