

August 2023

Greetings, my new friends!

Hope this finds you enjoying what remains of your summer! I know once the calendar turns to August, school related camps, retreats, and practices begin. Wishing you all a successful start to your school year!

I have such great memories of our time together back in June. There is something truly unique about the opportunity we had to be together for four days and experience the creation of music from the ground up. Thank you, again, for your focus and dedication. As you got to hear, there were some thrilling moments on the recording from the performance. And yet, our work continues...

As you begin to revisit the music, I encourage you to listen to our work with a critical ear. We should absolutely celebrate what we were able to accomplish together, but as artists we should also be eager to allow the music to continue to evolve. First, revisit notes and rhythms. If in the speed of getting music learned, you inadvertently learned something incorrectly, challenge yourself to make the needed changes. Second, don't wait until October to sing expressively. We added many beautiful music moments. If you show up in October with those already internalized, we get to add more! If not, we are simply relearning. Finally, it is never too soon to begin memorizing. Although I want you to bring your music in October so we can rehearse efficiently, I want you to have it only as a reference. The experience for everyone (including myself), will be elevated so much more if we can connect with one another musically, emotionally, and VISUALLY.

As you begin your school year, please remember the conversations we had about being great leaders. You offered some powerful testaments as to what leadership should look like in your choral programs. I hope you'll be willing to step out of your comfort zone and initiate some changes with your own leadership and positively impact others as well. I will look forward to hearing how that work has manifested. One of my favorite superhero movies has a quote that says, "with great power comes great responsibility." Having had the opportunity to be selected for the Wisconsin Honors Choir Project is a huge honor. Yet, it is now your responsibility to share that experience with others.

I'm already so proud of you and the high bar that you've set for this music. "Papa Last" now reminds you that the journey is not yet over. As I said to you at our very first rehearsal, the greatest compliment I can give you is to be super picky about the details. It is my hope that you'll return in October not just hoping to "sing songs" but to do the work needed to give this music new life!

Please remember, the invitation to visit Luther College and sing with the Nordic Choir for a day is always open to you!

With great respect and admiration,

Dr. Andrew Last