

Artistic Director

Dr. Matthew Myers



The Palouse Choral Society is celebrating its silver anniversary this spring! While we've had a community of singers gathering together for much longer than 25 years, 2000 was the year of the first concert by the Idaho Washington Concert Chorale as an independent nonprofit organization. Fast forward to 2025, and we have an even more vibrant organization with 150 singers on our roster! We celebrate our anniversary with our April concert, 25: Here to Thrive. We will honor the musical legacy of the choir by including at least one piece from every season of the organization's history. (Don't worry... there are a few pieces representing multiple years, so our concert won't be too egregiously long.) We hope to see you for our anniversary celebration! While this concludes our season, it's not the last music some of our singers will make:

over thirty of our members will head to Carnegie Hall to perform Bach's *Magnificat* in early June. This will be my conducting debut in the USA's most famous concert hall, and I'm so glad to share the experience with many of these wonderful singers and humans. We will share memories of the experience in our next newsletter! In the meantime... start thinking if you or anyone you know might like to audition for PCS in August. We're always happy to add more dedicated and energetic singers to our ranks.



**President-Elect
Darcy Howser**

I am incredibly honored to have been nominated by my peers to serve as President-Elect for the Palouse Choral Society. To this organization, I bring my passion for music and drive to make music accessible to as many people as possible. I studied vocal music at Western Kentucky University and worked semi-professionally as a singer and teacher during my undergraduate career. I have also recently been admitted to Washington State University where I will be pursuing my Master's in Music Education with a research emphasis on Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder-minded pedagogy in music classrooms. I love serving my community in any way that I can, and PCS provides an incredible outlet for me to utilize my skills to their fullest extent. Getting to accomplish this while surrounded by amazing people who happen to be incredible musicians is the cherry on top. Thank you, PCS, for your trust, love, and welcome into this community. You truly mean the world to me. I can't wait to see the wonderful things we will accomplish together.

**Outgoing
Administrative
Coordinator
Matt Zook**



Choral music is not one of life's frills. It's something that goes to the very heart of our humanity, our sense of community, and our souls."

-John Rutter

In preparing for my last entry to the Palouse Choral Society newsletter as Administrative Coordinator this quote from prolific choral composer, John Rutter, truly resonated with my memories and experiences with PCS. My experience with the chorale started when my spouse, Anneliese Zook, joined the organization after seeing a performance under the direction of Michael Murphy. The performances made an immediate impact on me, not only because of the quality but also the joy it brought my wife to be a part of this group. We made new friends and became part of a special community of musicians. My collaborative efforts with PCS started when the magnificent Sarah Graham asked me to play percussion for the piece, Song of the Salish Chief. This was a life changing experience for me, not only was it the first of several times I would be able to play percussion with PCS or the Children's Choir, but also because the piece led us to a performance in New York City in collaboration with the LCSC Choir.

More connections, more memories and I truly felt the importance of this community not only to my wife, but for me as well. Which leads to last August and my opportunity to support PCS as the Administrative Coordinator. I can't fully express how much fun I had getting to know the PCS community better and how fulfilling it was to work with the Artistic Directors in helping to provide performance opportunities. I have been so moved these last 9 months through the words and cards from concert patrons and donors. The PCS Community goes far beyond the folks on stage singing, it touches the souls of so many people in the Pullman-Moscow region and beyond. I will always cherish being a part of this community in any capacity, thank you PCS for all the memories, important friendships and amazing musical experiences!



**Atom Allison
Incoming
Administrative
Coordinator**

Howdy y'all, My name is Atom Allison and I'm honored to attempt filling the impressive (and stylish) shoes of Matt Zook as he transitions out of his role as Palouse Choral Society's Administrative Coordinator! I'm new on the Palouse, having moved to Pullman last summer from Kentucky. Growing up in small towns around Music City, I spent my younger years helping musicians book at infamous legendary venues like Exit/In, The End, and The Basement East.

I gifted my brother his first acoustic guitar and even had an internet radio show that helped indie bands get their first international record sales! Professionally, I've got over a decade of experience wearing a number of hats - from coordinating with professional licensing boards and managing registration for technology and professional association events, to front-line support for multiple software platforms and direct, in-home support for folks in my community. Here in Pullman, I'm truly loving the home I've found among fiber artists, community organizers, and of course, Palouse Choral Society. It had been at least twenty years since I'd sung in ensemble, but the months I've sung so far with PCS have been some of the most fulfilling moments I've experienced. All that to say, I'm looking forward to combining my passion for supporting people and fellow performers, professionally acquired skills, and keen interest in serving my community and bringing them to the role of PCS Administrative Coordinator.

Y'all don't be shy - I love meeting and knowing my neighbors. I'll see ya at the next concert!

RECOLLECTIONS FROM THE EARLY YEARS



**Meredyth Goodwin
with PCS
1988-present**

“When I moved to Moscow in the summer of 1988, one of the very first things I did was to join the Washington Idaho Symphony Chorale -- traveling to Genesee for rehearsals under the direction of Harry Johansen. Some of the concerts I most remember were singing *Carmina Burana* with the Washington Idaho Symphony and *Jephtha* with the Yakima Symphony and Chorale under the direction of Paul Klemme. As much as I enjoyed singing with the larger chorale, I particularly loved singing with the chamber choir. Preparing and performing *Missa Brevis*, written by WSU music professor Charles Argersinger, was one of the highlights of my time with the chamber. This piece is truly inspirational. The Christmas season was also lots of fun, as the chamber group would often perform various gigs at local establishments--Good Samaritan’s, the University Inn,

Alternative Giving Market and the McConnell Mansion.

Over the years, I have made many friends and have been privileged to perform beautiful music with so many incredible musicians. The chorale has enriched my life and nurtured my love of singing for over 25 years! I am so grateful to the patrons who have supported us for all these years.”



**Kevin Brackney
with PCS
2000-present**

“In the year 2000, I started a new job with the Nez Perce Tribe’s Water Resources Division. Perhaps because this change opened my mind to new opportunities, I started three new hobbies: hockey, US Masters Swimming, and singing in the Idaho-Washington Concert Chorale. Perhaps like many men in the choir, I agreed to audition after an invitation by Jill Price Freuden, who was an avid recruiter.

My singing experience had been limited to singing with my family at church and on long road trips, Boy Scouts singing around the campfire, Jr. Highschool choir, and St. Mark’s Church choir after moving to Moscow to start an MS in Hydrogeology in 1990. While in graduate school, I attended IWCC performances and learned that two of my professors, Erol Barbut and Kent Keller, sang in the choir and had recently performed in Eisenstadt, Austria, which was intriguing as my wife is from Austria. Twenty-five years later I’ve sung in almost every concert, still swim at 5:30 a.m. three days a week, but the late-night hockey games and practices were too much. I also went to Eisenstadt and Prague with the chorus and sang in a Pullman Civic Theater Production of “Bye-Bye Birdie” as Harry MacAfee--my sole theatrical performance.

(continued next page)

It's been a pleasure singing with such an accomplished group of musicians. Much of my time with the chorale I've felt like an imposter with the music being too difficult for my skill set. But some years the chorale only had 7-10 tenors and I felt like I couldn't quit and let down my section. However, with our overall excellent choir directors, each practice is a singing lesson and I've learned so much and met so many interesting people. In director school they must teach to focus on the most difficult passages first, singing from back to front, never singing the entire piece until almost the dress rehearsal and stopping the piece without resolving the final chord, all apparently designed to keep the singers off balance and striving until the chorus hopefully peaks at the performance. Then, we are so happy because now we know what the piece is supposed to sound like! Now in 2025, our current director, Matthew Meyers has attracted 15 new tenors and I was asked to sing baritone to help flesh out the lower voices.

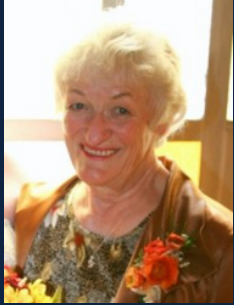
The practices are so fun the rehearsals fly by, as have the years. Thanks for the Memories.”



**Jennifer
Coleman
with PCS
1997-present**

“I started singing with the Chorale in 1997 when it was still combined with the symphony and was called the Washington Idaho Symphony Chorale. I had heard the chorale sing their Christmas concert at St. Boniface in Uniontown and all I could think of was “I want to sing with THESE people!” I did not grow up singing in choir but was a double major in music and theatre where I did most of my singing in musicals. This would be a new experience for me to sing in a large group. It's been interesting to see the Chorale change and evolve from our time singing with the symphony to our present Palouse Choral Society. During our rehearsal in the early years, we actually had coffee and cookies during our break time!

It was enjoyable to have that time to talk with other members but I can't even imagine doing that now with all the music we need to rehearse. There have been at least 7 musical directors since I first joined the Chorale. Learning how different directors like to rehearse and their different styles of conducting has been an education in addition to improving my singing technique. In addition to conductors, the dress code has changed several times over the years- especially for women! I'm glad we've progressed to a little more flexibility. I would be remiss if I didn't mention that part of my love for Chorale includes spending time with my carpool partners as we drive to and from the Lewiston Clarkston Valley. Carpool buddies have come and gone over the years as well. However, Judie Hanley and Karin Herbert have been singing in the Chorale longer than I have and have been constant companions throughout my time in the Chorale. I have always loved meeting new members and enjoy meeting the young singers from the universities. It's been a lovely journey these last 27 years to sing with such talented musicians to create the beautiful concerts we share with our communities.”



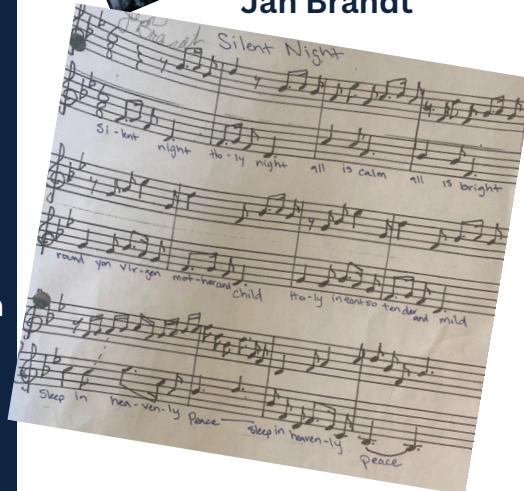
**Caroline
Hilty-Jones-
Germain**
Accompanist
with PCS
1991-2003

“I loved accompanying the chorale back in the 1990’s (I had the privilege of doing the thing I loved best). The conductors were each wonderful, and a joy to work with. When I think of special moments two immediately come to mind. Towards the end of my time with the Chorale we did a special “Red Hat” concert, where all the women dressed to the “hilt” complete with fancy clothes and wearing red hats! A song had been written for treble voices and it proclaimed that *When I retire, I will pick flowers from other people’s garden’s*. I was dating my husband at the time and got to go through his mother’s closet to find something truly perfect to wear. Concerts at St. Boniface Catholic Church in Uniontown were always a treasured memory.

We once did a winter concert where long-time member Jan Brandt sang the counter melody to *Silent Night*, it was unaccompanied and a sound of beauty. I was behind the chorale and wept while listening. When she passed away her family reached out to see if I remembered the arrangement. I remembered the counter melody and transcribed it for them. Her granddaughter sang it with a small group from the chorale at her service.”



Jan Brandt



**Madam President
Anneliese Zook**
a bit of *then*,
a touch of *now*

My life with the Palouse Choral Society began when I was young. My mom would tell me stories about bringing me to rehearsals (she was the accompanist) and placing me under the piano where I would stay and play happily! My dad and sister were in the chorale and it seemed like a fairy tale moment. Glorious St. Bonifas church, under the grand piano (that PCS had donated to the church), a little bundle of joy being soothed by the sounds and vibrations. Today as I was reading my moms article I looked at the dates concluding that at the VERY YOUNGEST I was 10. At 10 years old I was 5 ft 5in tall. I was a grown adult sized child laying under a piano at a choir rehearsal. Imagine my horror as I realize this is the first memories many of our members have of me and the joy in knowing that no one has ever said a thing about it. The common thread as I read through these columns from the leadership, long-time members, and new members is that this organization has felt like “Home” for so many for the last 25+ years. It has been the joy of my adult life participating in and cultivating that environment. As I step down as president and hand this baton off to Darcy Howser, I am enthralled with the idea of what we will be at 50!



Robin O'Brien (they/them),
Tenor

I joined PCS in January 2025, and it immediately felt like a second home. I was in choir consistently through high school and college, but started taking testosterone in 2022 and haven't done a lot of singing since my voice dropped. Bass clef is still hard for me to read, but singing in community is as fulfilling now as it was ten years ago. This semester, I'm particularly enjoying the two pieces from Bach and Bruckner. They've been challenging to learn but they're coming together beautifully. I spend the rest of my spare time baking and attempting various fiber arts – most recently, I've been trying my hand at weaving and lacemaking.

I'm Leesa!

I'm not only new to PCS but also to the PNW! Born and raised in South Florida, I made the long journey out here this past August to become the Open Publishing Librarian at U of I. Auditioning for the Chorale was the very first thing I did upon arriving in Moscow, and I'm so glad I did. From elementary school through college, choir was always a huge part of my life as a student; leaving it behind when I graduated left a hole in my heart for years.



It's a shame that so many people underestimate how important the arts are - both for students and for adults - which is why it's critical to support these programs in- and outside of education. I'm so grateful to PCS for the opportunity to perform again and for making an unfamiliar place feel like home. This community is full of so many warm, fun, and talented people from all kinds of backgrounds; it's truly a gift to tell our stories through music together.

Hey all!

My name is Niko Efstathiou and this is my first year singing with PCS! I just graduated from WSU back in 2024 and this is my first time singing since High School! I, like many of the wonderful members of PCS, took a break from singing due to the pandemic and prioritizing my studies. Since graduating, I've had a lot more free time and since I work from home I decided to seek out a community. PCS has been one of the most welcoming groups I've had the pleasure of interacting with and the singing is a lot of fun! With the stress that comes with working my first big corporate job, it's nice to know that once a week I get a break from the stressors of young-professional life. I feel extremely fortunate to have found PCS as it is the reason I've made some amazing friends and memories.



Palouse Choral Society Talent Show!

The choir put on a show in April to showcase members' talents other than large choir pieces. The event was held at the LeCompte Auditorium in the 1912 Center. A large variety of instruments were played: saxophone, clarinet, guitar, ukulele, dulcimer and bagpipes. Funny and serious poems were showcased, and a good time was had by all. The Talent Show was such a success that the choir plans to repeat the event next year. Don't miss it!

-Carole Wells



BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE RISER CREW

The riser crew sets up our risers before dress rehearsals or concerts. All the parts of the risers are stored in a trailer, which is brought to the concert site at a predetermined time before the concert or rehearsal. This is a situation where many hands really do make light work! A good-sized group of people (10-ish) can get the risers set up quickly, without tiring anyone out. There are always knowledgeable people there to tell you where each piece goes, and how to assemble them. Then the risers are dismantled, returned to the trailer, and driven away! Sometimes, depending on the concert location, the risers are taken apart between performances, and occasionally even between dress rehearsals! Singers, any time you are available when risers are being set up, please come and help! There is no sign-up sheet, and you don't have to commit to helping every time. Just show up! Questions? Contact me (Eric Nilsson) at nilsson@wsu.edu



Nov 1-2

A collection of music about sound and hearing, plus the world premiere of "Bugtong-Bugtong"



Dec 14-15

A concert of holiday favorites throughout the ages, including J. S. Bach's *Magnificat*



Feb 22-23 -24

A celebration of African-American composers & their contributions to choral music



Apr 26-27

A selection of favorites from the first 25 years of the Palouse Choral Society

25: Here to Thrive! Online Silent Auction!

Did you know - PCS is bursting with talent beyond their musicianship? Members are thrilled to come together to offer our skills and services to our community in this fundraising effort that will help keep our voices ringing loud and proud on the Palouse!

Looking for unique, hand-crafted accessories or stunning one-of-a-kind greeting cards?

Wanting to take a stab at playing piano or horseback riding?

Ever wanted to make soap or need character art for your next TTRPG?

Needing some space reclaimed or stuff hauled away?

We've got all that and then some!

[Click here to preview what we're offering ahead of the auction opening!](#)

Bidding will open at midnight on April 11th and continue through 11:59 PM April 27th. Winners will be announced in the days following with information on how to collect on services and items offered.