

inter nos

VOLUME 54, NO. 1

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Carter Publishing Studio

inter nos is the official newsletter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing. It is published two times per year (spring and fall) for all NATS members.

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PUBLICATION DEADLINES:

All material for publication must be submitted to the NATS Executive Office by the following deadlines:

Spring issue Feb. 1
Fall issue Aug. 1

Mission: *To advance excellence in singing through teaching, performance, scholarship, and research.*

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



ASSOCIATION NOTES

Riding the waves

By Allen Henderson, NATS Executive Director

For NATS summer was a “sweet spot” in the ongoing pandemic. As case rates subsided and the economy began reopening, NATS was able to host several smaller scale face to face events in May and June. The postponed 2020 and the 2021 NATS Intern Programs were our first live events since the 2020 NATS Winter Workshop in New York City 18 months prior and were a celebratory and successful return to live programming. Our hosts at Georgia Southern University and past presidents Linda Snyder and Karen Brunssen cooperatively established safety protocols that allowed these events to thrive and fully live up to their expectation as career changing events. You can read reflections from some of our interns (page 16 and 18).

The third major live event was the 2021 NATS board of directors meeting in Jacksonville Beach. While your board has successfully managed to meet virtually for TWO YEARS, there is really no substitution for the face to face interaction, discussion, debate, and conversation that happens when we meet face to face to accomplish the important business of our association. The board spent the largest block of time over our two day meeting under the guidance of consultants Alejandra Valarino Boyer and Theresa Ruth Howard as they led us in conversations and training surrounding inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. While we have several committees also interfacing with these topics, this was the first time our board of directors as a whole has been trained as we work to ensure we meet our obligation to continuously improve as an organization. Additional training will happen this fall with a wider circle of leaders and we anticipate introducing required training for all leaders and providing access to online training to all members in early 2022.

Choosing to hold the 2021 Summer Workshop virtually proved a sound decision as, by July, the Delta variant was beginning its rise around the U.S. Now, as school has begun for many, we are again in a crisis situation in some aspects worse than last year. As positive case rates increase, we are faced with a polarized public and political leaders who have limited the ability of many to reinstate various protective measures advocated by public health officials and the CDC. Many of our international members also are facing a resurgence in cases and reinstated mandates. While our independent teachers are able to control more freely their working environment, those who work at institutions, particularly public ones, are being forced to teach in unsafe environments due to low vaccination rates. Some of our colleagues have not been teaching on their campuses for over 18 months and so have never even had to learn and understand many of the protocols some campuses used last year and are rightfully concerned for their safety during re-entry.

NATS continues to monitor the latest research and information that can guide us all in our work. Our [June webinar](#), subsequent pre-publication of an [article](#) based on that webinar, and other additional resources on our [COVID-19 Resources](#) page and [YouTube channel](#) are still valuable tools for all. We continue to suggest



Allen Henderson
NATS Executive Director

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Dayme's CoreSinging: A Joyful Approach to Singing and Voice Pedagogy." Along the way, I was able to meet and mingle with the other program participants—faculty, interns, and students—who were not in my assigned cohort. I laughed a lot, especially with my voice interns Sarah Bucher, C.J. Greer, Sarah Folsom and collaborative piano coaching interns Natalie Sherer and Qiao Zheng Goh. It was truly magical and I won't soon forget it.

As I write this, it is three days after leaving Disneyland, I mean NATS Intern Program. My East Coast to West Coast jet lag is waning. My suitcase is unpacked, but I still have some laundry to do while I answer about a billion non-urgent emails that I ignored while in Georgia. I have projects to dive into and some big life stuff to navigate. It would be easy to go back to the same routine and daily stresses, however, I am determined not to waste the wonder. I have started journaling again, writing down new ideas, practicing gratitude, walking daily, and taking care of my health.

I have read many posts from NATS colleagues who attended continuing education and training programs this summer, either virtually or in-person. Many of you came away with creative ideas, new skills, greater knowledge, and renewed human connection. After months of malaise, some of you came away

refreshed, motivated, and inspired—you remembered why we do what we do. "Disneyland" was great, but eventually we all have to go back to our real lives and teaching studios and figure out how to keep and share some of the magic. This summer we took

"We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;—
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems . . ."

—Excerpt by Arthor O'Shaughnessy

far less for granted. It was a turning point for many and I can't wait to see what creativity you will unleash, what career choices you will make, what life and family choices you will make, and what books you will write, literally and metaphorically.

Cynthia Vaughn, June 6, 2021
Richland, Washington

Riding the waves *(continued from page 4)*

that everyone manage personal risk; use the recommended ventilation, room size, distancing, and length of sessions data to plan your work; and advocate for all possible to be vaccinated. Our joint statement, issued over the summer, has already been used effectively by some colleagues to advocate for safer working conditions. I am grateful for our partner organizations and the experts who have joined us this past year to keep us informed and armed with facts and science informed data. I also encourage you to join our #fighthefatigue campaign by sharing some of our social media images with your colleagues and students. Many of these are uplifting reminders about self-care as we continue to weather the ups and downs before us.

As the fall season begins, many of our chapters and regions are again facing the choice of holding live or virtual audition events. It is likely that we will see a mixture of modes this fall as leaders meet host venue requirements that may change with little notice. Fortunately, our systems are now prepared for an easy transition to virtual mode should the need arise. Please be patient with our volunteer leaders and also grateful for their service as they work tirelessly to create valuable feedback experiences for your students.

We hope to ride the wave to a return of live national events in January with the 2022 Winter Workshop in New York City on a theme of "Matters of Style." Very soon you also will be hearing about the 2022 NATS National Conference in Chicago. It promises to be an exciting event with more sessions than ever before as we come together in celebration of our profession. Stay tuned for the announcement of the exciting lineup.

Our success in these times, as always, is dependent on our dedicated and faithful members who have ridden the waves with us during this turbulent time. I have been gratified to read so many positive messages about how NATS supported you during this time, how it has been a lifeline of support, and how our community has come together to support one another. While our founders likely never envisioned a pandemic event of this magnitude that would impact our profession so profoundly, I am certain they envisioned a strong community of mutual support within our profession and would indeed be proud of the association we are today.

Keep the faith, and let's continue to ride the waves together. As always, if you have questions or comments, please reach out to me at allen@nats.org