

Pulling Back the Curtains and Opening the Windows Wide

BY HOLLIS THOMS

Michael Kaiser states, in his recent thought-provoking small book entitled *Curtains?: The Future of the Arts in America* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2015):

...I have believed in the power of the arts to inspire, educate, and entertain. People in every culture draw and sing and dance. The need to express oneself is innate to human beings. It cannot be ignored, submerged or repressed for very long. Artists need to create beautiful and meaningful works. It is not a choice, it is a requirement...The arts are necessary for every community's health and well-being. No great civilization can be sustained without the joy and the release provided by the arts... While I am confident there will always be art and artists in our world, however, I am less optimistic about the future of organized arts institutions... (Preface, ix)

...it is likely that our children will not think of the arts as integral parts of their lives and communities... Little by little, city by city, art form by art form, and organization by organization, we will witness an erosion of the scope and diversity of the arts... The arts world is changing and the children of my children will simply not have the same opportunities for inspiration and education. (120-121)

As Kaiser looks at the next twenty years for arts organizations in America, he sees great challenges for arts organizations and unless there is a transformation in the way we present the arts, the future of the arts in America could be very bleak.

Michael Kaiser looks at the arts problem through a top-down lens, seeing the bigger organizations as the driving forces behind the success of the arts in America. I wish to explore a different approach to the arts challenge in America, that is, from the bottom up.

Vaclav Havel, intellectual, playwright, politician and essayist, has written a powerful book, *Living in Truth* (London: Faber and Faber,

1990), where he talks about advocating a dissident movement and parallel structures to create a new society that will eventually emerge spontaneously from the old decaying and dying one. He sees a transformative power *within each individual* to change society. He writes:

...the most interesting thing about responsibility is that we carry it everywhere. That means that responsibility is ours, that we must accept it and grasp it here and now, in this place in time and space where the Lord has set us down, and that we cannot lie our way out of it by moving somewhere else. (104)

It is, however, becoming evident—and I think that... a single, seemingly powerless person who dares to cry out the word of truth and to stand behind it with all his person and all his life, ready to pay a high price, has surprisingly, great power. (156)

I would like to introduce you to three young individuals working in the arts who are each day transforming the arts where they are, carrying out their responsibility and moving the arts in America towards a brighter future.

Recently, I sent a multi-question survey to my three grown children, who are all working in the arts, derived the central meta-question: *How can we, who believe in and have committed our lives to the beauty and power of classical music, create a new American society where such beauty and power are essential, necessary, and transformative?*

The three respondents to the survey spent time reflecting on the questions and their responses give hope that there is a dissident movement emerging and parallel structures being developed that will bring about a transformation in American society. The respondents are: Jonas Thoms, 31, teacher of horn and music at Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio and free-lance horn player; Sonja (Thoms) Winkler, 34, Senior



From left, music professionals Jonas Thoms, Sonja (Thoms) Winkler, and Dr. Jason Thoms considered how to craft a society which embraces classical music.

Director of Operations with the Nashville Symphony and free-lance oboe player; and, Dr. Jason Thoms, 41, Dean of Arts and Sciences and Director of Choral Activities at Concordia College-New York.

THE SURVEY AND THE RESPONSES

Question 1: What has motivated you to pursue a career in classical music?

Jonas: I have loved playing the horn since elementary school and found a career in playing the horn to be the most natural career path to follow. I enjoy the activities, the experiences, and the people I am involved with everyday as a classical musician.

Sonja: I have spent many years studying oboe and classical music. I feel that live music is essential to life and have found a great opportunity to pursue working in music through arts management. I enjoy the variety of experiences in my work every day, interacting with talented musicians and colleagues while contributing to a product that inspires thousands of people.

Jason: I am a classical musician because it is what people in our family have done for four generations. As a vocal performer, I enjoy performing great music with great colleagues. As a teacher, I enjoy motivating students to achieve musical high points in their lives. It is not only fun and rewarding, personally, but it helps to pay the bills.

Question 2: How would you describe your career in classical music?

Jonas: I am a performer and educator. I teach applied horn, horn ensemble, brass pedagogy, a course in music appreciation, and also one in music of Western cultures at Wright State University. I am involved in planning and participating in many professional clinics and conferences and have played with many chamber and symphonic ensembles in Cincinnati, Dayton, and throughout Ohio and Kentucky.

Sonja: I have spent the last ten years in operations for a symphony orchestra. That means that I help to manage all the logistics of what happens onstage to make the concert happen. This involves assessing the needs of each program, collaborating with stagehands and technical staff, problem solving and supporting the needs of musicians and staff alike. I spent almost nine years working on planning tours for the Pittsburgh Symphony, which was a complex project involving bringing an orchestra of 100 players on the road in the USA, Europe, and Asia. I am now with the Nashville Symphony.

Jason: My career currently, in addition to being the dean of arts and sciences at Concordia College-New York, includes being the director of choral activities and conducting four different ensembles. I also work as an assistant conductor for a church and other organizations, perform as a professional chorister and soloist with high-level professional ensembles, and serve as a professional adjudicator for state ensemble competitions. In addition, I also write and arrange music for ensembles I participate in and have had a number of my compositions published.

Question 3: What are the goals that you have for your life in classical music and where do you see yourself ending up when you reach the height of your career?

Jonas: I would like to continue to teach at the college level and to frequently perform with a variety of high-level chamber and symphonic ensembles. I could see myself sustaining my current place in my career or attempting to move up. The opportunities to move up are limited and, in some cases, geographically unappealing.

Sonja: I would like to continue to facilitate excellent live performances that inspire all people in the community. I am constantly trying to improve my skills in leadership and

communication. I suppose I have achieved a great deal and really value the place I am right now. As long as I am contributing in an excellent way, I want to stay in the field.

Jason: I would like to conduct choirs that receive invitations to state, regional, and national conferences, perform with ensembles that have been nominated or have won Grammys, train and mentor students who will make an impact on the musical lives of others, write music that is performed by other ensembles on a national level, and, finally, always have fun, look for new and different music that affects audiences. I believe that I am very close to the height of my career. I hope that I can remain there for an extended period of time, and that as I grow and change as a musician I will do it with excellence and high standards. For me the most important thing is not where I'll be but how open, creative, and hardworking I will be.

Question 4: Whose lives do you affect each day by the music work that you do, and how do you feel that you are changing their lives by the music work you do for and with them?

Jonas: As I work as a performer and educator I affect students, fellow performers, and music patrons. For my students, I lead by setting an example of professionalism. For my fellow performers, I try to work with them in a spirit of camaraderie to complete the projects we undertake or the musical performances we engage in on a regular basis. For music patrons, I provide musical entertainment that they will enjoy.

Sonja: As part of a symphony orchestra, I have always had to produce two to four concerts per week, for 40 some weeks a year. Audiences have ranged from 500-2,000. That is a lot of ticket buyers, elementary/middle/high school students, and general public. A symphony orchestra should be for the community and seek to play excellently for all people. I find it very rewarding to hear the audience enjoy a performance. That is really the fuel that keeps me going. It doesn't matter what the content is—classical, pop, film—there is something for everyone (and not everything is for everyone). I think embracing the diversity and unity in music is very important.

Jason: First, I do music for my family. I am a fourth generation musician and the goal is to pass that interest and the skills necessary on to my own children, the fifth generation of music makers. It is also most important to support

family members in their musical endeavors. Second, I do music for my students, college, and audiences. I try to help these groups understand the importance, joy, and meaning of music, hopefully, inspiring them to pursue more musical styles, genres, and performances on their own. Third, I do music for my church by singing, conducting, and writing music so that God is lifted up, above my skill, providing music and performance with a higher meaning.

As a choral director I am always making sure that the quality of music performed is high, with great texts, solid musical language, and authentic character. I want my singers to pay attention to the importance of texts and how they are expressed. My goals, though mainly rehearsal related, help singers realize that they must spend time with the details, spend time exploring the texts, and understand what makes good music. These goals, hopefully, will also translate to other parts of their lives including studying, working and connecting with family and friends, requiring concentrated and detailed work and planning.

Question 5: What evidence do you get from those who you do your music for that you are affecting their lives?

Jonas: From my students I do not get immediate feedback, but feedback based on development over time. From my fellow performers, I get occasional immediate feedback through conversations based on the quality of performances. From the patrons I serve, very little feedback, but occasionally patrons will speak to me after a performance about how much they enjoyed a performance.

Sonja: Applause is a connection between performers and patrons. That connection can be affirmation of beauty, appreciation, joy, sorrow, and happiness. There is a special kind of happiness in seeing a program produced and performed well.

Jason: I always tell my students that our only goal is “to make old women cry, but if we make an old man cry then we are doing really well.” This is not to say that we try and manipulate emotions, but with my choirs it is our goal to teach the students important anthems, songs, and texts which will resonate throughout subsequent years. What is interesting to me is not only when old people cry because of the beauty or memory attached to the music, but when our students have an emotional reaction to something we do. They might have tears in their eyes when they realize that a song

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we have been singing all year finally makes sense, or maybe they felt joy at succeeding when the music was difficult to perform. Audience and alumni have expressed to me that the choir's beautiful singing moved them spiritually or aesthetically. I am not looking for life altering moments, but moments of transcendence.

Question 6: What values regarding classical music do you wish to pass on to those you work with each day?

Jonas: I wish to pass on to my students, colleagues, and those I perform for a strong work ethic, sincerity of action, and confidence in ability.

“It is important that creativity be valued in the education of all children. Classical music performances must be accessible to all audiences...”

Jonas Thoms, horn player & educator

Sonja: I am always keeping my eyes on excellence and striving for the best. Always consider the opinions of everyone, but commit to what you know you can do best for them. Seek to meet people where they are, but then draw them to where they might never have thought to go.

Jason: I am always trying to communicate confidence in one's abilities, while always striving to be better. Understanding that no matter what skill level you are, you are part of a musical community that must work together. Great music performed excellently, with context and understanding, creates transcendence. Poor music is poor music; it can be performed well, but it often lacks transcendence. Practice never makes perfect, it makes community, builds character, and increases expectations.

Question 7: What is the significance of classical music in the life of the people you come in contact with in your everyday music work, and how does what you do move them to a higher level of appreciation, involvement, or commitment to classical music?

Jonas: For many, classical music is something

they enjoy, but it is not their only musical preference. For others, it is their primary musical genre of choice, and they are very knowledgeable about the works being performed and the artists who perform. In either instance, the performances are often attended because of an entertainment value that is not matched through audio recordings alone. As with anything, if people have a good time attending an event they will likely attend another. In classical music, events that educate, please, and move audiences are the most effective. Too much that is out of the comfort zone of the audience will not lead people to attend future performances.

Sonja: A significant musical experience could be the first hearing of live music for a young elementary school student, or an intensely moving experience for someone hearing again one of their favorite classical works. Music provides both an escape from reality and a way to cope with reality. Music expresses what cannot be expressed

in words or life alone. The more an orchestra can reach out into the community, the more the community will see value in the orchestra and want to support it. Financial support from the community is essential to the American orchestra surviving.

Jason: Classical music is the means by which I meet the world. The best way for people to have a significant musical experience is to have people participate in some way. Provide the audience a chance to sing, have the choir stand in the audience as they sing, get people involved in making music themselves. They may not be good, but they will understand how difficult, or how much work it took to achieve the excellence they just heard.

Question 8: Can you think of an experience you had where you transformed the life of a person or an audience to a greater appreciation of classical music?

Jonas: I can think of times where a student

was transformed by a sense of accomplishment because they worked hard to achieve a goal. The music, in those instances, was a means to get to that level of accomplishment.

Sonja: I feel very passionate about mentoring young arts managers. I have mentored probably twelve to fifteen interns in my career so far. Many of them go on to work and lead in arts organizations. I always tried to instill a respect, honesty, and pursuit of excellence in their work while recognizing that we all bring something different to the table. I also remained teachable when I was mentoring, often leaving me changed for the better.

Jason: I would say that it is not the music by itself that does this. It is the community of musicians, the rigor of rehearsal, and the expectations for excellence, which are performed with a stance of openness to the audience. Choosing music that the audience will simply “like” is pandering to the lowest common denominator, while choosing music that probably only the performers will “like” most likely communicates a sense of elitism and standoffishness that will turn off an audience. The selection of appropriate repertoire, combined with great performing, helps an audience leave inspired, challenged, and hopeful for the future.

Question 9: If you were going to lay the groundwork for a new society in America where classical music was essential, necessary, and transformative, what steps would be required for such a groundwork?

Jonas: It is important that creativity be valued in the education of all children. Classical music performances must be accessible to all audiences (not saying all would have to be that way, but you have to appeal to people that are unfamiliar with your art in order to get them to come to concerts). Classical music performances need to be done in the community and in non-traditional environments so to connect with audiences within their comfort zones and in familiar contexts.

Sonja: I think a society needs to be built on excellence, respect, and diversity. Music can express all of those things, but will not have the freedom to until the citizens pursue excellence, respect, and diversity in all areas of life. We should highlight the incredible development

powers of music in early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school education. Playing a musical instrument develops the brain in ways that no other subject or activity can. Music is expressive and brings enjoyment. Embrace all kinds of music and let the students choose which kind speaks to them.

Jason: As a society we should require the mainstream and online media to showcase classical music, from birth to college put an academic emphasis on music and the arts (not just try to defend the importance of it), find ways to make more concerts free to the public (which means more funding of the arts through donors, grants, or the government), and develop better opportunities for community music making and inexpensive group and private lessons for children.

Question 10: Given the present context for classical music (aging population, lack of music education throughout a child's education, new social media, financial problems, etc...) how might those factors be turned around to enhance, enlarge, and enrich classical music in America?

Jonas: We must educate audiences through non-traditional performances. Many people are uninformed and, thus, uninterested in attending. It is okay to have performances for the educated few, but if there is a desire to appeal to the masses, performances must be more approachable and even include multiple musical genres.

Sonja: We need to reach out to communities to see how they want to interact with live performances and we need to listen to their suggestions. Perform excellently in ways that are familiar and, yet, challenge audiences. Appeal to them, adapt, and still perform excellently. Collaborate with other organizations to create partnerships and festivals of the arts. We are all on the same team, so do not become territorial, elitist, or exclusive.

Jason: I believe that our music making needs to be more relevant to the listeners. No matter what the medium, people will often attend concerts performed by people like themselves. If we can work to diversify the people on the stage, we will likely diversify the people in the seats. And yes,

that also means the repertoire will change.

Question 11: How important are your spouses, colleagues, and friends (either on Facebook or elsewhere) to nurturing and supporting you in the musical work that you do?

Jonas: Others are very important to nurturing and supporting the work I do. Teachers and mentors that have been integral in my development over the years continue to be an encouragement so that I keep my ability level high, marketable, and desirable.

Sonja: I think it's been very encouraging to have a spouse, friends, and family who have committed to a life with music. I am also inspired by those in my life who do not make a living in the arts but have a desire to have music a part of their everyday life. I learn equally from all when there is strong devotion to character, equality, and excellence.

Jason: Social media is wonderful for a "like" or brief comment. Most of my colleagues don't comment online, but when I see them at a gig they know what has been happening in my professional life. I think what supports and nurtures me is to see my colleagues performing constantly and for them to see me doing the same.

Question 12: In the above quotes by Havel, he talks about creating a dissident movement and parallel structures in a society and taking personal responsibility each day for speaking the truth. Do you see your music work as a "dissident movement" or "creating a parallel structure" in the hope that eventually your work along with others in classical music will transform our society into something new, more beautiful, and more meaningful?

Jonas: I'm not really sure how to interpret this quote. I don't think music in and of itself has the power to accomplish any of that other than in isolated instances. The communities that are centered in music and the interactions that occur because of the individuals involved can greatly impact society and move people to more meaningful relationships. Music can be a means to accomplish this and is a great way

to bring people together in a collaborative and encouraging environment.

Sonja: I see my responsibility in daily interactions with colleagues, family, and friends as the way I can affect society. I do not want to compartmentalize it only to music. There are many ways that society can transform, but the existence of music is essential to that transformation.

Jason: In many ways, yes. I believe that performers have a responsibility to comment on society, and to try and present truth. Social justice, human equality, speaking for all society as equals is a vital part of that. There is a fine line between a soap box and a truth teller. I want to be a truth teller.

Question 13: Do you think that your music work and those of your equally committed music colleagues can eventually create a "velvet revolution" (as Havel did) in America where classical music could spontaneously emerge as essential, necessary, and transformative?

Jonas: If there is a sincere and appropriate desire to educate and engage audiences, then yes. This may not be possible because of the state of the education system for young people in today's world. Adults also need to be engaged with classical music. The culture of classical music may need to be "toned-down" (not watered-down) in some instances so that it has wider appeal.

Sonja: I think that the values of community, diversity, respect, and balance in life are what will be transformative. The work of an orchestra will survive by embracing these values.

Jason: I don't think that this can or should be limited to "classical" music. There is a significant portion of the population of the United States who have never heard live music performed. I believe that if there is one area that can be transformative it is to try and bring high quality live music making to people, especially the disenfranchised: people in prisons, nursing homes, hospitals, mental institutions, and homeless shelters. It is significant, though, that

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much music is performed live by the poor, immigrants, and people living in rural areas because it is part of their cultural experience.

Question 14: Can you select one musical experience/ piece of music that you have performed in or helped to get performed that changed you personally from the inside out and provided you with the inspiration to devote or continue to devote your life to classical music?

Jonas: There are a few pieces that I greatly enjoyed performing and would love to perform again. There are definitely works that I have a stronger connection with than others. However, I do not think I would say that a single work has changed me from the inside out or provided me with the inspiration to continue to pursue music.

Sonja: I was tasked with producing a concert called "Singing City" with the Pittsburgh Symphony. It was to have a community chorus of 2,000 people, with full orchestra in a basketball stadium. A tremendous amount of work went into the project, but it was pretty awesome to see a performance work with that many people. This, like many other huge projects, has been inspirational in that there was a lot of community involvement and the product was really excellent. Excellence speaks and communities want to participate in that.

Jason: No, I cannot select one moment. For me, it is the continual moments of transcendence, beauty, or truth that I encounter on a daily basis that keep me going. There are many transcendent experiences, including music camps, tours, performances, and workshops, that have strengthened my resolve or sustained my calling. There is not one that has been significantly better than the next. Likely, it is the constant hope that the next experience will be better or more transcendent than the last that drives me forward.

Question 15: If a "velvet revolution" occurred in classical music in America because of your efforts and others like

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Jason Thoms,
Dean of Arts and Sciences and Director
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College-New York

you who believe in classical music, how would our society be different than it is now, not just in music but in other ways?

Jonas: We would probably have a society that is more interested in deferred long term benefits and more value driven goals and less interested in immediate gratification and quick results. We may have a more appreciative society as a result, or even one that is more apt to seek creative options, as a result of embracing a creative field such as music.

Sonja: If the values of community, excellence, diversity, respect, and balance were embraced, we would have a more productive, expressive, and free society.

Jason: If all of our society was a single choir, we would have to learn to respect each other's talents and be thankful that we are singing together. This doesn't mean that we would all think about the world in the same way. We would not all be Democrats, or straight, or spiritual. In the professional choral ensembles I sing in, there are a wide variety of people who are willing and eager to put aside differences to make something meaningful happen together. A society that is like a choir would be a place where a variety of people can sit down in conversation to get something meaningful done by working together. We would learn to appreciate our differences while celebrating our mutual gifts. This would be a different society.

Question 16: Do you think that such a "velvet revolution" in our society is

possible as a result of the daily work you do in classical music?

Jonas: I think we are able to affect our community and those that we come in contact with as a result of our daily musical encounters. A larger, concentrated effort of all classical musicians could be possible but seems unlikely. If impact on a small level can grow to a larger reach and continue to grow, then it is possible, but again, the most impactful way to affect a community is through close contact and instruction.

Sonja: Yes.

Jason: Only in a very small way. These changes can't be made by one performer or choir, but require a movement. There are movements beginning to take shape in America, but it may be a generation before change is evident.

Question 17: If you were to be part of a "dissident movement" or create "parallel structures" that might give life to classical music in America, what would you do?

Jonas: I would organize community events that involve bringing together diverse people of all ability levels in music making activities. I would present concerts that program engaging, interesting, and thought-provoking repertoire and/or include collaborations with different art forms. I would perform in non-traditional performance venues. I would educate audiences through performances.

Sonja: I would facilitate great performances. I would seek out community involvement. I would interact with patrons. I would make each interaction important.

Jason: I would find ways and people to serve the disenfranchised with live music making. I would find ways to meet people literally where they are to make music. The ultimate in this mindset is for performers to go to the audience and for hopefully the audience to become part of the performance. The concert hall is dying, because the people aren't there. Musical missionaries are becoming vital.

Question 18: When you finish your career in music what is the legacy you want to leave behind?

Jonas: I would hope that my students and colleagues would remember me as someone who was giving of time and talents, was willing to collaborate, and who benefited in their lives as a result of my interaction with them. It would be nice to be remembered for a certain level of artistry, ability level, and knowledge, as well. I would want people to say, “There goes Jonas Thoms; he was an asset to the community.”

Sonja: I want to equip musicians and arts managers/educators to bring music to all peoples in a way that respects their diversity and challenges them to be expressive and responsible citizens. I would want people to say, “There goes Sonja (Thoms) Winkler, who pursued providing music for every life.”

Jason: I don’t know that my legacy will be determined by me, but I believe that my legacy will include teaching people to be better human beings through the medium of choir and music. I would want people to say, “There goes Dr. J, the

person who taught me how to make a difference in my world.”

CONCLUSION

My grandfather was a professional singer during the 1920s-1950s, my father was also a professional singer from the 1940s-1980s, and I have been a teacher of English and music, a school administrator who supported the arts, and a composer from 1970s-until now. I have seen one generation move on to the next, one retires and another emerges, and that there is a span of time when there is an overlapping as one wanes and the other emerges. I now see my career as a composer and educator gradually coming to an end and my three grown children now taking on the mission of classical music in America with a fervor and zeal that is extraordinary. The future of classical music in America is strong because of the daily and personal efforts of teachers, performers, and administrators like my grown children, who in their own sometimes inconspicuous yet imaginative ways, quiet yet persistent actions, and patient yet fearless commitment, are creating a “dissident movement” and “parallel structures” so that someday classical music may emerge as a more transformative force in our American society.

As Henry David Thoreau wrote at the end of *Walden*, “There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.” By pulling back the curtains and opening the windows wide, we can let that light in *now*, and let in the bright future that awaits us.



Hollis Thoms, composer and researcher, has had a number of articles published in PAN PIPES. He has written over 100 musical works for a variety of ensembles and has over

30 published articles in educational journals. In addition to a graduate degree in educational administration and years as a teacher and school administrator, he has a Master’s degree in Composition from Northwestern University and finished the course work for a PhD in Composition from the Eastman School of Music. He has been the recipient of numerous fellowships, including the Joseph Kingenstein Fellowship to Columbia University and the Alden B. Dow Creativity Fellowship, was a Fulbright Exchange Teacher to Scotland, and was selected to participate in the Summer Institute for Principals at Harvard University.

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Networking can often be purely fate. However, if you don’t put yourself out there, fate will never find you!

3. See how awesome your students truly are.

As with many state NAFME conferences, ours in Massachusetts features multiple auditioned ensembles. Seeing your students experience a new conductor alongside their peers of equal ability with the culminating performance opportunity helps remind you of just how amazing they really are. You get to witness a truly life changing experience for your students, which then in turn reminds you of that moment you realized how powerful this whole music thing really is. It is very humbling to know that you helped play a role in the journey your student is getting to take.

2. Professional camaraderie.

I had mentioned that social time with friends and colleagues a few points back and

linked it to networking. While yes, networking certainly can and will happen, this social time together provides a significant amount of camaraderie between us all. We go through periods in our careers where we struggle in various capacities--tough administration, district financial woes, tough students--the not so pleasant parts of teaching. And, on the other hand, we go through fantastic periods that we wonder if they’re too good to be true. Whether it’s a struggle or a celebration, having this time together provides a huge sense of validation for what we do because we realize at that moment that we really aren’t alone with the various emotional and professional states of our careers. If anything, we feel far more normal as we realize that the vast majority of our colleagues have experienced or are experiencing what we are.

1. Inspiration for what you do.

I personally cannot wait to go back to school on Monday after our state conference and put into practice all that I learned in the three days

prior. New warm-ups for my choirs, new ways to access technology for my History of Rock and Roll classes, and new ways for me to stay (well, get better at!) organized and manage my time efficiently are just the tip of the iceberg of my inspiration. Hearing the keynote speaker and relating to what he or she has said, having that “light bulb” moment in a session, and leaving wanting *more* is what makes attending a professional conference so important for me.

I always feel refreshed, rejuvenated, and above all, happy to be doing what I’m doing for my career. Why not take time out to redefine our love for our careers and passions?



Stephanie Riley is an initiate of the Gamma Delta Chapter at SUNY Potsdam and currently a member of the Boston Alumnae Chapter. A

passionate music educator, Stephanie teaches 8-12 choral music on Cape Cod and is a member of the MMEA state board.