

Speaker Topics

The following workshops and speeches have been delivered at conventions and convocations in the United States and China.

Bilingual Conducting: Connecting Voices and Instruments through Culture-Specific Vocabulary

Choral and orchestral conducting can be considered two different cultures within the same performing art. To communicate effectively in each, it is helpful, to become fluent or at least conversant in the languages of both cultures. Five differences will be examined: The text, music, instrument, rehearsal, and performance. Using excerpts from repertoire, we will explore the synchrony required for a collaborative performance, and how a “bilingual” conductor can facilitate this connection.

Then Sings My Soul: Toward a More Dynamic Choral Presence in Worship

Why are great preachers, and actors so compelling and convincing, even when they are saying words that someone else wrote? It is because they are believable; their words, vocal tone, and body language are congruent and convey the same message.

An exploration of how church choirs can use rhetoric to give greater meaning to the music through the text we sing. To that end we will analyze selected excerpts from the repertoire using the principles of hermeneutics – a process that preachers use to link interpretative ideas to relevant and dynamic preaching; and for our purpose, linking it to relevant and rhetorical singing. Specific techniques will include word mapping, text appropriate tone quality, characterization, and movement dynamics.

Empowering Congregational Singing

Great hymns give voice to our faith, feeling to our theology and beauty to our worship. We will explore how a congregation can become more fully involved in the singing of hymns. The areas that will be addressed include, projecting hymn style, how to effectively lead hymns and chants, and how the use of certain kinds of gesture can encourage better singing, and the differences between conducting and song-leading.

Moving from Choral Performance to Choral Prayer

Are we singing to perform or singing to lead prayer and praise? The discussion includes twenty techniques to transform choral singing from a performance orientation to an integral part of the liturgy.

I Feel Something

A motivational talk about how the fine arts can encourage us to communicate from the inside out, and how we can create “awe”-some moments in our lives and the lives of others. Included will be a discussion of the seven habits of feeling-ful teachers and leaders and how they can be used to renew our passion for what we do.