



President's Message

By Way of Introduction

Dr. Mark Zeigler
President NY-ACDA

Hello, my name is Mark Zeigler, the new President of New York ACDA. I would like to introduce myself and let you know about some very exciting initiatives that will be occurring in the coming months.



First, however, I need to take a moment to thank Dan Bromsted for his steadfast leadership and commitment to NY ACDA over the last year. As many of you have probably heard, Dan had to resign his Presidency this fall due to health issues. As a result, the National Office has asked me to assume the Presidency one year early. I know you will all join me in wishing Dan well and thanking him for all he has accomplished for NY ACDA.

This summer I had the privilege of attending the National Leadership Training Conference in Oklahoma City, site of the 2009 National ACDA Convention. ACDA is celebrating 50 years of serving choral conductors in 2009 and as such, has decided to hold the national convention in Oklahoma City, the location of our National ACDA Office. Oklahoma City is a truly beautiful metropolis and the convention is going to be amazing! The highlight of the convention will be a freedom concert performed on the Oklahoma City Memorial site. I hope you will consider attending the convention and help us celebrate our professional organization's 50th anniversary.

This year, the National Office is promoting an important membership drive. I recently received an email from the President of Pennsylvania ACDA challenging our state to a membership drive contest. If New York wins, the President of Pennsylvania ACDA will be required to attend our summer conference in 2009, wear an "I Love New York" T-shirt, and eat New York hotdogs. If, however, New York loses (God forbid), I will have to attend the Pennsylvania ACDA summer conference, wear an "I Love Pennsylvania" T-shirt, and eat potato salad (a fate worse than death). I need your help. I am asking everyone to invite one friend, colleague, or member of your choir(s) who is currently not an ACDA member, to consider joining our organization. Membership forms can be easily downloaded from the national ACDA website, which can be accessed using the following link: www.acdaonline.org.

Here are some ways you might be able to help us increase our membership. If your school or district has hired a new choral teacher this fall, invite him or her to join ACDA. You could also encourage members of your church or community choirs to considering become an ACDA Associate Member; a type of membership specifically designed for indi-

viduals who love singing in choirs, but are not necessarily choral conductors.

The Eastern Division President, Lynn Drafall, has provided additional incentive for the membership push. The Eastern Division state that signs up the most new member between now and October 1st will receive several hundred dollars which can put towards hiring clinicians for workshops, seminars, projects, etc. Please help New York be the leader in our national ACDA membership initiative.

Take care and have a wonderful year.

Dr. Zeigler is an Associate Professor and Choral Activities Director at Nazareth College in Rochester, New York. He also teaches Music Education courses as well as graduate and undergraduate conducting.

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at
www.nyacda.org

NY/ACDA

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NY ACDA reserves the right to approve any application for appearance and to edit all materials proposed for distribution.

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A Case for Boy Choirs

Michael Bower

NYACDA R&S Chair - Boychoirs

It is a joy to direct a choir of boys' voices. The ability for an elementary school age boy to make a beautiful sound is quite incredible! The physical structure of a male child seems to be the proper house for the production of a purely beautiful tone of great spiritual value.

There are a great many challenges indeed to reach the goal of a successful boys choir. There are books on this sort of thing and I will write one too one day! For now, I wish to focus on two aspects of boys choirs in this short article. Modern culture and the modern church have added more difficulties to this



At this writing, let's talk about recruiting boys into a choir and then keeping them! If you're willing to take the risk and are starting from scratch, try to have a boys choir separate from a girls choir. There is a sense of camaraderie and status symbol that may be achieved by this. Boys don't necessarily enjoy being associated with girls at these ages but, it CAN be done in some activities. It also changes the color of the tone to have them in the same choir. (They may be combined for SPECIAL occasions though).

At St. Agnes, we have a combined children's choir of boys and girls in 1st and 2nd grade. After 2nd grade, they may join either boys choir or girls choir. From the children's choir, they have a basic singing and choir routine foundation. Unfortunately, they may not have received a formation in classical tone so sometimes there is work to be done to repair this damage.

I also visit the Cathedral school and do a "sign-up" for a voice-hearing-no strings attached but maybe they might like to join! I have a group of 4-6 warm-up together and then sing a bit by themselves. Pretty soon one discovers if they can sing, if they begin to catch on, or if they and you might be too frustrated. I then write a letter to the parents to explore the possibility of joining choir-this takes place in the Spring so you have the summer to organize for the next year! I also advertise in the church bulletin and some directors will put a blurb in their local paper. Some children are petrified of trying out and failing. Generally, if one has try-outs, they know that it is a privilege to be in the group.

We also have a very fine public school music program in our town and the boys who try out from the schools are fine musicians with a good sense of singing. I also hold an "Open House" where the prospective new singers attend a rehearsal of the choir. They observed part of the rehearsal, have snack with us, sing along with the warm-ups and one simple catchy song, and play some of the music games which I use to teach choir singing.

OK, now they're in! How does one keep them! They have to like you, trust you, like the other boys, and just love making this

incredible sound! Of course, there must be respect and discipline. Children are terribly instinctive and if they feel that you genuinely love working with them, they will produce.

Keep the music simple in the beginning and keep the pace rehearsal up. We use an adapted version the Royal School of Church Training Scheme for discipline, attendance (coming on time!) and achievement/rewards.

Start with fun warm-ups and go to more advanced vocalizes and they progress. I try to sing at least one hymn at every rehearsal. I switch between familiar music and new material, difficult and simple, so they feel gratified but stretched too. Find your leaders in the group and get them to help you. They'll learn so much from each other especially how to make this magical sound!

We always have some sort of refreshments - it's a good time to socialize and TALK - they do love to chat! This also energizes them for the rest of the rehearsal. Teach them music reading and score construction too.

Children LOVE to perform-most of them are born actors! Church, of course is not a theatrical performance but their singing in a resonant space is deeply moving. My choir is quite gifted and we have performed in local venues and rather famous places too. A singing tour is a huge amount of work but kids and families love this and it brings them back for the trip next year. (or do a major trip every other year.) We do something as simple as walking to the local ice cream parlor during the rehearsal time after Easter Week, to a mid- winter trip to the local video arcade with food and bowling, to a evening pizza party with a special practice, to singing the National Anthem for a sports game, to singing in famous concert halls and churches. For the boys considering joining, these activities are the dangling carrot! Of course, the choir routine is not always fun and games. If you are preparing a major classical work like Handel's Messiah with an orchestra, this requires sophisticated singers, but hopefully you have formed them for 3-5 years so they are ready to sing wonderfully.

And for those special events, perhaps a SELECT GROUP is required so the boys REALLY know that it is an honor to be in your wonderful choir. This coming September, a select group of the choir will perform with famous Irish tenor, Ronan Tynan, in a benefit concert for our cathedral elementary school. You can imagine the "hype" surrounding an event of this nature where folks are paying almost a thousand dollars for some tickets. The singers know that this event is quite important and a great tool as a director to bring them to a highly motivated, well behaved, professional level.

The work is great but so rewarding! And the boys' parents will LOVE hearing them sing! They will also become more disciplined at home too. ENJOY!

In addition to his NY/ACDA Repertoire and Standards post, Michael serves as Director of the 105 voice St. Agnes Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys, Rockville Centre, New York.

Visit us at www.nyacda.org!!

NYACDA Sessions at the 2008 Winter NYSSMA Conference

“Manual Masterpieces Revisited, Part 1”

Craig Knapp, Clinician
Thursday, December 4th
4:30 - 5:45 PM
Convention Center - Highland DGEF

“Manual Masterpieces Revisited, Part 2”

Dan Bromsted, Clinician:
Thursday, December 4th
7:15 - 8:30 PM
Convention Center - Highland DGEF

“Rehearsal Strategies for Teaching African-American Gospel Music”

Dr. Anthony Leach, Clinician
Friday, December 5th
8:30 - 9:45 AM
Hyatt Grand Ballroom BC

NYACDA Executive Board Meeting

Friday, December 5th
12:00 - 12:45 PM
Hyatt Corh Board Room

“Audio/Print/Resource Materials for Gospel Choirs”

Dr. Anthony Leach, Clinician
Friday, December 5th
2:30 - 3:45 PM
Hyatt Loftus Carson

“Clarity and Communication in Conducting”

Dr. Brandon Johnson, Clinician
Saturday, December 6th
8:30 - 9:45 AM
Hyatt Grand Ballroom BC

Other Sessions of Interest

“The Anatomy of Conducting”

James Jordan, Clinician
Thursday, December 4th
4:30 - 5:45 PM
CC Highland BJ

“Voice - Your Student and Yours, Singing or Speaking”

Robert R. Vehar, Clinician
Thursday, December 4th
7:15 - 8:30 PM
Hyatt Loftus Carson

“Vocal Jazz for the Masses”

Linda Contino, Clinician
Saturday, December 6th
10:15 - 11:30 AM
Hyatt Grand Ballroom BC

“Meet in the Middle: Choral Repertoire for Middle School Voices”

Sally Albrecht, Clinician
Saturday, December 6th
10:15 - 11:30 AM
Hyatt Grand Ballroom A

“Choral Markings - Efficient Rehearsal Quality Performance”

Stephen C. Pagano, Clinician
Saturday, December 6th
1:00 - 2:15 PM
Hyatt Grand Ballroom BC

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Greetings, Church Musicians

Tim Newton

NYACDA R&S Chair - Music & Worship



I was recently reminded of the incredible diversity of church music in our state when playing at a 210th anniversary service for the Prattsville (Dutch) Reformed Church. Their choir of six women and special solo flutist were very well prepared by their minister of music, Claudia Bracaliello. Contrast this with St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in New York City where I worshiped last Easter, hearing John Scott the men and boys under John Scott sing a Langlais Mass setting. Both choirs were serving their congregations in unique ways. And these are only two of the myriad church music settings in this state.

With this in mind, I find it almost impossible to attempt a "Ten Best Anthem" list that is relevant for all. I have mine for the various denominations in which I've served (Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, non-denominational, Christian Reformed, and a few others). However, I believe knowing good web resources are at least as helpful.

With the numerous websites devoted to church music including those offered by specific denominations, I have found that I can often find new appropriate repertoire through a good web search. Here's two places I frequently start: The ChoralNet (choralnet.org) and Church Music Publishers Association (cmpamusic.org).

The ChoralNet is an indispensable resource that offers repertoire lists both by voicings and by topics suitable for various times in the church calendar. The lists have been generated by the collective wisdom of colleagues nationwide who subscribe and contribute to the Choralist. While topical listed resources can be found under the side-bar "Church Music", I have found the "Repertoire" archives are at least as helpful.

The CMPA is another excellent and more specific launching point for church music searches. While it is not necessarily complete, it includes quick links to nearly 50 member publishers where you can peruse volumes of new music.

Certainly, you have your favorite sites. I'd be interested in sharing them with the broader community of NY-ACDA church musicians. Simply email me with favorite sites, be it for resources or repertoire and I'll pass them along in the months to come.

An Interview with David Crone

Choir Director at Christ Episcopal Church, Warwick, NY

A commissioned Mass Setting (2005) for 150th anniversary of Christ Episcopal Church and a new anthem entitled Celtic Cross.

TN: In the coming months, I will offer brief interviews with church music composers residing in New York State. I want to foster the music of people who live, work and worship around us as well inspire others to attempt writing new church music.

TN: So how did you come to compose a mass setting?

DC: Well, it was commissioned by the local parish and it was sung soon after that at the Diocesan Convention of NY in 2005. My church commissioned me because I serve as Choir Director and I know the congregation, and understand the musical styles, in other words, what would be singable and what would work for them.

TN: How many music staff are at CEC Warwick?

DC: A Music Director/Organist and me. There is an 11 o'clock formal choir for higher church music and a 9 am service with smaller musical vignettes for solo or cantor with more experimental music that is not as traditional.

TN: Tell me about your mass setting.

DC: In the Episcopal Church, the mass form is a little different. There is an Introit which could also be a Kyrie; it's the same kind of music, I just used a different text for a different ceremony. There is the Gloria and the Sanctus and the Eucharist prayer sung with a memorial acclamation and an Amen. And there is an Agnus Dei. All the text is sung in English.

TN: So, there is no sung Credo. Describe the musical style and the musical forces.

DC: It's written for SATB choir with either organ, guitar or piano.

TN: So you have an Introit that you say is a Kyrie. Then the Gloria...

DC: ...which is responsorial and the congregation sings the main part "Glory to God in the Highest." The congregation sings in unison and then the middle verses are sung by the choir. The Gloria repeats between each choir section.

TN: What's the scoring for the Gloria?

DC: It's organ and percussion, meaning suspended cymbal and drum and triangle and tambourine.

TN: Is it written in mixed meter or steady meter?

DC: That one is pretty straightforward.

TN: So, if you were to describe the style of the music for the members, who would you say it mimics or sounds closest to (assuming, of course, that you also have your own voice)?

DC: Well, I was kind of turned on by Alexander Ploquin so there is a little bit of that in there.

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David Krone
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

TN: And who was Alexander Peloquin?

DC: AP was a liturgical writer out of Boston College big in the liturgical circuit in the 70s and 80s. He wrote for the Catholic Liturgy but not necessarily only for the Catholic Church (NB see: GIAMusic.com/bios/Alexander-Peloquin)

TN: How would you describe his compositional style for those that don't know his music?

DC: Well, it is certainly singable and a little agant garde, not your typical hymnody or anthem writing. He'd hook you with a memorable melody and then harmonize with slightly strange harmonies, or the way in which he used the organ or instrumentation might be different.

TN: Is there a particular work that you would recommend by Peloquin?

DC: No, but he wrote a lot of psalmody and other liturgical music. You can find his music through GIA Music Publishers.

TN: Then you have a Sanctus and Eucharistic prayer.

DC: The Eucharistic Prayer is sung by the presiding priest and the Memorial Acclamation is sung by the choir and the congregation. There is a little bit of a spoken part after the consecration where the priest is speaking and chorus is humming a part of the theme underneath him, and then the presider comes back in singing the Doxology and the chorus and congregation answer with the Amen.

TN: So what is the style of the Sanctus?

DC: it's a jubilant Sanctus! Christ is comin' into town! "Holy, Holy Holy" is sung by the choir, then the congregation and choir sings Hosanna refrain. So it's responsorial, somewhat different for a Sanctus.

TN: the Agnus?

DC: In the Agnus, the cantor sings "Lamb of God", then the congregation and chorus sings "who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us." And then the Cantor can sing "Bread of Life" and the choir and congregation answer. There are any number of tropes that can be sung depending on the time needed at the altar.

TN: And the accompaniment?

DC: Just simple organ with the Cantor singing the tropes and the answers with choir and congregation.

TN: How would you describe the style of this mass setting?

DC: it's not folk, it's not English high church. It's not Healey Willan or William Matthias. It's not John Rutter, but it's singable like Rutter's music with a memorable refrain. Rutter doesn't compose much service music, but his anthems and Glorias have great melodies. That would be something we share in common.

TN: And you have recently composed an anthem that has been performed quite a bit?

DC: I composed an anthem with text by Scott Barker, the pastor of the church, with whom I have a liturgical understanding and a good friendship as well. I think that helps us to write really neat music together. The anthem is kind of steeped in the ancient traditions with thees and thous in the lyrics. Sometimes I delve into ancient celtic folk music sounds and write arrangements with a celtic kind of flair to it. One of the new pieces we composed, Celtic Cross, has this sound. We write music that is singable and I think that is the key: our music is singable.

TN: Singable in the sense of the melodic line?

DC: Yes, a melodic line that's easy for the congregation to pick up. I have been influenced by my experience with church music in the 80s, when I was inspired by the St. Louis Jesuits, a group of composers that wrote music which was singable and responsorial and easy for a congregation to learn. I believe this is so important for church music.

TN: What is the scoring of The Celtic Cross?

DC: That's actually scored for soprano, tenor and guitar, accordion, irish drum and either a cello or violin. It has really neat Irish flair. The instrumentation was actually inspired by a Flogging Molly concert that I saw with my son.

TN: Flogging Molly?

DC: (laughing) Flogging Molly. It's an Irish punk band. They had guitars, drummer, a violinist, and an accordion player. And I said, "Oh man, that stuff really works! And that would work in church, too." The text for Celtic Cross was written by Pastor Scott and it's original text that has been used in our Good Friday service when we are gathered around the altar in front of the cross. It's very poignant.

TN: Would it work at other times of the year? Is it a short anthem?

DC: Oh yeah. It's about 3 minutes. And I'm writing an SATB arrangement of it for a performance at St John the Divine.

TN: How did you arrange to have it performed at St. John the Divine?

DC: Well, I have a friend who is going to be ordained there and she asked if there could be some music from her home parish at the ceremony and the church agreed to it. And the piece that she happens to love the most is Celtic Cross. So the CEC Choir will be performing during her ordination.

TN: What's your musical education?

DC: My undergrad education was at the Berklee College of Music where I studied jazz composition, but it was while I was at BCM that I got an incredible amount of experience working at St. Anne's Catholic Church in Back Bay. From there, I enrolled in the Choral Conducting masters at NEC, then transferred to Temple for a Masters in Choral Conducting under Alan Harler. I did my doctorate at Seton Hall in Education.

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Welcome New Members

Below are listed just some of the newest members of NYACDA. Welcome!!

Alicia Kailee Bradford Rochester, NY	Tina Lauro Farmingdale, NY
Jeffrey Cannon Chafee, NY	Ruth Elaine Rice Delmar, NY
Nancy Casellini Clifton Park, NY	Jessica Stevens Rochester NY
Cecilia V, Hayden Oyster Bay, NY	Carol Ann Else-Sussdorff Diamond Point, NY
Katelyn Marie Keating Rochester, NY	Jennifer Tibbetts Huntington, NY
Ann Marie Kmetz New Windsor NY	

David Krone

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

TN: And where are presently conducting besides CEC?

DC: I am Director of Choral Activities at Monroe - Woodbury HS in Central Valley, NY. I also direct the Pro Arte Chorale in Bergen County, NJ, and Jubilate Youth Chorus in Orange County, NY. We just started the Youth Chorus and it has grown for 14 to 35 overnight. And we performed at St. Paul's in NYC last year, the sister chapel of Trinity Wall Street.

TN: So how do we obtain your music?

DC: Well, so far we publish all our own music.

TN: How would someone purchase copies of the music?

DC: They can email your interest in the Mass to the church, which is office@ChristChurch.org. We actually offered this after the convention and several people emailed the church.

TN: Great. And we hope you'll keep inspired to create new compositions for the church.

ACDA Eastern Division Well Represented at Upcoming National Convention

Message from the ACDA Eastern Division President

Greetings, Colleagues:

The ACDA Eastern Division offers congratulations to the following members participating in the National Conference in Oklahoma City:

- Anne Howard Jones, conductor of the Convention Concert (Vaughan Williams "Dona Nobis Pacem" and Argento commission)
- Christine Bass, High School Honor Choir conductor
- Fernando Malvar-Ruiz, American Boychoir
- Scott Tucker, Cornell University Glee Club
- James John, "The Relationship between composer, poet, and painter in Brahms "Nanie."
- Paul Head, Assistant Convention chair
- Rod Caldwell, Reading Session chair
- Alan Rowe, On-site Exhibits co-chair

...and others we may not know about!

We're proud of all of you!

Also, by now you hopefully have received the materials via US mail regarding the conference. For your information, all of the information is also posted online at www.acda.org. (note new address). In addition, you will find instructions regarding exhibiting, advertising, and hosting receptions. Our Eastern Division reception has been scheduled for Friday, March 6 at 9:00pm.

Please note that the national conference schedule begins on Wednesday morning, March 4. Since the Oklahoma City airport is relatively small, I urge you to book your flights as soon as possible!

I hope to see you there!

Cordially,
Lynn Drafall
Eastern Division President

The ongoing repayment of a debt greater than my student loans...

Brandon Johnson

NYACDA R&S Chair - Youth and Student Activities

I remember with pristine clarity my first years of teaching and conducting: the excitement with which I attacked each task, the countless hours spent preparing, the apprehension of greeting students on the first day. All of the disappointments and successes were magnified as I worked tirelessly wondering if I had the "right stuff" to succeed. I would stay late at school to make sure everything was perfect, and then skulk home to fall asleep in front of the tube. The thrill of victory... the agony of defeat... never were these words more visceral than in those first years of teaching.



It was not long before my tank was running low. My musical and emotional battery needed to be recharged. I took refuge in two ways. I treasured my relationships with peers from college who were going through similar issues in their first positions. We would talk on the phone, almost nightly, running through problems and possible solutions. We would laugh and cry together lessening the difficulties and receiving comfort knowing that others were working through similar issues. No matter how bad your situation, there was always another who was dealing with something more difficult or ridiculous. Another oasis of help was my affiliation with ACDA. My former high school director encouraged me to join in the ACDA summer conference before my first year of teaching. I left that summer conference confident and filled with resource materials and excited with new repertoire. As my battery began to drain there were concerts, and conventions. Mentoring relationships developed and... I survived. Thus began my life long affiliation with ACDA. They were there for me when I most needed them and I owe a debt of gratitude that can only be paid forward.

I cherish my roll as the NYACDA Youth and Student chairperson. It allows me to give back what others so generously gave to me. I get to assist the preparation of students and the work with our new teachers as they transition from college into our esteemed profession.

Four of the most pressing professional needs for students and young conductors are: conducting opportunities, mentoring relationships, networking prospects, & musical and emotional rejuvenation. ACDA has opportunities in each of these areas and we encourage everyone to participate in securing the future of our profession. If you are a student or young teacher please don't wait contact me immediately so that we can get you connected and supported. Why would you try to do it alone when there are so many successful role models that can help you find your own voice in our profession?

Consider these resources as a way to connect with other young conductors through NYACDA:

Facebook Group

In an effort to connect student and young conductors to one another I started a Facebook group entitled NYACDA Youth and Student discussion group for students and young conductors. If you are on Facebook, jump on board and let's get to know each other. Contact me if you have any trouble getting involved.

Mentoring Program

Also beginning this year I would like to establish a mentoring program for new teachers. There is nothing more valuable for a young teacher than advice from a trusted mentor. Contact me to get involved.

December 6, 2008 ACDA-NYSSMA Winter Conference

For the fifth consecutive year a conducting master-class entitled: Clarity and Communication will be held at the ACDA and NYSSMA winter conference. It has proven to be a valuable and popular event and will be held SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6ST at 8:30 AM. Selected students from NYACDA student chapters will conduct a selected choral ensemble and receive instruction from Dr. David Fryling and Dr. Brandon Johnson. Come and sharpen your conducting skills.

March 4-7 2009 ACDA National Convention

There is nothing more valuable for a young musician that developing the inner ear of what is possible. Go and hear these wonderful choirs and the go to sessions with many of our most respected peers. This is a necessity not a luxury.

April 2, 2009 Second Annual Conducting Symposium

Last year we began this event with a splash. Weston Noble and J. Donald Dumpson were our invited guest speakers. This year we will again bring wonderful guests to guide and shape our young conductors. Watch for more information on this event.

The Young Conductor of the Year Award

This award has been initiated to recognize the fine work of our most talented young conductors. If you would like to nominate a fine young professional (less than ten years experience) please send your nominations to Mark Zeigler, president of NYACDA.

In addition to his R&S duties, Brandon is Director of Choral Activities at The Greatbatch School of Music at Houghton College.

**Don't miss the
2009
ACDA National Convention**

**March 4-7, 2009
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

**"Transforming the Future
of Choral Music"**

MEET TONY LEACH

Penelope Cruz

NYACDA R&S Chair - Women's Choirs

Dr. Tony Leach will headline two NY ACDA-sponsored sessions at the NYS-SMA Winter 2008 Conference in Rochester. Many of us will remember hearing and seeing his Essence of Joy ensemble perform at the ACDA Eastern Division conference in February of 2006. Essence of Joy is a Penn State choral ensemble made up of a diverse group of graduate and undergraduate students devoted to performing music of the African and African-American traditions. Their captivating and honest performance caught the attention of many and spurred us on to bringing him to the 2006 Winter Conference. His sessions on accessible and useable music from the gospel tradition were filled with energy, inspiration, and participants—standing room only and then some! His 2008 sessions on gospel music repertoire and rehearsal techniques promise to be as rewarding. Certainly my choir's experiences working with Tony Leach have been both joyful and beneficial!



The White Plains High School Choir and I have established a relationship with Dr. Leach during the last couple of years that has had a profound effect on all of us. After I saw and heard Tony's work a few times, it became apparent to me that my students, some of whom come from gospel traditions and some of whom do not, should get a chance to work with a conductor who is a master of this style. I invited Tony to do a brief residency in gospel music with us. After the choir prepared three pieces that I had chosen from those that Tony had presented during his 2006 NYSSMA session, he came to our school of a couple of days of rehearsal, culminating in a concert performance.

Indeed, all of us benefitted from being encouraged, prodded, and challenged by the music-making we did with him. The most remarkable aspect of his residency with us was his efficacy in non-verbal teaching. Most obviously, his facility at the piano, particularly for gospel style, immediately communicated style and articulation in that most effective, non-verbal musical manner. His constant eye contact and engaging personality made each student feel as if he or she was being listened to and for. Tony, as every great musician does, encourages the whole physical self in the act of music-making. In demonstrating that so comfortably and enthusiastically to my students, he allowed all my students to find their own best way to move and really enter into the music.

It was intimidating to me to turn my choir over to Tony for his praise and criticism, but in seeing my students work with another conductor, I was able to learn just what how much my students are capable of—in performance and in learning, and I (and my choir) were rewarded by having all the things I've been asking them to do validated by an 'outside authority.' If you can find a conductor you trust, give your choir over to them when opportunity strikes because the learning to be had is both profound and steadfast.

This experience opened my eyes to how much little things can make your choir that much better. You can see that the quality of time spent practicing really pays off. – Maria, WPHS soprano

Almost a year after the initial project with Tony, we were fortunate to be invited by him to participate in the Festival of the African-American Spiritual, where choirs from Penn State as well as high school choirs from the Northeast region participate in clinics,

master classes, and concerts focusing on spirituals. Each choir prepares a number of spirituals for clinic and performance, Tony commissions arrangements of spirituals for performance by Essence of Joy, and the high school choirs also learn and perform selections as a massed choir.

This festival was another remarkable growth opportunity. We were eager to work with Dr. Leach again and demonstrate what we had been encouraged to do during his residency. The choir also had the opportunity to hear exemplary high school and college performances. The impact of that opportunity can not be over-estimated, as one of my students commented:

We were given a glimpse into our lives as future college students by getting a chance to watch how far other students in the Penn State Choirs have come. Our experiences as audience members were nothing compared to our chance to perform and learn from directors with different choirs with different styles. It is always fascinating to see what else is out there, beyond the walls of our school. -- Pam, WPHS alto

The opportunity to focus only on spirituals: their history, meaning, story, and the various songs and arrangements enabled the WPHS Choir to learn about a genre that is both unfamiliar to some, yet a crucial part of American culture. The students heard how different arrangers, conductors, and choirs brought out different musical and vocal aspects of the spirituals. My students had many opportunities to listen, compare, integrate ideas and perform while taking part in the Penn State festival and took away with them a deeper understanding of the spiritual, of their own choral community, and of music-making.

Every time I work with another conductor, watch another conductor, and sing with other people, I always come out of it feeling like a different singer, musician, and student. This trip not only reassured my desire for a career in music but was an amazing learning experience. I learned how much discipline can make a difference; not only individually, but more importantly, group discipline. I enjoyed working with other conductors. I felt like I didn't want to leave because they were challenging me at a level that I wish I could always work at. I learned more about music, how important it is, and what it means. I learned that each piece of music is somebody's story and how we as a choir must tell it.

—Lani, WPHS soprano

Tony brings to his work a thorough understanding of how to teach and effectively communicates a deep musicality—regardless of genre. (Ask any of my students about his work with them on Randall Thompson's Alleluia!) We were all inspired by our work with him and by his commitment to educating singers, teachers, and choirs in the music of the African-American traditions he has spent much of his life examining and performing.

Dr. Anthony Leach is a professor at the Penn State University where he teaches courses in choral music education and conducts the University Choir and Essence of Joy. A native of Washington, D.C., Leach has fourteen years of teaching experience in the public schools of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York. Leach is national chairman of the Multicultural and Ethnic Perspectives Repertoire and Standards Committee for the American Choral Directors Association.

Penelope Cruz is the choir director at White Plains High School and serves as the R&S chair for Women's Choirs for NY-ACDA and on the NYSSMA Diversity committee.