

# SD-ACDA

## NEWSLETTER February 2025

### Notes from our President

It is hard to believe the school year is already half over. Thank you to Kelsey Kaitfors for coordinating a wonderful Winter Conference in Rapid City. The timing is always just what I need to press through the winter doldrums. You can find clinician, Reginal Wright's, resources on the Director's Conference page of the SDACDA website.

The Senior Honor Choir board decided to move the summer event one week earlier to avoid some consistent conflicts, including marching band camps. The event will take place in Aberdeen on the campus of Northern State University from Sunday, July 20 through Friday, July 25th. This event is open to current sophomore and junior singers. Be sure to check the website for audition materials, and the audition dates in your area.

I'm excited to announce that Matthew Gawronski, a New York teacher, composer, and online content creator, will be the main clinician for our Summer Director's Conference on Thursday, July 24, and Friday, July 25. He has such a varied and interesting list of possible sessions. Please watch for a survey to give input about which topics are of most interest to you. We hope you mark those dates in your calendar and plan to join us!

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As my term as president draws to a close, I want to say what an honor it has been to serve in this capacity. I have gotten to know so many wonderful educators and directors in our state. I hope SDACDA has provided resources and inspiration to help you continue the outstanding work you are doing.

Denise Perry



### Upcoming Events

- National ACDA Conference  
March 18-25, 2025 Dallas, TX
- Registration For Senior Honor  
Choir Auditions is due March  
1st!!!

# NEWSLETTER

## Voicing the Tenor/Bass Choir

One of my favorite things about my job is getting Freshmen in my Tenor/Bass Choir who have not sung in Choir throughout their Middle School years. I promise you, I am not being sarcastic! I do have a love/hate relationship with the challenge of finding out what they know and getting them caught up with the rest of the singers who have been in Choir for 1 - 2 years. The most fun and interesting part of this process is voicing these students to see if they can match pitch, what their vocal range is, and how best I can help them to be successful in my ensemble.

This year, my Tenor/Bass Choir of 44 is made up of 5 Seniors, 10 Juniors, 10 Sophomores, and 19 Freshmen. Of the nineteen Freshmen in this ensemble, only two had participated in the Middle School Choir! We had to start at the beginning with basic music symbols, what those symbols mean, how to read an octavo, etc. They also did not know much about their voices.

At the beginning of each semester, I voice my Tenor/Bass students so I can place them in whatever section best suits where they are in their development. Let me preface that I am not an expert by any means, I don't have a PHD; however, I have a process that works well for me and I thought I would share my process in the hopes that it could potentially help someone else.

While the rest of the class is working on various assignments, homework, and free time (if they are all caught up), I have each student come up to the piano individually and have them sing the first three notes of "Jingle Bells" wherever they are comfortable. I then locate that pitch on the piano and have them do a short vocalise, "ah" or "oo", on D-R-M-R-D to find their lowest and highest pitch as well as take note of where their voice attempts to "crack/flip" or transition into their upper register. I also take this time to work with the student on pitch matching, octave jumps to get out of the basement, and exploring their head voice with sirens or similar exercises.

Overall, I take about 2 - 3 minutes per student. This is a time investment, but one I'm willing to make when I see the results. For example, we just finished our voicing as we go into the 2nd Semester and seeing the changes for the students who may have started the year as a Tenor, seeing how their range changed, and now they will be singing Baritone or even Bass is simply intriguing to me. It really makes me stop to think about how much they are changing and what I am doing to help them navigate those changes, while making them the most comfortable and successful while singing in their ensemble.

Below are a couple of examples of the tracking sheet I use with my students. When you have students for several years, it's especially fun to look back and see how much they've changed. If you'd like to share your process, I'd love to have a conversation with you! I'm always on the lookout for ideas to improve my practice. Feel free to email me at [Janice.Gilbert@k12.sd.us](mailto:Janice.Gilbert@k12.sd.us).

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## Voicing Examples

Name Blake Choir \_\_\_\_\_

Bari	Bari			
Date: <u>8-29-24</u>	<u>1-10-25</u>	_____	_____	_____
Age: <u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	_____	_____	_____
Grade: <u>9</u> <sup>1/23</sup>	<u>9</u>	_____	_____	_____

Name Kingston <sup>BAS 2<sup>nd</sup> split</sup> Choir \_\_\_\_\_

tenor	Bari	Baritone	Bari	Bari
Date: <u>8/23/22</u>	<u>1/9/23</u>	<u>8-21-23</u>	<u>1-5-24</u>	<u>1-9-25</u>
Age: <u>14</u> (sp 17)	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>
Grade: <u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>

*Annotations: "flipping" (twice), "Pitch not moving", "drifted an oct." (with a note marked with a cross)*

## Timing your Programming, Enhancing your Success

One of the most important things for a successful program is choosing great repertoire for your ensembles. Repertoire that compliments your group's level, enhances growth, resonates with your singers and audience, and excites you as a conductor is invaluable. It truly makes what we do simultaneously more rewarding and, in many ways, easier.

While I believe this is universally true, when we do our best programming as conductors varies for each of us. Finding the rhythm that best fits you is a process that early in your career may be more challenging.

As a young conductor, most of my mentors and colleagues talked about spending the summer programming for the next year. This works for many of us because in teaching, church work, and community groups we have the largest amounts of time to dedicate to discovering new repertoire and planning during the summer. For years I tried to do this but never found that my success was as high as I felt it should be. Much of my programming seemed less inspired, or more difficult to come up with, and for a long time I thought of myself as someone who had to labor to program. While I had the time in the summer, I had difficulty getting into the mindset.

I discovered what works best for me by accident. One fall, I was still missing "the right" piece to add to my winter concert. I was already in the mindset of pieces that matched the time of year and with that I started to explore the places I usually find repertoire. I needed specific criteria for this piece, shorter and up-tempo, but I found many pieces that I loved that didn't fit the immediate need. Instead of being frustrated by that, I let myself enjoy discovering the new repertoire. By the time I was done, I had programmed the next year almost completely and it had been easy and FAST! What I discovered is that I program best for Christmas, during Christmas. I program best for Lent, during Lent. When I am surrounded by the repertoire, the activities, and the energy of the season, I am much more in tune with programming for that season. (This also serves me in arranging and composing music.) Since then, I have found that whenever an idea or a piece strikes me, I make sure to write it down so I can revisit it later. My perspective on programming completely changed from feeling like it was labor, to feeling like it was a joy. All that needed to change was me discovering when I was most creative.

Perhaps the summer works well for you, and if it does embrace it! But if you find the traditional wisdom doesn't work for you find what does work for you and make it your strength.

Dr. Andrew Robinette  
SDSU



# NEWSLETTER

## Winter Conference!

We had a great time at this year's winter conference. We had the pleasure to learn from Reginal Wright. He was full of passion and energy and it was contagious! Visit our website and click on Winter Conference Resources to see what we all learned.





# NEWSLETTER

## Performing Choirs

Village Singers



Jefferson High School



Parkston High School



USF Concert Chorale

# New Board Members!

## SDACDA BOARD UPDATE

Congratulations to these people selected in the recent SDACDA election to be on the executive board:

Ben Van Moer - President Elect

Lorena Blom - Northeast Region Representative

Mason Meyer - Southeast Region Representative

Hayes Chohon - West Region Representative

Julie Fastnacht has agreed to serve as the new Membership Chair

The new members' term will begin in July. Thank you to our outgoing board members:

Jon Nero - Past President

Molly Augsburgers - Northeast Region Representative

Janice Gilbert - Southeast Region Representative

Kelsey Kaitfors - West Region Representative

Jacob Nordermeer - Membership Chair

# NEWSLETTER

## LEADERSHIP

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - Denise Perry

President-Elect - Janice Gilbert

Vice President - Jonathan Nero

Treasurer - Shane Wuebben

Secretary - Jennifer Loftin

Northeast Region Representative - Molly Augsburg

Western Region Representative - Kelsey Kaitfors

Southeast Region Representative - Janice Gilbert

Student Representative - Jamee Kattner

Membership Relations - Lorena Blom and Julie Fastnacht

Technology Chair/Newsletter Editor - Whitney Wilson

### REPertoire AND RESOURCES

Boychoirs; Children's and Community Youth Choirs

Kim Bruguier - kim.bruguier@k12.sd.us

College and University Choirs

Dr. David DeHoogh-Kliwer - dave.dk@usiouxfalls.edu

Collegiate Student Activities

Dr. Laura Diddle - laura.diddle@sdstate.edu

Community Choirs; Music and Worship

Dr. Andrew Robinette - andrew.robinette@sdstate.edu

Ethnic and Multicultural Choirs

Melanie Brink - brinkm@taism.com

Junior High and Middle School Choirs

Kathy Sundvold - kathy.sundvold@k12.sd.us

Tenor/Bass Choirs

Jeffrey Spencer - jeffrey.spencer@k12.sd.us

Treble Choirs

Jennifer Richards - jennifer.richards@k12.sd.us

Senior High Choirs

Rodd Bauck - Rodd.Bauck@k12.sd.us

Show Choirs

Trisha Fisher - Trisha.Fisher@k12.sd.us

Jazz Choirs

Chris Jacobson - Christopher.Jacobson@k12.sd.us

