

## The Circle of Life in the Association

By Allen Henderson, NATS Executive Director

As you read this column, those who teach on a schedule akin to an academic year are well into your fall seasons. Those who teach year-round have likely returned to a regular rhythm after offering various summer options for your students and clients. For others, work is a constant cycle of teaching and performing, coaching and collaborating, or composing and publishing without a specific cyclical schedule. This variety in how we work is one of the unique and wonderful aspects of the National Association of Teachers of Singing. For all practical purposes, NATS runs on a two-year cycle that culminates with our national conference. After each conference, we install new officers, reboot, refresh, and embark on a new two-year cycle (this marks the start of my ninth cycle as executive director).

The 58th National Conference in Knoxville was imbued with a palpable joy and excitement as we gathered for a time of professional development, performances, and the National Student Auditions semifinals and finals. I was constantly met with comments from regular attendees regarding the enjoyable and walkable location; the sense of joy that permeated our time together; the opportunities for networking, mentoring, and stimulating conversation; the inclusive and accessible programming; and the many ways our staff and planners made our time together a safe and welcoming environment for all voices to be heard and celebrated. I am grateful to our wonderful staff and our conference committee who worked tirelessly to plan and execute this event. Many of you have seen and/or heard social media posts or other stories about the event from colleagues, and I know some colleagues who expressed their FOMO at having commitments that prevented them from being there in person. There is not room in this edition to adequately highlight all the great times had, so those will have to live in our hearts and minds. A few perspectives are included, and I hope you will read about the impact such events have on our members and their students.

As a professional association representing members from all walks of life and with various perspectives on life and

a life in the arts, there are times when our association adjusts its programming and services to meet changing needs within our membership or their students and clients. Some changes are subtle but have a positive impact on the segment they serve while others have a more wide-ranging impact. Since 2020, there is no doubt that our profession has weathered a great deal of change and at times NATS has led the change. Other times NATS has followed the lead of others. Our staff and board of directors guide NATS through changing landscapes and new frontiers. As we embark on a new cycle, as part of our 2020-2025 strategic plan, we will be reviewing our products and services in depth in advance of the creation of our next strategic plan. You may be asked periodically to provide feedback and response regarding products and services NATS offers, and we hope you will eagerly provide your feedback so that we can adjust to better serve our members along with their students and clients.



Allen Henderson  
NATS Executive Director

In the upcoming renewal cycle, you will notice new membership categories. Full and Associate members are now called Professional Members, and Student members are now Pre-Professional Members. We've also added a new category: Emerging Professional Members, which provides early-career teachers who are new to NATS reduced membership dues for up to five years as they establish their careers. Special thanks to our Membership Committee and outgoing VP for Membership Torin Chiles for their careful and considered work in crafting these adjustments and updates that were approved at our board meeting.

*Journal of Singing* continues to be a leading publication in our field. Rather than sell our journal to a publisher, NATS always has felt it important to publish the journal ourselves in order to maintain independence and provide the best journal we can offer our profession. Editor-in-Chief Lynn Holding has

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ushered in changes to columns and personnel, and you are already seeing the results of her stewardship of our journal. Thank you, Lynn! As with many journals, the cost of printing and postage continues to rise. As a result, the board has decided to provide JOS in digital format to all members as part of your annual dues. For those who, like me, enjoy holding the hard copy in our hands as we dog ear pages and underline and highlight passages, a publication fee of \$40 can be added to your dues by selecting the option to continue receiving hard copies during the renewal process. With this change, we join other sibling organizations like the College Music Society and National Association for Music Education who have been using this model for many years now.

I continue to be impressed by the dedication of our leadership as they listen and address current needs of our profession while also focusing on the future that is yet unknown before us. I hope you will engage in conversation with national board members and share your hopes and dreams for the future of our association. Choose a different one each week this fall and email them thanking them for their service and share at least one thing you hope our association will accomplish in the coming years. You can find their emails on the [Board of Directors](#) page on our website.

The future is bright for our profession and association, and your engagement is vital to ensure it remains so.

As always, I appreciate your feedback at [allen@nats.org](mailto:allen@nats.org).

## Let's get social!

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and engaging discussions with  
your fellow members.



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