

Dear SERNATS colleagues:

As I write this, I'm reminded of how busy we all are with the many commitments this time of year presents. Many of us are hearing auditions for next year's class of new students, preparing our students for SERNATS and other upcoming auditions, juries, and recitals, all while juggling our own repertoire preparation, course grading, and laundry! With all our busyness, it seems important to remind ourselves (or maybe this is just for me) why we're doing all this. I had the privilege of serving as an adjudicator for two competitions recently. Both required some travel and time away from my daily responsibilities and family, so I felt a bit pressed to get them in just after a recital and in the middle of audition season. However, I reflect on these experiences as respites, as opportunities to stop being busy and savor the beauty of the human voice and the music we are gifted to share through singing and teaching. I fear I miss this most central truth too often during this season, so I am grateful for the magnificent reminders. I hope that during the upcoming NATSAA and SERNATS auditions, you'll find such moments to pause and enjoy as you endeavor to stay on schedule, total your scores, and collate your forms. We'll have so many opportunities to glimpse potential, to encourage success, to offer advice, to promote excellence... but I hope we don't miss the opportunities that will come to us to have our own spirits nurtured and energized as we share our time and expertise with these young singers. If your travel schedule permits, attend the NATSAA regional finals at **6 pm Thursday, March 27 in the River Center**, which is in **downtown Columbus at the Schob School of Music**. Enjoy the 380 auditions we'll hear on Friday and Saturday to follow!

Speaking of the auditions, this year's SERNATS auditions will represent three "firsts" for us: this is the first year that we will allow (per your approval) arias to be performed in categories 5 and 6 beyond those on the "allowed arias" list as an option for repertoire requirement #3. This is also the first year for the National Finals rounds to be held as part of the National Conference in Boston. **(Note that the details regarding this new national competition are posted on www.nats.org.)** I encourage you to become familiar with the guidelines and rules for the YouTube round and the finals that will follow in Boston, as there will be a very brief window of time for eligible SERNATS finalists (1st-3rd place winners) to submit the required materials for the next round. Finally, this is the first year that we'll post semi-final and final rosters on our ***SERNATS Facebook group!*** Please request to join this group so you're "in the loop".

Looking beyond the SERNATS auditions, I hope that you'll each give serious consideration to attending the NATS National Conference in Boston. Thomas Hampson, NATSAA, Musical Theatre Competition Finals, National Student Audition Finals, fantastic workshops, Boston on Independence Day.... enough said!

Finally, a PLEASE take a few moments to confirm that your contact information is up to date. I send email correspondence to SERNATS members through the national website, so be sure they have your correct address and that you are in our region on their records if you have recently relocated. Also, check your spam filters! We have sent out numerous emails over the last months pertaining to proposals for the repertoire changes mentioned

above, membership renewal reminders, postings of auditions information, etc., You are missing important information if it is being sent to an obsolete email address or is languishing in your spam folder.

I'll close by reminding you to check in with us at www.sernats.org, www.nats.org, and the Facebook page often. Dr. Hoch, Dr. DeBruyn, our marvelous faculty hosts at Columbus State University, and I look forward to seeing many of you in just a few weeks! Safe travels!

Melanie Williams
Governor, NATS Southeastern Region