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Mission: *The National Association of Teachers of Singing, Incorporated, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to encouraging the highest standards of the vocal art and of ethical principles in the teaching of singing; and to promoting vocal education and research at all levels, both for the enrichment of the general public and for the professional advancement of the talented.*

The National Association of Teachers of Singing, Inc. is a member of the National Music Council.



From the Independent Teacher Associate Editor Rethinking NATS Chapter Events as Business Travel Professional Development

by Cynthia Vaughn



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When I talk to former NATS members and younger voice teachers about the value of NATS, I frequently hear two things:

- 1) My NATS chapter is too large and geographically distant. It's too far for me to travel 1-3 hours for student auditions and workshops.
- 2) I don't have students advanced enough to sing in student auditions, so it doesn't have value for me.

Stop thinking of your NATS Chapter as "local." Unlike my local MTNA chapter that meets monthly in my neighborhood, just five minutes from my studio, my NATS Chapter is not local. In fact, my NATS Chapter moves from location to location from event to event. It's not local or convenient at all. And that is a very good thing for professional development. When I attend local meetings for MTNA, Chamber of Commerce, or Rotary Club, I carve out a little time in my day planner for the mandatory meetings, sandwiched between a multitude of everyday activities. When I attend a NATS Chapter workshop or student auditions, I have to block time from my calendar, make travel plans, book a hotel, reschedule other commitments, and sometimes juggle lessons. This is dedicated, tax-deductible business travel that allows me to immerse myself for 48 hours or more, two or three times a year in professional development. A road trip with a much-anticipated audio book clears my head. Talking and networking with my colleagues in person inspires my teaching and performing. A night or two in a nice hotel by myself is a luxury. Keep records of your mileage and travel expenses for your accountant, and reframe your NATS Chapter experience as fun, information, and restorative—a mini-vacation! You can also attend events hosted by other NATS Chapters, which may be just as geographically close at your designated chapter. I belong to the Inland Empire NATS Chapter (Eastern WA and Northern Idaho). However, I am about the same geographical distance from the Cascade Chapter events in Oregon, so I joined a second NATS Chapter for a very low cost. I also keep my eyes on NATS events throughout the Northwest Region, including Seattle. Now "my NATS Chapter" is even bigger!

Regarding NATS Student Auditions, I have a confession to make. I love to attend NATS Student Auditions without students. My own students participated in the Inland Empire Chapter Auditions in Walla Walla WA, but I traveled without students to Portland OR for the Cascade Chapter Student Classical Festival as a volunteer judge. I had a blast! I was available to judge any category because I didn't have student conflicts. I didn't have to worry about whether my students had arrived or which student had forgotten their music or which student was having a melt-down. I wasn't the only orphan teacher at the festival. The Cascade Chapter



THERE'S STILL TIME TO RENEW FOR 2019!

If you have not already paid your 2019 NATS membership dues, please take care of this so you won't lose your membership privileges. All members who did not pay their dues by March 1 will have their privileges suspended until dues are paid. This means you will not have access to the "member only" section of the NATS website, can't search the *Journal of Singing* database, and won't be able to participate in student auditions or any other NATS activities.

[Renew Online](#) or call the NATS office at 904.992.9101, Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Eastern Time.



75 ¹⁹⁴⁴⁻²⁰¹⁹ YEARS

continued: Independent Voices

needed more judges, so the auditions chair sent an email to the entire chapter membership and asked for teachers who did not have students attending, to come and adjudicate. Seven NATS teachers volunteered! Seven teachers that had not planned on participating, said yes when they were asked and felt needed and appreciated for their expertise. I met some fabulous new colleagues, listened to some wonderful young singers, flexed my listening, observation, and writing skills, and got several repertoire ideas to take back to my own students. In April, I'll be returning to Portland for a 4-day NATS Cascade Chapter sponsored CCM workshop with Matt Edwards of Shenandoah University. Will it be convenient? Not at all. But I'll spend three and a half hours driving along the Columbia River Gorge in springtime, one of the most scenic drives in the country. NATS isn't local. It's a destination.



In this issue, Independent teacher Deanna Maio writes about how Virtual Assistants (VAs) can make your business run smoother, and independent teachers from the Cal-West Region and North Carolina Chapter collaborate to create a sample adjudication rubric for other chapters that want to add pop/rock/jazz etc. to their student auditions. *What We're Talking About* examines the pros and cons of social media forums and in *Studio Management* we talk about lesson-sharing to avoid cancellations.

Remember that this is your newsletter—*Inter Nos*—a professional trade publication for voice teachers to share ideas "between ourselves." What would you like us to explore? Please send your articles or topics for consideration to CynthiaVaughn@mac.com.

"While our roads might be markedly different, the fact that we are both walking a road intimately unites us. And if we each dare to step onto each other's road for even a moment, we can profoundly enhance the journey for both of us. And so, might I invite you over."
— Craig D. Lounsbrough

Cynthia Vaughn teaches voice at Magnolia Music Studio in Richland, Washington, the studio she originally founded in Fort Collins, Colorado in 2008. She was formerly on the voice faculties of Colorado State University and Cedarville University. Cynthia Vaughn and Meribeth Dayme, PhD, are co-authors of a leading college voice class textbook/anthology, The Singing Book (W.W. Norton, 3rd Edition 2014). Cynthia wrote the "Currents" column for Inter Nos and was a featured writer for Classical Singer magazine.

Call for Submissions

Short articles on relevant topics are being accepted for inclusion in the independent Teacher section of future issues of *Inter Nos*. Submissions should be sent by email to CynthiaVaughn@mac.com.