**Welcome Letter**

Hi, composer friends! In the early 2010s, I was commissioning composers and never thought that I could compose. My degrees and experience were all in music education. I thought that composing only came to the "special" people and that I wasn't one of them. Now I know that if you dream it, you can become it with a little help from your friends, some solid work, and know-how from experts. I started composing at 45 and 9 years later, I am with 7 publishing houses, have 27 published works, and have premiered at Carnegie Hall! This is not to brag, but to say that if I can do it, YOU can do it!!!! So...

You are invited to participate in our inaugural **International Choral Composers Institute** for composers of choral music with a focus on music for grades 3-12 and adult developing choirs.

This will be a 5-day institute that welcomes ALL levels of composers including dreamers and beginners (like the 2015 me)! Staff will include three composing teachers in residence; three grades 3-12 choral music education experts (including ME!), and publishing industry editors.

Sessions would include but not be limited to:
- How to write beautiful, accessible choral music for grades 3-12
- How to write accompaniments including making a piano part more pianistic (esp. for non-

pianists)
- Writing for specific levels of difficulty

- How to compose for specific voicings including elementary age, adolescents including

the changing voice (cambiata), teens, and trans/non-binary singers
- Finding lyrics/lyricists and/or writing your own lyrics
- How to get published and navigate the industry side of things
- Why you need to know about ASCAP, BMI, royalties, etc.
- How to get noticed, market yourself, and grow your online presence
- Landing commissions and gigs including how much to charge
- The ins and outs of self-publishing including how to go from a working score to making it

look finished.
- All things regarding composer competitions
- Introductions to publishing house owners/editors
- Composing WITH ensembles for collaborative composing
- How to use Sibelius, Dorico, Musescore and other popular notation software including

pros and cons of each

(The above sessions will be determined based on interest of participants via surveys.)

Also included will be master classes on composing where you witness/learn the composing process from experts; inspiring instruction on the art of composing choral music; individual and small-group composing lessons (auditioned track only); reading sessions including YOUR MUSIC; and potentially performances of YOUR MUSIC (auditioned track only).

ALL classes will be taught by friendly, welcoming, engaging experts who love to teach and share AND who are HAPPY to work with beginners as well as other composers of ALL levels. This will be a collegial and non-competitive atmosphere where ALL are welcome.

If there's a topic you're interested in that you DON'T see here, feel free to contact Sherry Blevins and share.

(I should add that if you're an expert in one of the above things and want to be considered for staff, email [Sherry Blevins](http://sherryblevinsmusic@gmail.com).)