

Manitoba Choral Association Annual General Meeting

President's Report

One year ago, the board of MCA gathered to envision how to best embark upon a new season of choral singing. The world was slowly coming out of the pandemic, and we understood that there would be a lot of work to do to bring choral singing back to the heights it had once enjoyed in the province before public singing was shut down. We generated some great ideas and crafted some ambitious plans. And we went for it. I'm proud to say that this past year has seen MCA produce some fantastic events for the provincial choral community. From singers to conductors, member supporters, donors, and audiences, Manitoba Choral Association has worked to enrich the lives of Manitobans through the art of choral music.

In October 2022, MCA undertook its first event of the year with GATHER, an all-day choral concert in the Lyric Theatre at Assiniboine Park. Even though the weather was rather cool, we couldn't be happier with the turnout. We had food trucks, art vendors and other arts organizations represented on site throughout the day. And of course, the amazing line-up of choral groups including the Buffalo Gals, Rainbow Harmony Project, the University of Manitoba and Canadian Mennonite University choirs, and many more, as well as a workshop with Cory Campbell, and JP Hoe capping the event. It was a great way to say that choral singing was back.

Manitoba ChoralFest was finally in person this year. We had a great slate of clinicians from throughout Canada and changed the format slightly from years past. Even so, with many choral programs in a rebuilding stage, attendance was not as high as in previous years. We anticipate that will change in the future.

We also had a fantastic Manitoba Sings event in February at a new location for us at Portage Avenue Church. The adult choir was quite full, but youth numbers were lower than in previous years. No doubt, this is also a by-product of the pandemic.

And finally, I just want to mention our BEYOND choral symposium. This event was meant to engage and inspire choral educators from around the province with clinics from prominent choral educators from Canada and the US. Among our many presenters, Melanie DeMore reminded us of the power of music and of singing within community. She showed us the power music has to engage people, to reflect, to tell stories, and to provide meaning. Doug Friesen showed us how thinking outside the box can lead us to brand new music learning experiences. All of our presenters were engaging and experts in their field. And of course, visiting and catching up with colleagues is always a great reason to get together.

The future is certainly looking bright for Manitoba Choral Association. I have to give a very large thank-you to our fantastic Executive Director, Jenny Steinke-Magnus, for her tireless work and energy. The work she has been able to do has been nothing short of amazing. And I want to thank our other staff and board members for giving their time and energies toward making MCA such an important vehicle for choral music in the province. You're all amazing people and your contributions to MCA are invaluable.

There is still much work to do. We've heard from so many people that rebuilding their choral programs after the pandemic will take time. Manitoba Choral Association wants to be there as we build the future of choral singing in this province together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Sawatzky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr. David Sawatzky, DMA
President
Manitoba Choral Association