

Theatre Arts For Kids™ (Summer 2008)

Meet the Staff

Program Staff:

Leah Arington – Program Director
Max Stoffregen – Accompanist
Adrienne Larsen – Associate Director
Chi Chi Nieves – Associate Director
Lauren Carroll – Assistant Director

Staff Assistants:

Dante Biale
Jessica Montgomery

Administrative Staff:

Sandy Warner, Chorus Manager
Dottie Larsen, Administrative Assistant
Kathy McCann, Finance Manager
Astrid Vuong, Communications

Support Staff:

Marcia Mason, Costumes
Blanca Anderson, Photographer
Keith Anderson, Videographer

Leah Arington – Program Director

Leah has been the director of the Contra Costa Children's Chorus' Summer Theatre Program for the past six years. Leah has also served the CCCC as Associate Artistic Director, conducting the Level 1 Chorus, the Boys Choruses, the Honors Ensemble, the Graduate Ensemble, as well as serving as the resident Voice Instructor, Choreographer, and Stage Director. Originally from Nebraska, Leah started Theatre Arts For Kids there in 1999.

Leah received her degrees in vocal performance and music education at the Eastman School of Music in New York and continued her graduate studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. Leah's performing credits include various roles and solo engagements with Royal Northern Opera Company, the Eastman Opera Theatre, the Rochester Broadway Theatre League, the Nebraska/Aksarben Arts Council, the Centro Studi Italiani Opera Theatre, the Eastman Philharmonic Orchestra, and the East Bay's own Diablo Light Opera Company, and Women's Sing. Leah is certified in Orff methods and Henry Leck's Choral Artistry.

Leah is a certified music teacher in New York State. She has taught choral and general music in the Arlington Central School District in LaGrangeville, NY where her select chorus, Treble Talent, received consistent superior ratings at various music festivals.

This past fall, Leah returned to the Eastman School of Music where she is pursuing her Master's Degree in Stage Directing. Leah is thrilled to be returning for another TAFK summer with her CCCC family.

Adrienne Larsen – Associate Director

Adrienne Larsen first began her performance career at the age of four with the San Ramon Valley Dance Academy. A few years later, she joined the Contra Costa Children's Chorus under the direction of Iris Lamanna. During the ten years she spent with the choir, she was privileged to perform in Carnegie Hall, sing in honor choirs with the ACDA, perform some of the first children's operas that the chorus offered, and worked with world-renowned choral directors in festivals held in Denmark, Italy, Prague, Budapest, and Salzburg. Aside from singing with the Advanced Chorus and Honors, Adrienne sang with the Chamber Choir and Beauty Shop Double Quartet with the Monte Vista High School Choir. Adrienne went on to study music at the University of California Santa Barbara where she was in the operas *Hansel and Gretel* (Engelbert Humperdinck, 1854-1921), *Barbe-Blue* (Bela Bartok, 1881-1945) and performed the role of Lu in the *Red Azalea* (William Kraft), world premier February 7-9, 2003. She participated in "La Fabbrica", a summer opera workshop in Florence, Italy with Michael Sokol and Angelina Reaux where she appeared as the Sorceress in *Dido and Aeneas* and as Jenny in *The Three Penny Opera*. She was a member of Santa Barbara's Musica Antiqua under the direction of Alejandro Enrique Planchart for five years where she appeared as a soloist, and in *Oronthea* (Antonio Cesti, 1623-1669) as Amore and Ismero/Giacinta, in concert performances as a benefit for Opera Santa Barbara. She also studied conducting as a member of the UCSB Chamber Choir with Michael Marc Gervais in Paris, France, 2001. Adrienne graduated with high honors in June 2003 with a bachelor of music degree in vocal performance. She is ecstatic to be working for a fifth season alongside Leah this summer. She received her teaching credentials from Cal State Long Beach, and is teaching choral music at Vista Verde School in Irvine, CA.

Chi Chi Nieves – Associate Director

Chi Chi Nieves is currently pursuing her Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Performance and Music Education at Oberlin College. Chi Chi is an active alum of the Contra Costa Children's Chorus where she performed in various chorus levels, the Honors Ensemble, and CCCC's Children's Operas. In addition, Chi Chi served as a student director for Level 1 and the Boys Choruses.

Lauren Carroll – Assistant Director

Lauren Carroll recently received her Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from University of California Davis. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Cellular and Molecular Biology at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Lauren is the Co-Chair of the Contra Costa Children's Chorus Alumni Association. She also performed in various levels, the Honors Ensemble, and served as assistant director for Honors and Level 1 Choruses.

Max Stoffregen - Accompanist

Max Stoffregen is a San Francisco based composer and keyboardist who has written music for a variety of genres, from songs to multi-movement works for chamber ensemble. Max's music has been described by pianist Scott Foglesong as "...bracingly original and exhilarating", and has been performed by a variety of musicians, from the Oakland, CA based art-rock band Inner Ear Brigade (with whom he performs regularly on keyboards), to the New Music Ensemble of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, to the Sqwonk bass clarinet duo, as well as by pianists Mike Ippolito in Minneapolis, MN and Madison, WI, and Scott Foglesong in San Francisco.