

**Karyl Carlson**



A Detroit native, Karyl Carlson was fortunate to have a formative music education in Redford, Michigan. With early studies of piano, then bassoon and voice, Carlson credits her early music education as the origin for her current success. Carlson is now in her thirteenth year as Director of Choral Activities at Illinois State University where she conducts the Concert Choir, Madrigal Singers, and teaches graduate conducting. Her graduate students have gone on to successful teaching careers and further study at major university graduate programs.

Carlson came to central Illinois after serving as Director of Choral Activities and Associate Chair of the music department of Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington where she conducted the Chamber Choir, taught graduate conducting, and undergraduate music education courses. She earned music education degrees from the University of Michigan and had the great fortune to start her teaching career at Franklin Elementary School in Sterling, IL. Further graduate study led her to a Master of Music Education at the University of Illinois. Karyl earned her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Michigan State University, where she studied with Charles K. Smith. Prior to earning her doctorate she taught in the public schools for twelve years in Miami, Florida. There she was Director of Vocal Music Hialeah-Miami Lakes High School, Miami Lakes Junior High, and then at the famed New World School of the Arts in Miami, FL. Having taught at every academic level, from elementary general music to auditioned collegiate choirs, Carlson has a unique perspective and abiding appreciation for choral music educators.

While at CWU and ISU, Dr. Carlson has conducted many major choral/orchestral works, including Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem" as the inaugural performance of the international *Benjamin Britten at 100: An American Centenary Symposium* (2013). Carlson has also conducted numerous operas and musicals, including the Illinois State University's recent productions of "Cabaret" and Kurt Weill's "Street Scene."

For many years, Carlson sang and recorded in ensembles with Robert Shaw in France and at the Professional Training Workshops at Carnegie Hall. She has also performed a wide variety of piano and vocal solo repertoire, but has particular fondness for playing and conducting chamber music. Dr. Carlson regularly works with contemporary composers and enthusiastically supports the commissioning of new choral compositions. Equally, student works are frequently given readings and performances on major concerts.

Carlson is an active choral adjudicator and honor choir conductor. Her choirs have been featured at state and regional festivals, and have toured nationally and internationally. The Illinois State University Concert Choir, and the Madrigal Singers, have enjoyed collaborating with professional local and regional symphony orchestras. Under her direction she has toured internationally with her ensembles to Italy, Spain, England and France, and performed at Carnegie Hall

in New York City. This summer, current research will take her to Aldeburgh, Suffolk, UK, to study early choral manuscripts of Benjamin Britten at the Britten-Pears Foundation Archive Centre. She will be there for the entirety of the Aldeburgh Festival, along with ISU Associate Professor of Voice Justin Vickers, to confer with festival administrators and artists. This extended visit is in preparation for the inaugural season of the *American Festival of Music and the Arts* in 2019 at Illinois State University.

Launched in 2016, Carlson was key in the development of an ACDA urban initiative choral festival: *JOIN VOICES, CHICAGO!* The event brought over 500 students together in a non-competitive environment focused on student performing and learning, and teacher professional development. The festival was funded in part with a grant from ACDA's Fund for Tomorrow. She ended the year with a second such festival: *JOIN VOICES, MIAMI!* Karyl is thrilled to see this initiative gaining interest in numerous urban and rural settings. As a strong initiator of music and arts advocacy, she is in frequent contact with legislators regarding arts funding issues.

Dr. Carlson is a member of NAFME, NATS, Omicron Delta Kappa (Leadership Circle) Sigma Alpha Iota, and the American Choral Directors Association. She has been active in ACDA for many years, having served on the Illinois ACDA Board as Women's Choir and Collegiate Repertoire & Standards Chair. Currently she serves as the IL-ACDA Past-President, on the ACDA Central Division Board representing Student and Youth Activities, and on a national sub-committee on Diversity Issues.

Karyl resides in Normal, IL, and enjoys spending time with family and friends. She has a wide variety of non-musical interests, including video production, constant rehabbing of her 1890's home, and caring for her rescue dogs, KoKo and KiefKief.

**Dr. Gabriela Hristova**



Dr. Gabriela Hristova is Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at the University of Michigan-Flint Department of Music. She conducts the University Chorale and Chamber Singers, and teaches courses in choral and instrumental conducting and music performance. Dr. Hristova is the Artistic director and conducting faculty of the Department of Music's Summer Vocal Academy of Music - a summer day camp for middle and high school students widely-recognized for its high level of vocal music instruction.

Dr. Hristova earned the Master of Music in Conducting and Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting degrees from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, where she studied under the direction of Dr. Jerry Blackstone and Professor Theodore Morrison. She received the Bachelor's degree in Music Education and Choral Conducting from the State Academy of Music in her native country of Bulgaria. While engaged in graduate work, she conducted the University of Michigan Women's Glee Club for two years, and served as chorus master for the University's opera productions.

Dr. Hristova is a passionate performer, educator, and promoter of choral music throughout the Midwest, conducting choirs of all ages, both professional and amateur.

Under her direction, the University of Michigan-Flint Chamber Singers have performed by invitation at the Pentagon as the special guest choir for the Black History Month Observance honoring of the three living veterans of the Triple Nickel Infantry Battalion from the WWII; She has appeared with them at the Michigan State Conferences of the American Choral Directors Association both in Concert performances and clinics. The Chamber singers are invited to participate in university events of significant importance (Chancellors Inaugurations, Veterans Day Observances, Scholarship dinners, Capital campaigns, and others). Dr. Hristova's choirs are invited to perform at the Flint Festival of Choirs every year.

Prior to her appointment at UM-Flint in 2007, she was Visiting Director of Choral Activities at Oberlin College-Conservatory of Music where she taught advanced conducting seminars and directed the Oberlin College Singers, College Choir, and Musical Union. For several years, Dr. Hristova served as the Director of Music Ministry for the West Side United Methodist Church in Ann Arbor overseeing a vibrant music program, and as an accompanist and of the Flint Festival Chorus.

Dr. Hristova has been the president of the State Board of the American Choral Directors Association, serving and promoting the choral arts in the state of Michigan. In this capacity some of her initiatives include the state First Collegiate Honor Choir, directed by Simon Carrington at the state conference in 2013,

followed by the state First Church Honor Choir, in 2014. Most recently she directed the first Michigan Community College Honor Choir at the state conference in Kalamazoo.

Dr. Hristova is often sought as an adjudicator for competitions (Michigan Federation of Music Clubs, Indiana Music Teachers Association, *Simeonis* International Composers Competition for Choral Songs), vocal auditions, and clinics. She has actively adjudicated for the Michigan School Vocal Music Association offering her choral expertise and experience to the younger generations of singers in the state.

Dr. Hristova is very active as a collaborative pianist in solo recitals and concerts with instrumental and vocal soloists. She has recently appeared as a soloist with the UM-Flint Wind Symphony and has performed recitals with flautist Colton Sayer at the University of Michigan-Flint, Michigan State University, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church Concert Series.

Dr. Hristova is a recipient of the Lucinda Hinsdale Stone Junior Women Faculty Award bestowed by the University of Michigan-Flint in recognition of one's scholarship and creative activities.