

FL-ACDA Fall Newsletter



A message from Dr. Peter Steenblik, FL-ACDA President:

I'm excited to gather with you all very soon in Orlando. Our conference theme "Music in All Spaces" is being celebrated in many different ways. The keynote address will be focused on the beautiful intersection of sacred music and secular situations -- and possibly the inverse: secular music applying to sacred situations. I can think of no one else doing that better than Dr. Jeffery Ames. The intercollegiate choir, which will be conducted by Dr. Michael Hanawalt and various collegiate conductors, has prepared a program that reflects different spaces -- music at home, music in joy, music in sorrow, and so forth. I wish to thank Dr. Arnekua Jackson and her team that carefully reviewed the repertoire of each performing choir. They offered guidance of cultural sensitivity. I was inspired by their words of encouragement to each director and how their aim was to further educate and encourage the performance of music from oft-underrepresented cultures. It all belongs. You all belong. We all belong.



Brad Chase
SSAA R&R Chair

When I thought about our theme for this month, I was drawn to the idea of music that might push the boundaries of typical concert music. While nothing here will feel out of place on the concert hall stage, I hope that perhaps these pieces might elicit a different kind of reaction from your audience, or perhaps provoke a discussion with your ensemble.

Tres Cantos Nativos - Marcos Leite - arr. SSA (also SATB)

<https://earthsongschoralmusic.com/product/s-168/>

This work for 3-part treble choir is an arrangement of 3 different folk songs from the Krao tribe, a group of indigenous Brazilians living in the forests of northern Brazil. The choral parts are accessible for high school, and perhaps even middle school. Use the sheet music as a guide, and create an entire world full of sounds from the rainforest, potentially using body percussion or various appropriate percussion instruments!

A Hive of Frightened Bees - Andrea Ramsey - SSAA (also SATB)

<https://musicspoke.com/downloads/a-hive-of-frightened-bees/>

This work for 4-part treble chorus directly takes on the horrible reality that we face today in our schools - gun violence. The text was written by a student living in the aftermath of the Parkland school shooting. The music supports this powerful text in sublime ways. Appropriate for advanced treble choirs, this piece will challenge everyone, performers and audience members alike.

The Ssssnake Hotel - Cyrill Schurch S(SA)

https://www.jwpepper.com/sq=The+Ssssnake+Hotel&fuzzy=0&operator=and&facets=fuzzy%2Coperat or&sort=score_desc&page=0

This piece is as fun as its title. It can be sung in unison or 3-parts, making it appropriate for elementary school through high school. Lots of hissing, harmonies that invoke snake charmers, and the overall silly idea of checking into a hotel filled with snakes will be sure to get everyone smiling.



Natalie Taylor
High School R&R Chair

The theme of music in all spaces sparks a memory of when I sang in Indonesia in 2019. This was the first time I truly experienced music as a universal language that can bring people together from all walks of life. I was a member of the Festival Singers of Florida during our Indonesia tour, where we joined with the Universitas Pelita Harapan Choir to perform Sisi Ni Moja. I remember looking to my side as we were singing and seeing two women in the choir gasp with joy as we all sang together. At the end of the piece, I saw them crying, overwhelmed by the moment we had just shared. I remember thinking how special that moment was for all of us and how the power of music can bring people together and create a bond that nothing else can.

As musicians, we have the privilege of making music in so many different spaces—schools, churches, community choirs, concert halls, or simply on our daily walks to and from the places we go. As a music educator, I feel a responsibility to provide a community where anyone can walk in and

feel that they are a part of something bigger than themselves.

I have had the privilege of witnessing communities form through the power of making music, and I believe that is possible because music can exist in ALL spaces and include EVERY human being. Music has the unique ability to transcend language, culture, background, and circumstance, reminding us that, at our core, we all have the capacity to connect, listen, and create something beautiful together.

I Sing Because I'm Happy - Rollo Dilworth - Available SATB, SAB, 3-part treble, and 2-part

<https://www.halleonard.com/product-family/PC19536/i-sing-because-im-happy>

I Sing Because I'm Happy is a piece I have used in a variety of settings, including my church choir, high school choir, and middle school feeder programs. It is well written, accessible to a wide range of singers, and, most importantly, just fun to sing. It has consistently been a favorite with both my students and audiences. The positive message is one that singers and audiences of all ages can connect with, making it a great choice when you are looking for something uplifting and engaging. I highly recommend adding a musician to play the drumset if you program this piece.

Joy - Hans Bridger Heruth - Available SATB, SSAA and TTBB

<https://sbmp.com/SR2.php?CatalogNumber=1392>

Joy is a piece I performed with my auditioned chorus for MPA, and it is a song that I witnessed bring my students together in a meaningful way. I remember discussing the text with my students when one student shared how difficult it was for him to truly allow himself to experience pure joy because he struggled to cope with his stress and anger. His response was incredibly vulnerable, and I remember how it connected my students with one another on a deeper level. Joy provides an opportunity to explore those emotions together and reminds us that joy can be found even during difficult seasons of life.

The Meditations of My Heart - Elaine Hagenberg - SATB

<https://www.elainehagenberg.com/ehm/meditations-of-my-heart>

The Meditations of My Heart is such a beautiful piece of music, especially in its simplicity. The text, "May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer," speaks to the power of reflection and the desire to live with intention. I feel that this piece connects deeply to the theme because music often gives us a space to pause, reflect, and meditate. I believe many of us use music to calm ourselves, find comfort, and cope with the challenges of life. The simplicity of this beautiful melody reflects that quiet, personal plea to be our best selves and to strive to live a life that we can be proud of.



Dr. Arnequa Jackson
World Musics and Culture

I interpret Music in All Spaces as a reminder that music is not confined to the concert stage or rehearsal room. Music lives in our communities, cultures, places of worship, schools, homes, and wherever people gather and connect. Through World Musics & Culture, I see this theme as an opportunity to help our singers experience music beyond what is familiar while honoring the traditions, languages, and stories that give the music meaning.

Tshotsholosa - Traditional South African, arr. Jeffery L. Ames - SATB

<https://giamusic.com/resource/tshotsholosa-satb-print-wlg139>

Tshotsholosa reminds us that music does not always begin on a concert stage. It can grow from the experiences, work, traditions, and everyday lives of people. I love the sense of community this piece creates through its call and response, movement, and rhythmic energy. When taught with its cultural and historical context, it becomes more than an exciting performance piece. It gives students an opportunity to understand how music can carry the story and spirit of a community.

Esto les digo - Kinley Lange

<http://www.alliancemusic.com/product.cfm?iProductID=492>

There is something special about the simplicity and beauty of Esto Les Digo. The Spanish text speaks about the power of gathering together, and the a cappella setting requires singers to truly listen to one another, breathe together, and create something unified. For me, that makes it especially fitting for Music in All Spaces because it reminds us that sometimes the most meaningful musical moments happen when voices simply come together and share a message.

Sisi ni moja - Jacob Narverud

<https://sbmp.com/SR2.php?CatalogNumber=1338>

What I appreciate most about Sisi Ni Moja is that its message is simple but powerful: we are one. The rhythmic energy and Swahili text immediately draw singers in, while the message gives them something meaningful to connect to beyond the notes on the page. It is the kind of piece that can bring a choir together while reminding students that even with our differences, music gives us a space where everyone can belong.



Dr. Jason Longtin
Two year College Chair

At the heart of "Music in All Spaces" is the belief that music is more than something we perform. It is something we experience, share, and learn from. When we sing together, we have the opportunity to pay closer attention to the world around us, to the experiences of others, and to ourselves. Through choral music, we encounter new ideas and perspectives, reflect on our relationship with the natural world, and deepen our understanding of what it means to be part of a larger human community.

Travelogue - Jennifer Lucy Cook - SATB

<https://www.ecspublishing.com/travelogue-7-0771-cook.html>

This piece explores the composer's own journey of self discovery and risk taking. Through vivid text painting and complexity, Travelogue asks us and our students to look inward to find the strength to take those risks, and to trust that the support system and safety equipment (be it literal or metaphorical) will be there for us.

Earthsong – Frank Ticheli – SATB. also available SSAA and TTBB

<https://www.hinshawmusic.com/product/earth-song-satb/>

A well-loved “gem,” Earth Song asks us to reflect on our relationship with the natural world. Through its description of a suffering earth and its plea for peace, the piece invites singers and audiences to listen more deeply to the connection between ourselves and the giant rock in space we call home. Singing this work encourages us to look beyond our own experiences and consider our responsibility to one another and to the world around us.

To Sit and Dream – Rosephanye Powell – SATB, also available SSAA and TTBB

<https://www.halleonard.com/product/8711521/to-sit-and-dream>

To Sit and Dream invites us to think about the kind of world we want to create. Through Langston Hughes’s poem, the piece encourages us to learn, imagine, and hope while recognizing our connection to the people around us. Singing it offers an opportunity to reflect on how we can “reach out” and build a community that is more compassionate, curious, and understanding.



Miguel Oquendo
TTBB R&R Chair

The best thing about choral music is that it can happen anywhere. While we love singing in our classroom my students love singing in the stairwell because they can truly hear the magic that is created by all their voices singing together. I also recall one of the highlights of National ACDA in Dallas was the performance that was taking place on the street in front of the convention center by one of the performing choirs.

Shady Grove – arr. Jerry Estes – TB

<https://www.halleonard.com/product/35030044/shady-grove>

Shady Grove by Jerry Estes takes us on a musical journey. I have my students imagine that they are in a different time where they must speak to who they hope is their true love. My tenor-basses love this piece, and I will catch them singing this piece when walking down the hallways of our school.

Rest Not – Laura Farnell – TB

<https://www.halleonard.com/product-family/PC16864/rest-not>

Rest Not by Laura Farnell is a wonderful piece that talks about not settling and not sitting idle. Life is a journey and you must leave your mark on it. Wonderful message for young people. This piece will inspire your students to think about life and their journey and what they will leave behind as life passes by.

I Saw Three Ships – arr. Paul David Thomas

<https://www.brileemusic.com/bl1011-i-saw-three-ships.html>

I Saw Three Ships by Paul David Thomas is a fun piece that my Tenor-Basses love for the holiday season. We go around the school singing this piece to different classes spreading the holiday joy. This is a fun joyful arrangement of a folk song that brings new life to a piece we have all sung at one time or another.