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TIME OF CORONAVIRUS
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CORONAVIRUS IS NO MATCH FOR CCDA’S INTREPID MEMBERS. SEE INSIDE FOR RESOURCES AND SUPPORT! PHOTO BY MICHAEL LOPEZ.
FROM THE PRESIDENT’S PEN:
THE CALM DURING THE STORM

None of us thought we would be here at this moment. Sitting at home, away from our choirs, avoiding most human contact turns out to be just as difficult as we might imagine it to be. I cannot say, “I’m doing great,” or “I’m doing the best that I can.” I think I’m simply doing what I can right now for my singers and for myself. That’s all I have at the moment.

Conductors and teachers are planners (or control freaks, depending on your perspective). We don’t deal well with uncertainty. This lack of control is creating anxiety and stress for our singers and for us. Broadway legend Stephen Sondheim depicts our current frustrations perfectly: “Art, in itself, is an attempt to bring order out of chaos.” Currently we aren’t able to create art in the ways we are accustomed; thus chaos is the new norm for many of us. We are desperately craving normalcy, hoping to be back in front of our choirs and performing for our audiences. Alas, it’s now our job to be flexible and figure out how to move ahead. I have lots of questions and very few answers. I’m incredibly thankful to all of my friends and colleagues in this profession who are my lifelines right now. We are all feeling the aesthetic arts, and the human spirit is elevated to a broader understanding of itself through study and performance in the aesthetic arts, and

WHEREAS,
SERIOUS CUTBACKS IN FUNDING AND SUPPORT HAVE STEADILY ERODED STATE INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTRY,

BE IT RESOLVED
THAT ALL CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES ACTIVELY VOICE THEIR AFFIRMATIVE AND COLLECTIVE SUPPORT FOR NECESSARY FUNDING AT THE LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT, TO ENSURE THE SURVIVAL OF ARTS PROGRAMS FOR THIS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

CALIFORNIA CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION EMPOWERS CHORAL MUSICIANS TO CREATE TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES FOR CALIFORNIA’S DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

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UPCOMING EVENTS
CCDA SUMMER CONFERENCE AT ECCO
JULY 26-29, 2020 (OAKHURST)

Jeffrey Benson is Director of Choral Activities at San Jose State University. The Washington Post has his choirs for singing with an exquisite blend, suavity of phrasing, confident musicianship and fully supported tone…that would be the envy of some professional ensembles.
He is also the Artistic Director of Peninsula Cantare, a community choir based in Palo Alto. He received his Masters degree and his Doctorate in Choral Conducting/Music Education from the Florida State University and his Bachelors degree in Music Education from New York University.

California Choral Directors Association, an Affiliate of the American Choral Directors Association

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On the cover: Members of the CCDA Coastal Honor Choir take a rehearsal break. Photo by Robin Peters, courtesy of Genevieve Tep.
My name is Eliza, and I don’t want to do a virtual choir.

Don’t get me wrong: I’m impressed and inspired by all the online choral creations I’ve seen during and before our current crisis, and heaven knows I’ve seen a lot of them, since friends send me links to them roughly every ten minutes now to ask if I’ve ever heard of virtual choir. I have enormous admiration for all those directors—including some of you, surely—who have made this medium work for your singers. And I’m grateful that our technological age has made online choir an option, especially now, as we face a new reality that none of us prepared for and none of us wanted.

But virtual choir captures precisely none of the things that made me fall in love with choral singing. As a kid in a rigorously musical household, I learned the basic grammar of harmony by singing four-part Christmas carols around the piano, reveling for successfully holding my own part by the magical sound of the whole. A few years later, in children’s choir, I discovered the joys of beautifully matched vowels and unified releases, along with the somewhat less refined (but no less formative) pleasures of choir tours and four-in-a-room pre-teen giddiness at Travelodges across the Midwest. In college I immersed myself irretrievably in the counterpoint of Bach, the inner workings of Brahms, and the vast sound-spaces of Mahler, all accessed through the shared work of listening, anticipating, reacting, sharing, and daring.

Choral singing is a corporate endeavor in the true, non-capitalistic sense of the word: a pursuit in which our individual bodies act as one body toward a common goal. We became one body toward a common goal. We became the true, non-capitalistic sense of the word: a pursuit in which our individual bodies act as one body toward a common goal. We became one body toward a common goal. We became

So what am I doing with my choral ensembles for the rest of the year? That’s still a work in progress, and one that my students will play a role in determining, but I know for sure that we’ll use this time to practice the skills that sometimes take a back seat when we’re busy recording repertoire for a performance.

We’re going to listen to a lot of great music together, some chosen by me and some chosen by them. We’re going to analyze scores together, and discuss how a future choral conductor might design a rehearsal plan for them. We’ll talk about stylistic choices and poetic interpretation.

Maybe we’ll have a contest to see who can create the best “join choir” meme for the fall, when we all hope we’ll be ready to recruit new members again. There will definitely be some George Michael and Heart videos in the curriculum, because my singers (with the exception of the “lifelong learners” in the group) are lamentably unfamiliar with the hits of the 1980s. We’ll watch some virtual choir videos together, too; we already have.

Most of all, I will listen to my students, because what they need from me and from all of us is love, support, understanding, and the basic grammar of harmony. As a kid in a rigorously musical household, I learned the basic grammar of harmony by singing four-part Christmas carols around the piano, reveling for successfully holding my own part by the magical sound of the whole. A few years later, in children’s choir, I discovered the joys of beautifully matched vowels and unified releases, along with the somewhat less refined (but no less formative) pleasures of choir tours and four-in-a-room pre-teen giddiness at Travelodges across the Midwest. In college I immersed myself irretrievably in the counterpoint of Bach, the inner workings of Brahms, and the vast sound-spaces of Mahler, all accessed through the shared work of listening, anticipating, reacting, sharing, and daring.

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Coping with COVID-19
Resources and strategies for conductors and teachers

Virtual learning
Taking your choir rehearsals online

Choruses are in for a rather long dry spell.
The CDC has recommended that U.S. event organizers cancel all mass gatherings with more than 50 people for at least the next eight weeks. And many other countries, if not already at that point, are undoubtedly headed in that direction. The whole world could soon be on a long choral hiatus. For choruses canceling their spring season, this means they could potentially be on break until the fall or later.

Luckily, we live in the age of technology, so the good news is that it’s relatively easy for us to stay connected virtually. How can choruses move from a physical rehearsal model to an online one? We’ll discuss how to do just that in this article.

It’s Okay to Take a Breath
The first thing I want to address is that it’s okay to take a break. This is an incredibly stressful and scary situation in which we find ourselves. It’s one that almost no one alive has ever experienced.

It’s okay to not have all of the right answers or solutions right away. It’s okay to need some time to think. It’s also okay to give you and your singers a break. People need time to organize their lives into this new structure and they might need you to encourage them to do just that.

By Tori Cook
Ultimately, whether you choose to move to a virtual chorus model is up to you. And you should do what feels right for you and your chorus.

For those of you interested in what a virtual environment would look like, read on.

**Why Might You Host Virtual Chorus Rehearsals?**

Fact: virtual rehearsals will never be the same as in-person rehearsals. But they can provide a way for you to sing together and build your choral community in lieu of physical connection.

Here are a few reasons you may want to do virtual rehearsals with your choir:

- **To keep the sense of community.** We’ve talked a lot about why building your choral community is important. In a time where we’re being asked to isolate, the sense of community feels even more vital. Social interactions are good for your soul and can help your singers feel like they’re not in this alone.

- **To keep making music.** Music is a language. A language that requires constant practice to stay fluent. You can use the time in virtual rehearsals to continue building vocal skills and musicianship with your singers.

- **To keep things feeling as normal as possible.** With all of the information in the news and media, it can be difficult to stay calm. But, we have to try.

- **To prepare for a future concert.** At this point, it seems pretty unlikely that any concerts in the U.S. will be taking place over the next few months. While it might seem a little silly to prepare music for something not immediately coming up, remember that there is still a future ahead! Perhaps you’re preparing for something in the summer or beyond.

- **To keep making music as a language.** It requires constant practice to stay fluent.

**How to Host Virtual Rehearsals**

Okay, so on to the good stuff: the technical components of planning a virtual rehearsal.

It’s nearly impossible to run an online choir rehearsal in which you are able to hear all singers. This is largely due to issues with internet connectivity, lag time, etc.

- **The chat box also allows people to “raise hands” and type out questions to the host.** The host can then answer these questions during the virtual rehearsal without needing to unmute participants.

- **There are several view options which will allow participants to see each other and/or the host.** You really feel the sense of community with this platform! It is important to note that in Zoom’s free version there is a 40-minute time limit on meetings. However, the company is eliminating their time limits in light of COVID-19 for educational institutions. While this seems to apply primarily to schools, you can reach out to them directly to request that the time limit be removed.

- **Apart from Zoom, there are other video conferencing tools you can consider.** These tools include, but are not limited to, Facebook Live, YouTube Live, Google Hangouts or Google Meet, Facebook Messenger, Webex, GoToMeeting, FreeConference, or Join.

Let’s get started with planning your first virtual rehearsal.

1. **Identify your host(s)**

   First, you’ll want to decide who is leading your virtual rehearsals. Your host will be the person who is responsible for instructing the participants in the call, collecting and answering any questions via the chat box, and muting/unmuting your participants.

   You’ll likely want the host to be your primary musical leader—whether typically runs your choir rehearsals—or other musical leaders such as section leaders. This is simply because you want your virtual rehearsal to reflect your in-person rehearsals as much as possible.

   You’ll also likely want your host to be tech-savvy—someone who can get the virtual rehearsal up and running without much effort.

   Work with your organization to determine who your host(s) need to be and whether your video conferencing tool will work for their needs.

2. **Find the right video conferencing tool**

   A video conferencing tool is required for operating virtual rehearsals. These tools allow participants to call in on any device with the option to turn on/off video. They also give hosts tools to effectively manage their participants—such as the essential ability to mute participants.

   **Zoom seems to be the platform of choice for most choruses looking to host virtual rehearsals.** People choose Zoom for a variety of reasons:

   - **It is free for up to 100 participants,** so it’s affordable and perfect for most chorus sizes.

   - **It’s easy to use and reliable.**

   - **It does allow two-way conversations,** so you communicate together as a group. However, it also gives the host the ability to mute all participants so you won’t get overwhelmed from everyone talking at the same time.

3. **Establish your process**

   We’ve all been in that awkward conference call—people talking over each other, people coming in late and introducing themselves, or loud noises in the background that make it impossible to hear. Establishing your virtual rehearsal process can help avoid these issues.

   Kathy E. Schneider from the New York City Bar Chorus recently held successful virtual sectionals. She shares her process with us:

   - **Each virtual sectional was scheduled for 30 minutes, one after the other.**

   - **Singers received Zoom meeting links (placed in their section-specific calendar events on their Chorus Connection account) and clicked on them to log in.** They were able to use either the Zoom website or the Zoom mobile app to video conferencing.

   - **Kathy started the rehearsal with all participants unmuted.** Everyone was able to say hello and chat for a bit. Then, Kathy laid out the ground rules before muting everyone to begin work on the first piece.

   - **Kathy worked through the music by playing piano, singing, or both.** Her iPad was standing left of the piano bench for the video.

   - **While Kathy rehearsed each piece, she would periodically watch the chat box and answer any questions while they came in.**

   - **At the end of each piece or at a good stopping moment,** Kathy would unmute all participants and answer any incoming questions before moving on.

   - **She would then mute them all again before working on the next piece.**

   - **At the end, Kathy unmuted everyone to wrap up and say goodbye.**

   This process worked well for Kathy with minimal issues so it’s a good starting place if you’re new to virtual rehearsals!

4. **Do a trial run**

   You can use almost any device to host a video conference—laptop, tablet, or mobile. You’ll primarily want to ensure that your singers can both see and hear your host clearly. Choosing a device with a good microphone and good camera is key.

   Set up the device so that it is relatively close to your host and captures them from the waist up. You’ll also want the camera primarily pointed towards their face so your singers can see and hear them clearly. You may need to get a stand for the device in order to position it in this way.

   Gather a couple of people to do a trial run with you before your first scheduled virtual rehearsal.

5. **Communicate to your singers**

   Once you have everything planned out, you’ll want to notify your singers. In your communications, include the following:

   - **Information about the date and time of event.**

   - **Recommended login time (plan for approximately 5-10 minutes to get the application launched and working properly).**

   - **Clear instructions on how to access and launch the Zoom (or other video conferencing) application.** Send the specific meeting URL links in a calendar invite to make it easy for participants to click and join. Note: Mobile users should download the Zoom app ahead of time.

   - **Whom to contact if your singers are experiencing technical difficulties or are unable to join.** Explain the process as you determined above.
Remind people they will likely be muted most of the time and to email any initial questions ahead of time.

6. Run your virtual rehearsal
Now, it’s time to run your virtual rehearsal!
Plan to have your host start getting ready at least 15 minutes prior to the start time so there is ample time to get everything set up. You may wish to send a reminder to your singers approximately 15 minutes before the virtual rehearsal starts as well.
After your rehearsal, write up any challenges you had and work to address them before the next one!

UNEXPECTED BENEFITS OF VIRTUAL REHEARSALS
While you might look at virtual rehearsals as second-best to physical rehearsals, there are, perhaps surprisingly, some benefits that come from them. Kathy Schneider shares with us some of the unexpected benefits that she experienced:

- **Singers can focus on individual progress and self-evaluation.** While the host can’t hear everyone singing and offer feedback, each singer can do that on their own. Singers found that they were able to focus individually on their own sound and self-reflect on how they can improve. Kathy says, “They had to trust themselves. It really challenged singers to take responsibility for their own performance.”

- **Everyone can see the musical leader.** Because the camera is close to the host’s face, singers were able to see things more closely than they likely would have in rehearsals. For example, things like vowel shapes can be modeled clearly up close.

- **Musical leaders can focus on vocal modeling.** Usually musical leaders conduct a chorus, but they don’t often sing with them. The virtual rehearsals allowed for the host to sing the part with the choristers, helping to demonstrate vocal quality and technique throughout the rehearsal.

- **The rehearsals felt highly efficient.** Without the constant chitchat that we often get in rehearsals, the rehearsal can run more efficiently. Participants are muted so the host can really take the rehearsal at their own pace.

- **It provided everyone the opportunity to participate.** Even if someone was sick and couldn’t come to rehearsal, they could participate by listening and watching. There is also the opportunity to record these and share the recordings at a later date.

- **People got to show their personalities a bit.** Kathy says it was fun to see everyone working on their own vocal parts. Some people’s pets even made an appearance! And who doesn’t need an adorable dog to look at right now?! Kathy’s singers also had positive feedback about the experience:
  - “It’s a great temporary solution.”
  - “I love the opportunity to connect. It’s great to see people and chat.”
  - “It’s like having a personal voice lesson.”
  - “It’s so good to be back with the family.”
  - “I felt so connected just seeing everyone’s faces.”

You may feel like virtual rehearsals are a “backup” plan only, but they may be worth experimenting with to see if you experience different positive outcomes.

ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE TO VIRTUAL REHEARSALS
If virtual rehearsals aren’t in your wheelhouse, you might want to try something a bit easier. Martha Leonhardt, Executive Director of the Tacoma Youth Chorus, and her staff are keeping everything relatively simple to start.
Tacoma Youth Chorus has several ensembles, each with their own music director. Every week, the music director will create a weekly lesson plan accompanied by musical tracks or an audio recording for their singers. The assignments are uploaded to Chorus Connection. An email is then sent to the parents requesting that they login to access these assignments.

COVID-19 is continuing to spread and things are changing at a rapid pace. Martha says, “We don’t know how it’s going to progress. So we don’t know if this will be a 3-week solution, a 6-week solution, or a long-term one. I think this process will continue to evolve.”

In the meantime, Tacoma Youth Chorus is planning ahead. They’ve already added four Saturday rehearsals to their existing rehearsal schedule for their late-spring performances. They’re also monitoring the situation as it changes and will adjust course as needed.

So if you don’t plan to have virtual rehearsals, you can still do weekly assignments and communications with your singers if you wish. There are plenty of tools to share resources and stay connected with your singers as you navigate this tricky situation.
You’ve worked for months on a concert. Your singers have been practicing their music day and night. You’ve spent money marketing the performance and countless hours trying to plan every last operational detail. Then something like COVID-19 forces you or your venue to cancel the performance.

It’s easy in situations like this to rage and throw every object in sight. But take a moment. You have an opportunity here: to build trust with your audience and to show them that your organization is capable of handling crises. Once you’ve had a moment to gather yourself, what are some things you can do?

Disclaimer: The information provided here does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information, content, and materials are for general informational purposes only.

**Set Your Primary Goals**

Let’s start with a few primary goals you might have throughout this process. As you work through exactly what to do, stay focused on:

- Building trust with your singers and ticket buyers.
- Doing everything you can, within reason, to save the event and to also keep your singers, staff, volunteers, and ticket buyers safe.
- Minimizing financial loss—saving as much money as you can or redirecting funds towards a future performance.
- Keeping spirits high.

Add any other goals you have to this list.

**Check Your Contracts**

Before you notify anyone about the cancellation, check your vendor contracts. Consider the following:

- What is listed in the cancellation policy or force majeure clause?
- Which parties are responsible for eating any deposits or pre-paid expenses?
- Will the chorus be responsible for paying any additional fees?
- Are there any clauses that discuss event postponement? And does the contract stipulate whether funds can be applied towards a future date?

Using this information, put a plan in place before contacting your vendors.

**Notify the Board**

The moment you are facing cancellation, as a result of your own decision or not, the first notification you should make is likely to your board. Let them know the scope of the situation and what you plan to do about it. Because you’ll need to move quickly, you’ll likely want to give them a heads-up that you will be working with vendors to either reschedule the concert or cancel the bookings. Provide an opportunity for board members to give feedback but let them know that time is of the essence and you have to move forward with your plans as soon as possible.

**By Tori Cook**
WORK WITH VENDORS TO WEIGH YOUR OPTIONS

Next, work with your vendors, guest musicians/presenters, and co-hosts to weigh your options for the concert.

Option 1: Postpone the Concert

Rescheduling or postponing the concert is another feasible option to consider. This allows your singers a chance to perform the music they’ve worked on, gives your audience members a chance to hear the repertoire, and enables you to get money back on your market time.

When possible, it’s a good idea to have a backup date in place if you think your concert will likely be canceled (even if it has not been canceled yet). This way, when the concert gets canceled, you’ll be ready to go with a new date.

If you don’t have one already, check with your venue, vendors, and guest musicians to see if there is another future date that could work for the performance. You may even need to consider different venues or vendors.

If you can find a suitable date for all parties, lock it in (getting board approval as needed). See if the parties can move any deposits or monies pre-paid for the concert and apply those funds to the new concert.

Check to see if your box office will allow you to transfer ticket sales to the new date. If this is possible, when you inform your ticket buyers about the cancellation, you can offer to automatically transfer their ticket to the new date or to process a refund if they cannot make the date.

If you can’t quickly find a suitable date for all parties, you’ll need to make the call to either notify your ticket buyers about the cancellation, you can offer to automatically transfer their ticket to the new date or to process a refund if they cannot make the date.

For those requesting refunds, do you plan to offer alternative options to support the organization - such as requesting a donation in lieu of the ticket refund? Work with your marketing team or publicist to draft up appropriate messaging or a press release for all relevant parties.

NOTIFY YOUR SINGERS

Let your singers know as soon as your messaging is ready. If you are rescheduling the performance, find out which singers can perform on the new concert date. Ensure that you have a balanced roster before notifying the public of the change.

If you are canceling the performance, let your singers know about the cancellation and when you will notify ticket buyers and the general public. Ask them to keep the information private until a formal announcement has been made. Once the announcement has been made, they can then share that information publicly.

NOTIFY YOUR TICKET BUYERS

Send an email to your ticket buyers about the changes being made to the performance.

If you are rescheduling the performance, include information about the new concert date and how ticket transfers and/or refunds will work. If you’re giving your ticket buyers the option to request a refund or transfer their ticket, you may wish to include a link to a survey which will help make sure every ticket buyer has been notified and keep you organized.

If you do decide to refund ticket purchases, either as a result of cancellation or postponement, include information about the process for your ticket buyers. Include your standard refund policy, any changes you’ve made to it, how refunds should be requested (if applicable), how the funds will be returned, and when they can expect to see the refund. Include your contact information for additional questions.

When possible, try to include ways that your ticket buyers can stay engaged with you and support your organization during this time. In the event of a concert cancellation due to emergencies (such as COVID-19), perhaps ask your ticket buyers to consider converting their ticket sale into a donation to the organization to help cover your operational losses. You may also want to request that they follow you on social media or subscribe to emails for updates on future performances.

NOTIFY THE PUBLIC

The most invested parties have now been informed. It’s time to notify the general public. Use your marketing channels to get the word out. Remember to keep the messaging consistent across all channels to avoid confusion. Here are some marketing channels to update with the new information:

- Website and landing pages
- Social media (organic and ads)
- Email marketing
- Digital ads
- Event calendars
- Ticket sales or venue box office pages
- Other more specific channels that you used to promote the performance

Look ahead to any pre-planned and upcoming marketing, promotions, or advertisements for the concert. Ensure that the messaging on those are updated accordingly.

NEGOTIATE PAID MARKETING FOR FUTURE PERFORMANCES

When you cancel a performance, one type of funding that you won’t get back is any money you’ve already spent marketing the performance.

If your concert has been canceled due to anything listed in the force majeure clause, ‘acts of God’ or otherwise, you can use this to your advantage in marketing negotiations.

Check in with any companies in which you have purchased advertising space for the now canceled performance. Make a plea to them to provide discounted or free advertising for your next performance(s). Some of them may just be willing to cut you a break! It’s worth a shot, anyway.

In the event many arts organizations in your community have had to cancel their events due to an emergency (as such is the case with COVID-19), maybe you can even pioneer an initiative to alert the media asking them to help your entire arts community get back on their feet. You could be a hero here.

THANK EVERYONE AND STAY CONNECTED

Throughout this entire process, it’s important to keep spirits high and maintain the great relationships you’ve built along the way. You can do this by staying connected regularly and showing your appreciation.

Remember to thank everyone for their time and great contributions towards the concert. Performances take a lot of work to plan, and many people have put blood, sweat, and (by now) probably a lot of tears to make your concert happen. Pat yourself on the back and thank all those who contributed during the planning process.

Maintain regular communications with your patrons about what is happening regarding future performances or programs. Always include ways that people can stay engaged with and support the organization.

Find other opportunities to come together as a community. As a result of COVID-19, people are staying at home. Consider whether you can host virtual rehearsals or virtual community sings. Can you host an appreciation pizza party after all is said and done? Can you plan a large-scale mass singing event to bring the community together when all is well? Get creative and stay connected with your singers, patrons, and other local arts organizations.

Let’s all come together as a community to help each other solve problems, stay connected, and support each other in whatever ways we can.

You are strong. You are resilient. You can get through this. ■

TORI COOK IS THE DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING AT CHORUS CONNECTION. SHE IS THE FORMER MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE HARBORLIGHT SHOW CHORUS OUTGOING PRESIDENT OF CHORUS PRO MUSICA, AND SINGS WITH THE NANGLEWOOD FESTIVAL CHORUS IN BOSTON. WHEN NOT MAKING MUSIC SHE DAYDREAMS ABOUT ADOPTING A GOLDEN RETRIEVER PUPPY AND SCUBA DIVING TO EXOTIC LOCATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.
On loss, community, and taking a breath

What a month it’s been. I know many of you must be feeling as emotionally and mentally drained as I am. I have personally been involved in the cancellations of 17 concerts in just three days: two with the choirs I perform with, and the remaining 15 with the non-profit I manage. At least six more face further cancellation as the situation develops, likely more.

My organization, the Friday Morning Music Club (FMMC), is “lucky,” perhaps, in the fact that we do not charge for tickets for the 80+ concerts we present each year. Many days I wish for us to do, particularly when combing through our budget, contemplating how much we might take in if we did charge for admission. But ultimately it is a huge part of our mission that our music and performances be accessible to all, performers and audience alike.

That said, I had never anticipated a scenario such as this, where not charging for tickets would ultimately allow FMMC the flexibility to truly do what’s best for our membership and patrons without any thought to budget or financials.

The reality of the developing circumstances surrounding COVID-19 is that large gatherings will cause this virus to spread faster. It’s not a matter of if, but a matter of how much. I am not here to evaluate the science behind social distancing and “flattening the curve,” or to tell you what will happen with your choir if you proceed with your concert. What I am here to discuss is the grief that many of us have experienced, and the mental and emotional impact that these cancellations have brought about. But I can feel it, and I know that as the days turn to weeks (heaven forbid, months), it’s going to become all the more potent.

Those of us in choral administration (or any arts administration, for that matter) face a unique situation in that we are not just administrators but artists, and have to cope with this situation from the perspective of our work but also from the perspective of our music. Yes, ultimately our stress and frustration surrounding these cancellations is connected to our bottom line and the financial sacrifices we’re making for the sake of public health. But the very heart of what we do is making music together. I know for certain that I am not the only arts administrator who also actively sings with a choir or plays in an orchestra or band. I do what I do with my career because choral music brings me joy; I spend my days advocating for it and other genres of classical music while spending my evenings singing with multiple ensembles and working on a wide variety of projects.

As we are told on all fronts that we need to halt our work and to distance ourselves from one another, we are faced with an uncomfortable reality: the exact thing that we are asked to discontinue is also the exact thing that we so desperately need for ourselves in these uncertain times. While I am always drawn to group creation, the desire to come together and make music is only heightened when times are troubled and worries are high. What makes these circumstances particularly difficult is that we cannot come together and provide a musical balm for our wounds. The very balm that could heal and comfort many of us is the same balm that could hurt—or even kill—other people.

So yes, we’re grieving the loss of our concerts, the work that has been put in, and the financial stability we absolutely need, but we are also grieving the temporary loss of our art forms and our personal solace. Even if you are not as keenly aware of that grief just yet, it is certain that many of your singers are feeling it—or will be feeling it in the near future. And just like any grief and any loss, it is important to acknowledge it and to recognize it for what it is.

I am desperately going to miss making music with my friends and colleagues. I am mourning the temporary loss of my community, and afraid of what the future holds for us all. I don’t quite know how to cope with such uncertainty without music, because I’ve never had to do it before.

In the days to come, be transparent with your singers and your audience. Don’t give them excuses or false promises, but don’t give them silence either. With social distancing comes loneliness, which is unavoidable when all we want to do is gather together and create music, and can’t.

Use technology to your advantage. Using Zoom for sectional rehearsals is certainly not as ideal as in-person rehearsals, but it reminds your singers that they’re not alone and that there is an end to the chaos. It gives them a way to make music, albeit a non-traditional one.

Remind them that your musical group is a community first and foremost, even if it isn’t a “community chorus” under the standard definition.

By Jennie Weyman

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Remind them that they can always reach out for help, musical or not.

Remind them that even as we are asked to isolate ourselves for the good of the many, no one is alone.

Remind them that the music will be here waiting for us when we get back.

Jennie Weyman is the Managing Director of the Friday Morning Music Club in Washington, D.C. She is also an active member of both the Capitol Hill Chorale, serving on the Board of Directors since 2015, and the Washington Revels. She has previously worked with both the Washington Chorus and Arena Stage at The Georgetown for American Theater. Jennie taught elementary music for two years, and continues to teach musical theater workshops in her spare time. When not working, Jennie freelances as a graphic designer, reads terrible mystery novels, and makes Airbnb wishlists. Go Hufflepuff!!
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**Crowdsourcing: CCDA board members and friends share inspiration for surviving the crisis**

**POLLY VASHE**

**CCDA MEMBERS: A READY-MADE SUPPORT FAMILY**

As a retired choral director, I greatly miss the few but welcome opportunities I have to experience the joys of music-making: singing in our Modesto Symphony Chorus, rehearsing devoted handbell ringers, adjudicating exciting and inspiring choral festivals, and even studying for pianists and conductors in local churches. Thus it is hard to imagine the reset of mental and physical energy required of full-time teachers when the often frenetic pace of daily schedules is brought to a sudden halt.

As our National ACDA President Lynn Gackle said in a recent post, this abrupt change of routine logically results in “sadness, frustration, pessimism, loneliness and even a bit of anger for many.…” However, we must try to replace those feelings with a sense of community. Music and song will continue to contribute to all-important intentional positivity. To paraphrase Dr. Gackle, “We need each other and a sense of community. Music and song will continue to contribute to all-important intentional positivity.”

Our CCDA community as well as the National ACDA membership are sharing creative ideas and methodologies to apply in our unique situations. Please avoid yourself of the collective wisdom presented in these pages and in many other communications. And beyond practical considerations, commiserating directly with a colleague can broaden your perspective and contribute to all-important intentional positivity.

**POLLY VASHE**

**TECHNOLOGY CHECK-IN**

La Nell Martin

In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, I have found that staying connected is the key to withstanding this difficult time. Well, almost everyone thinks that, right? I am not the best when it comes to technology, so I have been following the lead of our Executive Director at the Oakland Youth Chorus.

Currently, we are leading our rehearsals through the use of Zoom. It has helped me to stay connected to my singers and give them some normalcy in a not-so-normal situation. I have used it for sectionals, and the singers and I are learning together what the dos and don’ts are. For example, headsets help with the two-second delay, and everyone uses “mute” except for the instructor when I am playing parts.

I have found that staying connected is the one thing that my singers need. Having these virtual rehearsals is a break from the anxiety and boredom that they are experiencing. I have even had a chance to meet more parents online, as well as the singers’ pets. Those check-ins are imperative glimpses into their lives.

I will use other online resources that I have always wanted to try, and now is the time. For example, Sight-Reading Factory for sightreading and assessments is one I will be using, as well as Flippipad, which is an interactive site for students.

The one drawback that I am finding, with technology, is accessibility and equity. Some of my students’ families do not have computers, so there is a loss of connection. Also, one more drawback is that we are on computers too much, which can feel like an overload. However, with this pandemic, I hope we come out of this with more love and respect for just the simple things in life. We are building a deep connection with families, and hopefully, this will make respectful and caring communities.

**JILL DEWEES**

**HAVE YOU MET SOUNDTRAP?**

This is a quick description of Soundtrap, which is a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation). Think Garage Band or Pro Tools, but much simpler. Soundtrap is integrated with Google Classroom, Schoology, and MusicFirst, and they offer a free 30-day trial.

The regular subscription price is $249 for a one-year license for up to 50 users. But since it is part of the suite of music software available in MusicFirst, you can request free use of all that MusicFirst has to offer during the COVID-19 school closures. The entire suite includes Soundtrap, Noteflight, Sight Reading Factory, Auralia, O-Generator and more.

With Soundtrap, students can begin creating music instantly through the many included loops and beats. There is also a piano keyboard that can be played with a touch screen or through the computer keyboard. As my district has 1-to-1 Chromebooks, this is useful, since so many of my piano students do not have an instrument at home. There are many video tutorials available on the Soundtrap.com website that will help any novice or experienced music engineer quickly start making music.

Being a Pro Tools user at home, I still needed some of the quick videos to see where all of the various tools are located. As a choral director, I may load up my arrangement tracks and assign my students to record their vocal parts. (You can import audio or MIDI files.) And if you are an experienced recording engineer, you can even export your work to your personal DAW and fine-tune your recordings even more.

**CHRIS ROTHAY**

**FIVE MUSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT DON’T REQUIRE INTERNET ACCESS**

Even though schools are closed for the foreseeable future, the learning must continue. It is important during this time to keep some semblance of normalcy and routine. Over the last few weeks I’ve seen educators go above and beyond to ensure that students have access to websites and apps to support digital learning. In support of those who have limited access to the internet (or just need a break from staring at a screen), I’ve compiled a short list of activities that don’t rely on the world wide web. Here are five quarantine activities that don’t require technology.

- **Daily journal entries**: Take this time to reflect on your experience. You may want to write about what you are doing or feeling in your neighborhood or household, or describe the activities you’ve been engaging in at home. Discuss how these changes have affected your life and how you are feeling about it. Describe the positives and the negatives of this new experience.

- **Build your own concert**: Choose a concert theme and create a repertoire list based on that theme. Talk about which choirs would perform which pieces and why. This might be a bit challenging without using the internet, but it can be a fun challenge to see how many songs you can come up with off the top of your head.

- **Create a handmade flyer**: Using the things you have for your concert, create a handmade flyer for your “performance.” You can also do this for past concerts that you’ve participated in. Use markers, crayons, colored pencils, paint, or anything that you have readily available to you. You don’t have to be the best artist in the world to create something fun and beautiful!

- **Rexist music you’ve already performed**: Take a look at music from past performances and see how much you can remember. Use this as an opportunity to refine the work you’ve already done. Maybe there was a particular measure in a piece that always gave you a hard time. See if you can improve it using the knowledge you now have about singing and rehearsing.

- **Write a song**: Write your own lyrics and/or melody. If available, add instrumentation using a piano, guitar, ukulele, a wooden spoon and a bucket, or anything else you have access to. Think outside the box! Another option: Take a preexisting song and create new lyrics to it. Be sure to perform your magnificent creation for someone to hear. I’m sure they could use the pick-me-up.

**JOSH PALKKI**

**PROCESS AND PROGRESS**

I am always looking for ways to encourage my students to reflect on process and progress. This is an ideal time to have your singers reflect on the year/season that they’ve had together. For my university students, I’ve created the following prompt using a YouTube video of a piece from our first concert in October. Feel free to use/modify as necessary!

Watch this video from our fall concert, then write a reflective journal entry about the progress of University Choir this academic year. More importantly, talk about your own progress as a musician and as a member of this ensemble. Your response should be 200-300 words (200 words minimum). Please be as specific as possible. You should use these guiding questions as a jumping off point for your writing. How has your vocal technique progressed? Your music literacy capabilities? In what areas have you progressed and in what areas do you still want to grow? What was the process of creating the social contract like? Do you feel that you were able to “live these principles” as a member of this ensemble?
Do you have any regrets? If so, what are they and how will you avoid this in the future? What have you taken with you this semester that may serve you in your future musical/choral experiences? What will you miss about this ensemble in the coming weeks and months?

If you’re looking for fun music literacy instruction, consider using The Blobs, a fun ear training game. For example, in one module the students will hear King Blob sing a pitch. Then they will hear three other Blob people sing pitches. The student needs to figure out which of the Blob people sang the same pitch as King Blob (if you’re trying out the preview, purposely get an answer wrong; you’ll thank me later). Visit echalk.co.uk/music/training/blobChorus/blobChorus.html.

There is a subscription fee to use this service (subscription.echalk.co.uk/subscription/registration.aspx), but the Blob chorus tool is just one of many fun, engaging music literacy tools on the website.

JENNY TISI

LISTEN TO THE SILENCE

Our virtual choir video is on hold, and probably indefinitely.

I made an assumption...an assumption based on what I saw others doing. An assumption based on my own pain and sadness of not getting to work with my amazing choristers.

I made an assumption as an adult who is confident and I have found that it is well worth the time. Here’s an example, in one module the students will hear King Blob sing a pitch. Then they will hear three other Blob people sing pitches. The student needs to figure out which of the Blob people sang the same pitch as King Blob (if you’re trying out the preview, purposely get an answer wrong; you’ll thank me later). Visit echalk.co.uk/music/training/blobChorus/blobChorus.html.

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David V. Montoya

LETTER PERFECT

How often do we find that our singers don’t have the kind of knowledge of the staff that we assume they have? We all know that even if singers can read well by using solfege, they don’t necessarily have to know the letter names of the notes, nor where to find them on the piano. Even my piano students often rely on fingering instead of knowing which letter named note they are playing.

If you find yourself in that situation and you’re looking for online activities, try having your students spend some time on MusicTheory.net. You can easily create simple assignments for them to strengthen their note-naming skills. It takes maybe 10 minutes a day, and I have found that it is well worth the time. Here’s one example that I have used over a series of days:

• Go to the EXERCISES menu.
• Choose NOTE IDENTIFICATION.
• In SETTINGS, choose GRAND STAFF,
• RANGE from low C to high C,
• no KEY SIGNATURES (for now),
• use ACCIDENTALS,
• and use HELPERS if you need them.

• Do 60 notes and send me a SCREENSHOT of your percentage.

I don’t grade them based on their percentage, but a test after a few days will be a good assessment. I do write down their percentage each day, and it is wonderful to see their faces when they can see themselves improving in the numbers.

You can do this for key signatures, scales, intervals, chords, ear training, etc. The possibilities are endless and best of all, it is free!

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I often catch myself feeling distracted in the process of composing. Maybe I’ve only written for twenty minutes, but I feel the urgent need to check my e-mail. After all, what if I get a message from a potential collaborator about an artistically fulfilling and well-paying commission? Shouldn’t I go see if that e-mail has appeared in the last five minutes?

That urge to procrastinate is not a larger sign that something is amiss with my pace or my composing process; it’s a sign that I’m human. Checking e-mail is usually more entertaining than playing variations of the same chord at the piano twenty times in a row or spending two hours writing two minutes of music, only to delete all of it later. My mind is suggesting that I leave my creative work and do something else.

When I catch this happening, though, I find it helpful to employ the same strategy that I use with meditating. Any primer on meditation will recommend recognizing and dismissing this voice as many times as I need to. Yes, I want a break, I tell it, but I’m going to keep composing for now. And then, ten minutes later: Yip, this part is challenging. You’re right, I’ll take that break soon, but not right this minute.

Just as I’d direct my attention back to my breathing if I were meditating, I turn my attention back to my work during my creative practice. I try to do so without judgment. Each time I acknowledge distraction and successfully shift my attention back to my work, it becomes a little easier to repeat that step later that day.

Some days are more successful than others, and when I start over again on a new day, my mind is just as easily distracted as it was at the beginning of the day before. But it’s the process of recognizing that distraction that gets easier with practice, like training a small and forgetful dog. Each day, I practice telling myself that if I just wait, I will be rewarded with a treat—a break from my work—eventually.

We can recognize an impulse to do something without following that impulse. This is such an obvious truth, but in the actual practice of creating something, this realization can feel almost revolutionary. You’re allowed to be distracted. You will be distracted. But each distraction means you have yet another chance to practice gently turning your attention back to your work. If you miss this opportunity and give in to distraction, no worries; you’ll have another chance to practice soon.

The more you practice recognizing which impulses you shouldn’t follow, the better you’ll get at recognizing which ones are worth your attention. You’ll learn to tell the difference between ordinary distractions that are best ignored and those moments when your genuinely hungry self should get up and eat a snack. You’ll know when it’s time to forge ahead and when to set your work aside for the day, giving your brain a rest, and trust that you’ll have equally brilliant ideas tomorrow.
We are pleased to report that our return to the California All-State Music Educators Conference (CASMEC) was an overall success! The conference was held in Fresno from February 20-23, and we were blessed with great weather for the weekend. CCDA sponsored 12 interest sessions, including 3 reading sessions with varied repertoire. Our sessions were so well attended that we had to add extra chairs to all of our meeting rooms! Many sessions were standing room only.

With our return to CASMEC, CCDA was able to have a booth in the exhibit hall where we hosted a bagel breakfast one morning. The booth gave us the opportunity to talk to our constituents and connect with teachers in our state who are doing amazing things, even under stressful circumstances, often with limited resources. Many people from all areas of the music world, including our friends in instrumental and general music, stopped by the booth and told us how happy they were that CCDA was back at CASMEC. The feeling of inclusion and one-ness was a real highlight.

In addition to the interest sessions and exhibit hall booth, we hosted 6 choirs, all of whom performed wonderfully varied repertoire and showed off what our California choirs are capable of. Having attended the Western Division ACDA just a few weeks ago, and reflecting on the two conferences, I am proud to say that the singers in California are leading the way (yet again!) in movement and expression, creating transformative performances for the diverse audiences that they come into contact with.

As teachers, we are problem solvers; as music teachers, we are problem destroyers. For me, all of the insanity of honor choir weekend is worth it when I hear the beautiful music that is being made at the concerts on Saturday. None of it would be possible without our CBDA/COA/CAJ counterparts on the CASMEC board, and of course our amazing CCDA leadership: Kristina Nakagawa, conference chair; Jeffrey Benson, President; Robert Istad, Past President; and Christopher Peterson, President Elect. 2020 was a year with a huge learning curve, but our team took notes and is ready for 2021! See you in Fresno!
SEEN & HEARD

Clockwise from top right: The Christopher High School Chamber Choir attends the SJSU Choral Festival (photo by Kira Dixon); Susie Martone and Molly Peters mean business at CASMEC; friends and colleagues celebrate Western Region ACDA conference honoree Donald Brinegar (photo by Scot Hanna-Weir); and members of the Orange County Women’s Chorus share a Mexican feast the night before performing at WRACDA (photo courtesy of Maryloie Espinoza). Turn the page for more! And send your best photos of your choir’s activities—musical or extra-musical—to cantate.editor@gmail.com if you’d like them to be considered for publication in a future issue!
**Top:** Jeffery Ames directs the All-State TTBB choir at CASMEC in Fresno (photo by Kristina Nakagawa); **bottom:** the Irvington High School tour choir visits the Massachusetts State House (photo by Jennifer Olson); **opposite:** the Clovis East High School choirs (Carlin Truong, director) explore the Salt Lake City scenery.

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Allysia Lee
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**FAR SOUTH REGION**

In February, the San Diego Master Chorale presented its fourth annual High School Honor Choral Concert featuring more than one-hundred high school singers from the greater San Diego area. The singers, representing twenty different high schools, were given a day-long workshop rehearsal with SDMC music director John Russell. The day culminated in a collaborative performance with the members of SDMC at the First United Methodist Church of San Diego.

In March, the San Diego Unified School District presented its second incarnation of the District Honor Choral Concert, coordinated by Laura Williams of the VAPA Department. Over 120 students in grades 4-12 participated in one of three choirs directed by Kristy Aragon (Green Elementary), Emilie Amrein (University of San Diego), and John K. Russell (Palomar College and San Diego Master Chorale). The students had six weekly rehearsals before the culminating event on March 7.

**NORTHERN REGION**

The choral programs at Shasta College in Redding unfortunately had to cancel their planned May performances. The North State Symphony was to have performed Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the Shasta College Chorale and the Simpson University Trinity Singers joining the symphony for the fourth movement. The Shasta College Chorale is directed by Dr. Elizabeth Waterbury. The Shasta College Jazz Choir and Concert Choruses are enjoying the music of Arcadelt, Josquin, Koppin, Sibey, Shaw, and Kerry Marsh.

The California Music Educators Association, Capitol Section, recently recognized Tina Harris, Director of Choral Music at St. Francis High School in Sacramento, as their Choral Educator of the Year. The Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra (pictured below during last year’s performance of Brahms’ Ein Deutsches Requiem) were due to perform the Verdi Requiem on Saturday, March 21, in Memorial Auditorium with soloists from the MET. Mayor Steinberg was to present a Proclamation to the family of our famous Chef Biba Caggiano who passed away last October.

**BAY AREA**

Resounding Achord of San Jose and the West Valley College Concert Choir joined together for a concert on Leap Day. Conductors Kristina Nakagawa and Lou De La Rosa crafted a program that was full of whimsy and laughter to celebrate the extra day of the year.

San José State University and Cal State East Bay held their annual Invitational Choral Festivals at the end of February, featuring performances by over 20 local choirs.

The Peninsula Women’s Chorus (Martin Benvenuto, Artistic Director) presented its tenth New Music for Treble Voices Festival on March 14, featuring some of the Bay Area’s most renowned treble choirs: Peninsula Women’s Chorus, Piedmont East Bay Children’s Chorus Ancora, and Musae. PWC also honored women’s suffrage champion Alice Paul with a new commission by Jocelyn Hagen and PWC’s own poet and singer Barbara Saxton.

The Bay Area Choral Guild, led by Sanford Doyle, gave three performances of Mendelssohn’s Elijah at the beginning of March, with the Jubilate Orchestra playing period instruments and Bradley Ellingshoo as Elijah.

**CENTRAL COAST REGION**

The final concert for the season for the Canzona Choral Society was “Dance Me to the Stars” on March 1. It was inspired by the 50th anniversary of the moon landing. The group, under Artistic Directors Jill Anderson and Cricket Handler, performed a sold-out concert with guest dancers from Ballet Theatre SLO and beautiful performances by soloists环境保护Hanna Shlesobdak and pianist Susan Azaret Davies. “Dance Me to the Stars” explored the vast richness of our universe with selections from Moon Goddess by Jocelyn Hagen, among other works.

The Covid-19 event abruptly changed the direction for local school choirs, as well as school musicals, community choirs, local professional groups, and college chamber and concert choir concerts. The Central Coast Spring Choral Festival, sponsored by the adult community group, Vocal Arts Ensemble and Director Gary Lamprecht, expected 62 choirs.

Adelphi Ensemble (Tommor Korishel, artistic director) plans to hold their June concert on Friday, June 5, at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, June 6, at 3:00 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, Santa Barbara.

**SOUTHERN REGION**

We’re so proud of the following CCDA members for their outstanding artistic and scholarship at the Western Region ACDA and CASMEC! The Ayala High School Vocal Ensemble (Robbie Davis, conductor) performed at CASMEC, and the following ensembles performed at Western Region ACDA: The Riverside City College Chamber Singers (John Byun), the Orange County Women’s Chorus (Eliza Rubenstein), the Biola University Chorale (Shawna Stewart), the CSULB Bob Cole Chamber Choir (Jonathan Talberg), Valencia High School’s Two’n Four vocal jazz ensemble (Christine Tavares-Mocha), and the Fountain Valley High School Troubadours (Kevin Tison).

Josh Palkki and Jonathan Talberg presented interest sessions at the Western Region ACDA, and Donald Brinegar was the 2020 Conference Honoree. Congratulations to Karen Garrett for winning the 2020 Choral Director of the Year award at CASMEC!
Recent performances and recordings include:

Recent repertoire highlights:
Mahler Eighth Symphony, Lang The Little Match Girl Passion, Mendelssohn Elijah, Bernstein Chichester Psalms, Howells Requiem, Bach St. John Passion, Händel Israel in Egypt, Stravinsky Symphony of Psalms, Lauridsen Lux Aeterna.

Annual performances: the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Pacific Symphony Orchestra, Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, and Andrea Bocelli at Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, and major arenas.

Annual performance tours: including, Spain, Scandinavia, the Baltics, Russia, New York City, Paris/Northern France, Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Australia.

Annual, fully-staged operatic productions with orchestra.

Distinguished alumni: Deborah Voigt, Rod Gilfry, Charles Castronovo, Rene Tatum, Jubilant Sykes, and Christopher Job.

Graduates from our Master of Music in Choral Conducting program are successfully conducting performances with collegiate ensembles, professional choruses and orchestras, and opera companies throughout the world.

M.M. Choral Conducting graduates gain real-world experience leading performances with CSUF’s award-winning choirs, orchestra, and opera theater program.

Recent performances and recordings include:

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PROGRAM INFORMATION: MUSIC.FULLERTON.EDU

CHORAL CAMP

“I love camp! Why can’t this be all year?”

August 3-7, 2020 from 9 am – 6 pm at Cal State Fullerton
Cost: $325
Open to students who have completed grades 8-12 by Spring 2020

Spend 5 days with students like you who love to sing, and learn from professionals who know how to help you become a stronger musician. You’ll meet guest artists, take voice lessons, sing music in lots of different styles, and finish strong with a final concert for your family and friends.

The program is great for students who are considering majoring in music, choir section leaders, or anyone who wants to be a better singer!

Complete your registration by June 1 and get a $50 discount!
Financial assistance is available.

CAMP INFORMATION: WWW.PACIFICchorale.org/choral-camp

Program Information: Music.Fullerton.edu

Performance Opportunities in 2021

Lisbon Choral Festival
Jeffrey Benson
Lisbon, Portugal
June 10-15, 2021

“Magnificat” European Premiere
Michael John Trotta
Florence, Italy
June 20-24, 2021

Pura Vida Costa Rica: A Festival for Women’s & Treble Voices
Andrea Ramsey
San José, Costa Rica
June 23-27, 2021

United in Song
Ryan Beeken
Elaine Hagenberg
Tallinn, Estonia
June 26 - July 1, 2021

Normandy Choral Festival
Cameron P. LaBarr
Bayeux, France
July 2-7, 2021

Remembrance, Hope, Peace
Pearl Shangkuan
Kim André Arnesen
Berlin & Leipzig, Germany
July 9-14, 2021

Theater of Music Festival: Shakespeare EnACTed!
Emily Ellsworth
Stratford-upon-Avon, England
July 10-16, 2021

Israel Festival for Peace
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Dec. 2021 - Jan. 2022

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### Teaching Elementary Singers

Teaching elementary singers is an ideal opportunity to nurture a love for choral singing. It is a chance to be, in some cases, the first and most important musical influence in a young singer’s musical journey. The repertoire we select can spark a love for the choral instrument in our singers. I hope these suggested pieces will not only build a music foundation but create respect for our communities.

**Dorothy Masuka, arr. Michael Scott**

*Cameroon*

2-part with piano or accompaniment

Afrika Publishing Company SV933

This simple repetitive piece has the energy to take your singers and audience away. There are only six Zulu words, and then the text moves to English. The occurrence of “Wo—Cameron” assists with creating a legato feel with young singers. The canon idea creates support and accessibility for singers to perform in duets. You can include percussion instruments, and the drive of the piano leads to energy.

**Francisco J. Nunez**

*Guinea Mi Madre*

2-part

Boosey & Hawkes CME 48019280

Anytime there is an opportunity to put authentic pieces of music into singers’ hands, I am all for it! This piece is one of four Spanish *Lullabies* written by Nunez. This lullaby has rich text that uses words from Trubia, a town in the Asturias region of Spain, and the rhythm evokes the influences of Portugal and Brazil. Please perform the piece with a guitar to bring out the true essence of the lullaby. There are a few dissonances that the singers will need to work on, but the piece is a joy once mastery has occurred.

**Ann Tracy Wong**

*Wau Bulan*

SA a cappella

Cypress Press CP 1537

This Malaysian folk song has been a recent favorite for my singers. This short piece has a drone and a simple melody. The drone is interrupted with a canon, which ultimately sets the remainder of the piece. I have to say, the movement was the driving force for me to select this song for my choir. Please check out YouTube videos, for clarity in choreography as well as variety; for reference; I enjoyed the performance of Sing Silicon Valley’s choir.

### Top Five for Your Choir:

#### CHILDREN’S CHOIRS

**Christy Rohayem**

*The Director of Chorus at East Bay Performing High School, and also conducts the choir at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. She received her Bachelor’s Degree in Music Education and Vocal Performance from San Jose State University. Christy serves as the Choir Chairperson for Kern County’s Grand Night for Music Festival, and her experiences includes prep and kindergarten general music, middle school, high school, and community choirs. She has a passion for Medieval Eastern music and is currently working on her Masters Degree in Music Education from San Jose State University.*

#### Music in Worship

I have been on a hunt for worship music that celebrates different religions and ethnicities. These are some of my favorite arrangements that I have discovered along the way. If you’re looking for pieces with some diversity, you will love these non-traditional worship songs!

**Trad. Iraqi, arr. Lori Tennenhouse**

*Iraqi Peace Song*

SSA with piano and cello

Santa Barbara Music Publishing SBMP797

If you’re looking for a piece with some instrumentation, this is a great option. This three-part treble arrangement features cello and a Middle Eastern drum called a darbuka. The text alternates between the Arabic and the English interpretation. The duration of the piece is 3:30, so this is a great selection if you’re looking for something a bit more substantial in terms of length. Although it’s arranged for treble choir, it would work well for a bass choir or even a mixed choir depending on the voices you have.

**Laila Constantine, arr. Greg Schear**

*Abana*

SATB

GIA Publications G-8488

“Abana” is a beautiful setting of the Lord’s Prayer. The Arabic text fits the melody in such a way that it enhances it. An option for English text is also included, which makes it a versatile piece for many different audiences and settings. The opening solo line is a great way to feature your tenors and basses or even a fantastic soloist. The bass line goes down to low Gs and Fs, but the approach is usually descending from the octave above. If more suitable for your choir, you can always have the basses remain in the upper octave.

**Sufi melody, arr. Shereen Abu-Khader and Andre de Quadros**

*Adinu*

Unison/2-part

Earthsongs S-331

This Sufi melody is a simple yet beautiful introduction to the Arabic language. The transcription provided in the arrangement allows the choir to lead the language with ease and confidence. “Adinu” features a unison solo line, a two part treble split, and a unison tenor/bass line. It features three intermittent solos that showcase the intricacy of melismatic Middle Eastern music. I love this arrangement for its simplicity and for how impressively it comes across. This is a great piece to keep in your back pocket. You can find this arrangement in *Andre de Quadros’ series Choral Music of the Muslim World*.

**Darin Lewis**

*We Break This Bread*

SAB/D

Earthsongs S-450

In these crazy times of panic and separation, this piece carries a great message of inclusion and celebrates diversity. The opening text “For all who walk the way of faith, we break this bread,” sets the tone for the entire song. The word “all” reappears in the text, reinforcing the idea that we all can and do coexist together. Darin Lewis sets this text extremely well for all voice parts. It’s a great non-denominational piece for any form of worship.

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**La Nell Martin**

*Oakland, CA native and has taught music levels K through 12 in the Bay Area for over 25 years in both private and public schools. She holds a B.A. in Voice from CSU East Bay, M.A. in Music Education from San Jose State University, and a Level One Certificate in Kodaly from Holy Names University. La Nell is currently the Artistic Director for the Oakland Youth Chorus and Planet and Choir director for the Bethany Baptist Church (Oakland, CA). She is also an Adjunct Professor at Holy Names University.*

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**Bethany Baptist Church (Oakland, CA). She is also an Adjunct Professor at Holy Names University.**
The 20s have always been a special decade in Western music history. World events in the early part of each century (World War I, Napoleonic Wars, European Wars of Religion, Colonialism, Reign of Henry VIII) gave composers an abundance of inspiration on which to draw. Below are my Top Five favorites that are representative of the ‘20s in their respective centuries.

1520s
John Taverner (c.1490-1545)
*Missa Gloria tibi Trinitas*
SATB 193 a cappella
Available on IMSLP and CPDL
This is a beautiful example of the early English Renaissance at its finest. The full mass is approximately 40-45 minutes long and is designed to highlight soloists or small soli groups. The Tallis Scholars have two excellent recordings of the full work, the most recent from 2013.

1620s
Claudio Monteverdi (c.1567-1643)
*Laetaniae della Beata Virgine à 6*, SV 204
SSATTB and continuo
Available on IMSLP and CPDL
This work was originally published by G.C. Bianchi of Venice in 1620 and republished in 1626 and 1651. If your choir is not quite ready for Monteverdi’s Vespers, this approximately 10-minute motet will give your audience and singers a wonderful taste of the masterful composer’s offerings.

1720s
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80
SATB with solo quartet, 3 oboes, 2 oboes d’amore, strings, and continuo
Available from Carus-Verlag, Bärenreiter, IMSLP and CPDL
Although the beginnings of this work were composed in 1715 in Weimar, the first performance of the work as we know it was for the Feast of the Reformation (October 31) at Leipzig’s Thomaskirche. The cantata is based on Martin Luther’s hymn tune and text of the same name from the 1520s. If your ensemble is not ready for a full cantata, try Bach’s motet *Jesu, meine Freude* (1723).

1820s
Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
*“Der Tanz,”* D. 826
SATB and piano
Available from IMSLP and CPDL
During his incredibly short life, Franz Schubert wrote some incredibly insightful and touching music. “Der Tanz” is a part song that underscores the joys of life to be found even when we’re longing for the healthy days of our youth to return.

1920s
Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
*“O Clap Your Hands”*
SATB with organ, brass, and percussion
Galaxy Music Corporation
This English anthem is a setting of verses from Psalm 47. Though Vaughan Williams was himself agnostic, he said, “There is no reason why an atheist could not write a good Mass.” This piece opens with a brilliant brass fanfare and ends with the choir proclaiming “singing praises” as a triumphant climax. It would serve well as an opening or closing piece in performance.

Top Five for your Choir:

**COMMUNITY/PROFESSIONAL**

Tammi Alderman is director of choral/vocal music at San Marino High School. She also teaches at CSU Fullerton’s School of Music, where she is a University Supervisor for choral music education. Ms. Alderman is head of the choral program at Arrowbear Summer Music Camp and is on the faculty of the Choral Advantage Camp through the Pacific Choral and CSU Fullerton. Tammi is also the assistant conductor of the Long Beach Camerata Singers.
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