



August 3, 2016

Dear YCTC,

I'm so thrilled to be joining the team at YCTC as your new Artistic Director. Thank you to the Board of Directors and all of the parents and singers who were involved in the search process. It's been great to have met and worked with many students already and I look forward to the music making we will share in 2016-2017. I have an ambitious, yet fun, season of music planned for all of us. I'm hoping to get our season started with traveling songs from all over the globe! I'm excited to embark on this journey of music making with all of the current and new families. I know Justin sent out some information earlier in the summer about my appointment, but I wanted to share little more about myself. I have a Bachelor and a Masters of Music Education from the University of Illinois-Champaign/Urbana, where I double majored in piano and voice. I have taught choir across middle school and high school for a combined 13 years. I also have done many musicals in my tenure and look forward to working with the YCTC singers. I am active on the Executive Board for Illinois American Choral Directors Association, and when I'm not making music I love to knit. I also am a wife and mom to three beautiful boys.

I also wanted to let all of the YCTC families know that Justin resigned at the end of July to take a new opportunity in Washington, DC. While I'm disappointed to see him leave, I am excited by the opportunity he has in front of him. I'm also excited to welcome our new Operations Manager, **Sarah Kruske**. She has just graduated from DePaul University with an arts administration degree and is thrilled to be joining our team. We hope you will welcome her to the YCTC family when you meet her this Fall.

As we prepare for the start of the 2016-17 season I wanted to share specific things with you about the coming year:

1. One of my primary areas of focus is expanding the number of voices in our choir. You will be receiving registration information soon and **I would also encourage all of our singers to invite two friends who love singing to join them for auditions or for one of our first classes. I know I made many of my closest friends while singing in choir.**
2. We have placement auditions on August 22nd and 24th and I look forward to meeting all the current singers, siblings, and parents then. There is so much talent already within YCTC, and I'm excited to help your children take the next steps in their musical journey. Please see the Registration Packet for Placement Audition sign up. After placement, we will organize the various choirs into 2-4 parts

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Amy Boyle, *president*

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Tom Beck

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Melissa Corley

Mary Ann Finlay

Kelly Gervin Raizer

Bryan Hales

Tobi Heekin

Scott Johnson

Martha Kinzel

Linda Kiracibasi

Mary Alice Miller

Cheri Mock-Jaffe

Aki Nakagawa

Janet Nolan

Children will look to you for which way to turn, to learn what to be.

and start digging into all the music we need to prepare. My approach to choral singing is a holistic approach which starts with meeting the socio-emotional needs of children so they can fully express and showcase their amazing abilities. I'm passionate about all types of music and genres, and I hope we will be able to sing something in this concert season that will become one of your "new favorite" pieces.

3. To help with planning, the key concert dates for the year are:
 - a. Thursday, October 20, 2016 - Come Travel With Me (Full Choir)
 - b. Tuesday, December 6, 2016 - Glorious (Full Choir)
 - c. Saturday, December 10, 2016 - Let Snow Take Flight (Chamber and Treble Choirs)
 - d. Thursday, February 16, 2017 - Music Be The Food Of Love (Full Choir)
 - e. Sunday, April 23, 2017 - Tell Your Story (Chamber and Treble Choirs)
 - f. Sunday, May 7, 2017 - It Takes A Village (Full Choir)

4. The biggest news is that we are looking into planning a trip for our Chamber Chorale members where they will audition for an opportunity to work with Eric Whitacre at the National American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Convention. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to be taught and led by renowned conductors at the convention in Minneapolis, MN. The dates of this prospective tour are March 8-11, 2017. Families of Chamber Chorale chorus members should pick up an audition packet with more information from Sarah at placement auditions. We will be able to take all interested students and chaperones whether they make the various Honor Choirs or not.

At the National ACDA Convention, students who are chosen for the Honor Choir will be in a 3-day intensive singing experience with their honor conductor. Students who travel with us will be able to attend various performances of professional choirs from around the nation, workshops, and sit in on honor choir rehearsals. The event finishes with Honor Choir performances to conclude the event. It is my hope to submit YCTC as a performing ensemble at future events.

I'm looking forward to meeting you all very soon. Get the word out about YCTC, because this year is going to be amazing!

Sincerely,



Amy J. Branahl
Artistic Director

The Youth Choral Theater of Chicago

Audition Materials 2016-2017

Please contact Sarah Kruske at (847)535-9873 or by email at info@youthchoraltheater.org to schedule an audition.

You can also sign up online: smarturl.it/yctcsignup

Those auditioning for Chamber Chorale (Grades 6-12) will have a **full ten minute** slot of time.

Those auditioning for Winnetka Children's Chorus, Concertina, and Treble Ensemble (Grades JK-5) will **share a ten minute slot** with another student.

Audition Information

Auditions will be from 3:00-8:00pm with a break from 6:00-6:30pm. Please contact Sarah Kruske with your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice of a time slot.

Address: Trinity United Methodist Church of Wilmette
1024 Lake Ave, Wilmette, IL

Auditions will take place in the Gym/Social Hall on the 2nd floor. Enter through the garden and stone arches and use the sidewalk to get to the main door. I will be there to greet you at the door. Please have all registration materials filled out or submitted before you arrive for auditions. If you would like to fill out the Registration Form online, you may do so here: <http://smarturl.it/yctc> . We will also have extra paper copies available on site.

What to prepare: Please fill out the audition form online found here: smarturl.it/yctcaudition, or bring a copy of the completed form to the audition. Students will sing a warmup. New auditionees do not need to prepare any additional music. If singers were in YCTC last year, please be ready to sing an excerpt from "Come and Sing" which is included in this packet.

Chamber Chorale

What to prepare: Please prepare to sing several warmups, the sight reading sheet attached to this form, and a verse/chorus of a song you are currently singing.

When you arrive, please take an informational packet regarding ACDA National Convention. Travel to National ACDA Convention is optional and acceptance into National Honor Choir is not mandatory to travel.

See you soon!

Sarah Kruske
Operations Manager
Youth Choral Theater of Chicago

Youth Choral Theater of Chicago | AUDITION FORM

Please circle Ensemble: **Chamber Chorale** **Treble Ensemble** **Winnetka Children's Chorus** **Concertina**

Name: _____ Grade (2016-17): _____

Height: ____ feet ____ inches

What goals do you have for the season? _____

What is your favorite memory of YCTC in previous years, or what are you most excited for in the upcoming season?

Performing Experience: _____

(Chamber Only) Will you be auditioning for National ACDA Conference in Minneapolis? (Circle one): YES NO

In the lines below, please indicate any dates on the schedule sent prior that you **cannot** attend (all rehearsals are at Trinity Church unless otherwise noted.) Musical rehearsals will be from 4-6pm at Trinity United Methodist Church.

Director's Notes: