

MUSIC MINISTRY 2018-19



ANNUAL
REPORT

It gives me much joy to share the many accomplishments of the music ministry at the University Catholic Center serving the University of Texas at Austin. This past year has been one of much growth; laying the foundation for a thriving music ministry.

In the two years I have been in my position as Director of Music Ministries, I have had the pleasure of forming three regularly rehearsing musical ensembles that cover repertoire from the 9th century to present day compositions and everything in between. As the first full-time director of music at the Catholic Center, my highest calling is to form talent into well-rounded church musicians so that they may continue to serve God's people with their musical gifts. Later in this report we share Courtney's story, which demonstrates this quite well.

This past year (my first as full-time staff) has been a year of many great accomplishments. Last September our choir had the opportunity to sing for a concert of alumni, parents, and potential benefactors at Hilcorp Tower in Houston, TX. This required countless hours of preparation and rehearsal from all of the choir members who took part in this event. I was able to witness firsthand the camaraderie that can be formed in a musical ensemble.

Another huge accomplishment is the stabilization of the music ministry as a whole. At this point, the choirs can easily handle all of the essential musical elements within the Mass with very little review, which now leads us to some plans for the coming year.

During this new academic year, I am wanting to increase the number of musical offerings of the choir beyond the borders of the Mass. One of our larger goals is to mount a large-scale musical concert of Antonio Vivaldi's *Gloria*, which will draw heavily on our great instrumental and vocal talent present at the Catholic Center. Another event is to host our first Lessons and Carols, a prayer service with elements of scripture paired with musical reflections that herald the coming of Christ, at the beginning of Advent. In addition to these larger events, we are wanting to program other smaller musical events such as adoration and Taizé prayer services.

I hope that you can join us for one or all of these events. I am grateful for your financial support and your help laying this foundation for the music ministry. Thank you for sharing your blessings with our students for many years to come.

DR. BENJAMIN COX

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES



YEAR AT-A-GLANCE

At the Catholic Center, we are preparing students to be leaders in their music ministries after graduation. This year six students graduated from our program and will be heading to parishes across Texas. Looking to the upcoming academic year, ten new students have expressed interest in the choir already and we expect to recruit twenty more students.



CANTOR WORKSHOP

LEADERSHIP

Benjamin hosted a cantor workshop that was attended by psalmists from the Catholic Center and music directors from other local parishes. The goal of this workshop was to provide a brief history of the role of the cantor within the Mass and provide formation in dramatic reading and vocal technique to equip these singers to better lead a congregation in sung prayer.



40 CHOIR MEMBERS

DISCIPLESHIP

Our choir for the 2018-19 academic year was composed of thirty students and ten resident community members who regularly attended rehearsal and sang together for Mass each week. This inter-generational ensemble mixes people from many backgrounds and various stages of life from college freshmen to retired adults. Some graduates over the past few years have gone on to become music ministers in their home parishes.



2 PRAYER SERVICES

SERVICE

The choir provided musical leadership for two prayer services. During our Busy Student Retreat we hosted a Taizé prayer service and had an Evensong prayer service during National Catholic Sisters Week.

COURTNEY HAM, MM '18

Serving as an assistant choir director at the University Catholic Center was one of the more poignant, informative experiences I had in learning to be a music educator. As someone who started out in this position with an instrumental background, but no formal training in vocal technique or string instruments, I quickly found myself far more attentive in my upper levels courses, eager to be placed in teaching situations where I could get insight on how to work with things outside of my comfort zone.

No one told me when I took the position that I should probably know bowing technique. No one gave me a neat, compiled set of vocalises for choir. No one told me how many people to expect to come, or whether they would be on time, or what their skill levels would be. Despite this lack of knowledge, I dove headfirst into rehearsals, striving to make each person a more accomplished, thoughtful musician than when they came the week before. In many ways, this position is much like the first year of teaching.

Once a music educator graduates from college and starts the job, *for real*, there are myriad facets of the job that no one will think to tell you about, because how could one prepare for all of the variables that happen in the real world in just four or five years? I will forever be grateful for working at the Catholic Center. These situations taught me how to seek out help from experts on things I do not know. Doing so taught me how to have more meaningful rehearsals with the choir members and improve their musicianship. Most importantly, it taught me to handle surprises, of all kinds, with grace and an open mind.

