

Sunday, July 8

4:30 REGISTRATION, distribution of repertoire packages and course materials

5:00 An introduction to the *fikamusik* concept
Faculty

5:45 FIKA Overview of musical life histories: Revealing our common stories

6:30 Improving singing and conducting through Anatomical Awareness (AA): A focus on alignment
Catherine Robbins

This session provides a user-friendly introduction to thinking about the body from a biomechanical perspective. How do we find balance in our stationary posture as choral singers and conductors? How do we help singers remain free of tension while encouraging energized tone? How do conductors find balance in the body that allows a full range of motion, and builds strength and endurance without sacrificing expressivity? We will explore how our joints and muscles interact, and look at the role of connective tissue (fascia), borrowing from science to enhance our art. This session includes a brief introduction to MELT method and Body Mapping (BMG) techniques.

7:45 BREAK

8:00 Starting the year off right: Mindful creation of the choral community
Faculty

This session invites new ways of thinking about how to set up the year for success. Topics included creating a safe place for singers, creating genuine community in the choir, and instilling a sense of personal and group artistry in choristers.

9:00 Day end.

Monday, July 9

9:00 Warm-up: Getting the music into the body
Elroy Friesen

9:15 Vocal Techniques: Addressing respiration and phonation: Ideas for application
Catherine Robbins

This session will present both foundational knowledge and ideas for creating exercises that speak to the “power source and vibrator” elements of vocal production. How do the concepts of inhalation and breath management aid in developing a warm, resonant, and free tone? The nature of onsets and releases, and relieving tension in the neck and larynx will also be addressed.

10:15 FIKA Early music and singing experiences: family, school, church

11:00 Embodied score preparation: Conducting and cuing with the body in mind
Faculty

How do we analyze and prepare scores to ensure healthy vocal production? What gestures support this effort? This session offers concrete ideas to support the principles explored in earlier sessions. A variety of repertoire will be used. Feel free to bring your own scores for ideas.

12:00 LUNCH BREAK

1:00 Techniques into practice: Breath and body
Faculty

Participants have the opportunity to sing and conduct with their colleagues. Topics from previous sessions will be applied to various repertoire and integrated into a loose workshop and masterclass format. Participants will experience, experiment, and apply ideas from earlier sessions.

2:15 FIKA Early music and singing experiences: family, school, church

2:45 Re-thinking the changing voice: The journey from grade 4 to early adulthood
Catherine Robbins

What changes occur in both boys and girls as they grow; what strategies can allow these changes to happen naturally? What are the stages of the developing voice and how can conductors facilitate consistent vocal growth in individual singers within the ensemble? In this session, the concept of “the changing voice” will be expanded to address vocal development into the early twenties.

3:15 Voice matching and placement
Faculty

This session builds on the session at 2:45 by presenting strategies for creating an environment conducive for healthy singing through choral formation. Issues of blend and balance will be discussed and a “how-to” for voice matching will be presented. This will help conductors capitalize on physics to produce quality choral sound.

4:00 Self-study debrief/discussion

5:00 Day end.

Tuesday, July 10

9:00 Taming the tongue: Considering the tongue's role in singing
Catherine Robbins

9:15 Resonance: Principles and ideas for practice
Catherine Robbins

What does *resonance* really mean and how does it relate to singing? How can we succinctly explain this to student singers? What techniques can be employed that create a vibrant tone? This session addresses these questions and sheds light on some of the old understandings and terms that still confuse singers and choral conductors alike ("head tone"). We will focus on "feeling" our sound, the role of sympathetic vibration related to the sinus cavities, and the influence of the muscles of the face on tone.

10:15 FIKA K-12 School music experiences

11:00 Tuning in the choral ensemble
Elroy Friesen

This session will introduce principles of tuning. The focus will be on harmonic tuning for *a cappella* singing and melodic tuning for unison and accompanied music. Concepts will be applied to repertoire and ideas to incorporate tuning into warm-ups and rehearsal procedure will be addressed.

12:00 LUNCH BREAK

1:00 Vowels: Formation and relation
Catherine Robbins

An exploration of all things vowel! How are vowels formed with the tongue and articulators? How do they relate to each other and align throughout phrases? How do we choose the right "colour" for vowels in various contexts? How does vowel choice influence tuning, tone, and timbre? This session explores all these concepts in pursuit of developing exquisite tone in choral singing. *Includes a brief introduction to IPA.*

2:00 FIKA K-12 School music experiences

2:45 Techniques into practice: Tuning and tone
Faculty

Participants have the opportunity to sing and conduct with their colleagues. Topics from previous sessions will be applied to various repertoire and integrated into a loose workshop and masterclass format. Participants will experience, experiment, and apply ideas from earlier sessions.

4:00 Self-study debrief/discussion

5:00 Day end.

Wednesday, July 11

9:00 Warm-up: Awakening "the ear"
Faculty

What are you getting done during warm-up? How are you preparing brains for success? This warm-up will review and incorporate principles from yesterday's sessions.

9:15 Digging deeper: Conducting as a way of being
Faculty

In this session we address not simply what we do as conductors, but *how* we do it: how we are as conductors. We consider our ways of rehearsing and performing from another angle: our *selves*. We will share understandings that have emerged for us over the development of our careers and research, and how these understandings have impacted our practice. We'll also share how we apply this to our rehearsing and teaching. We will reveal how craft-knowledge and self-knowledge interact to create meaningful rehearsal and performance, and how we apply the *fikamusik* concept to our ongoing practice.

10:15 FIKA Post-secondary music experiences

11:00 Group Vocal Lesson: Theory into practice
Catherine Robbins

A review of previous sessions with an emphasis on coordinating aspects of breath, phonation, and resonance.

12:00 LUNCH

1:00 Expressive English Diction
Elroy Friesen

How often do we struggle to get English "off the page" in a natural, unaffected manner? Understanding and embracing the ebb and flow of English is key. This session will teach participants how to make their text come alive, moving from characteristics inherent in English, to specific teaching of English-isms.

2:00 FIKA Post-secondary music experiences

2:45 Communicating and connecting: Techniques into practice
Faculty

Participants have the opportunity to sing and conduct with their colleagues. Topics from previous sessions will be integrated into various repertoire into a loose workshop and masterclass format. Participants will experience, experiment, and apply ideas from earlier sessions.

4:30-6:00 GROUP DINNER PROVIDED at DEGREES, U of M Campus

Thursday, July 12

9:00 **The synaptic approach to developing a great choir: Expanding our thinking on rehearsal procedure: PART ONE**

Faculty

This session challenges choral music educators to think outside their regular comfort zone and critically reflect on rehearsal procedure. How do we move from concept to concept to create an overall understanding of a particular set of pieces in a short time while, at the same time, addressing all the components of the choral art? How do we help singers to quickly understand both the macro and micro-patterns present in pieces so that we are not trapped in a “note-learning mode”? Looking at how our brains process information and create memory can inform rehearsal process. These sessions will focus on methods to accomplish as much as possible during rehearsal and reveal how repertoire choice contributes to this ideal.

10:15 **FIKA** Career experiences

11:00 **The synaptic approach: PART TWO**

Faculty

12:00 **LUNCH**

1:00 **Techniques into practice: The creative rehearsal in motion**

Faculty

Participants have the opportunity to sing and conduct with their colleagues. Topics from previous sessions will be applied to various repertoire and integrated into a loose workshop and masterclass format. Participants will experience, experiment, and apply ideas from earlier sessions.

2:00 **FIKA** Career experiences

2:45 **The creative rehearsal in motion: PART TWO**

Faculty

4:00 **Self-study debrief/discussion**

5:00 **Day end.**

Friday, July 13

9:00 **FIKA Group Breakfast:** influences on professional practice: connecting narratives to values, beliefs, assumptions

10:00 **Conductors. Being.**

Faculty

Participants have the opportunity to sing and conduct with their colleagues. Topics from previous sessions will be applied to various repertoire and integrated into a loose workshop and masterclass format. Participants will experience, experiment, and apply ideas from earlier sessions.

12:00 **FINAL GROUP LUNCH PROVIDED**

1:30 **Final Self-study debrief/discussion**

2:30 **Day end.**