



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
**TEACHERS
OF SINGING**

Ontario Chapter

Annual General Meeting

Saturday May 07, 2022 - 10 AM

Zoom Link:

<https://wilfrid-laurier.zoom.us/j/97916105763?pwd=eFYvVzIXTjIENGI0YlgwMUpoMDY2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 979 1610 5763

Passcode: 943880

Minutes

NATS Ontario Executive Team:

District Governor: Gloria Gassi

President: Dr. Mei Lee

Vice-President: Amanda Brunk

Special Events and Projects Director: Renée Salewski

Treasurer: Mike Fan/Lisa Brillon

Secretary: Dr. Elizabeth Lepock

Vocal Showcase Director: Bethany Hörst

Marketing and Communications: Amanda Kind

Special Events and Projects Associate: Nicky McGrath

Liaisons: Allison Arends (Urban), Irene Ilic (Suburban), Erin Milley-Patey (Rural),
Suzanne Schaafsma (Urban), Elspeth Maynard (Classroom Teacher), Dr. Chad Louwerse
(Academic Classical), and Darnell Thomas (Academic MT)

Members in attendance (listed alphabetically horizontally by surname):

Sarah Amelard	Sarah-Ann Birken	Anna Boyes	Lisa Brillon
Amanda Brunk	Louisa Burgess	Natasha Campbell	Jen Carter
Torin Chiles	Shannon Coates	Linda Condy	Chelsea Cushman
Amie Debrone	Brooke Dufton	Darryl Edwards	Mike Fan
Linda Fletcher	Cara Gilbertson	Joan Heels	Bethany Hörst

Irene Ilic	Mei Lee	Julie Ludwig	Lorna MacDonald
Elsbeth Maynard	Nicky McGrath	Erin Milley-Patey	Renée Salewski
Charlene Santoni	Sharon Tikiryan	Patricia Wrigglesworth	Michelyn Wright

Proxies (listed alphabetically horizontally by surname):

Allison Arends	Kimberly Barber	Marie Baron	Margie Bernal
Norma Churchill	Edwina Douglas	Barbara Dunn-Prosser	Heather Faris
Michael Faulkner	Gloria Gassi	Rachel Goldenberg	Arlene Gray
Gail Hakala	Melissa Hakala	MJ Johnson	Jill Kelman
Marnie Kersten	Amanda Kind	Judith Lebane Kane	Elizabeth Lepock
Chad Louwerse	Elizabeth McDonald	Alison Moodie	Kati Pearson
Sofia Peycheva	Andrew Rethazi	Darnell Thomas	Tammy Whetham

Quorum is one third of members, so for this meeting a quorum consists of 42 members. We have 60, including members in attendance and proxies sent.

1. Call to Order - meeting chaired by NATS Ontario President, Dr. Mei Lee.

2. Roll Call/Permission to Record

- Mike Fan moved to record the AGM.
- Seconded by Renée Salewski.
- Motion carried.

3. Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, Opening Remarks, Recognition of Founding Members

- Land acknowledgement from Renée Salewski.
- Welcome from Mei Lee, acknowledging the challenges and successes of the year and hopes for the future.
- The executive conducted a comprehensive survey of our membership last June, receiving an enthusiastic and informative response regarding the needs and hopes of our members. Many thanks to our liaisons who spearheaded this project, and to Tim Hanson for his expertise and help.
- In order to put the results of the survey into action, we formed several committees - Vocal Showcase Committee, co-chaired by Bethany Hörst and Amanada Brunk, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, chaired by Renée Salewski, Programs and Services Development Committee, chaired by Allison Arends, Bursary Committee, chaired by Mike Fan, Bylaws Revision Committee, chaired by Linda Conday, and Research Committee, chaired by Dr. Elizabeth Lepock (this final committee has not yet gone into action, but we hope to begin this spring). We are planning to establish an Online Presence Committee, chaired by Amanda Kind.
- Many thanks to the executive committee for their volunteer service for our community. Special thanks to Irene Ilic, Lisa Brillon, Bethany Hörst, and Allison Arends, for serving on multiple committees.
- Congratulations to Lisa Brillon for her election to the position of Great Lakes Regional Governor, taking office after the national conference in July. We are thrilled that she will

be representing us.

- Torin Chiles, National Vice-President for Membership, will serve a second term in this role. How wonderful to have two Canadians serving at the national level.
- Gratitude to our founding members from 1988 - we honour their legacy and promise to continue their good works.

4. Adoption of Agenda (circulated)

- One amendment - Patricia Wrigglesworth will report for UWO SNATS.
- Lisa Brillon moved to accept the agenda as amended.
- Amanda Brunk seconded the motion.
- Motion carried.

5. Approval of Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting (circulated)

- Joan Heels has a correction - add chair's name to call to order of 2021 minutes.
- Jen Carter moved to approve the minutes as amended.
- Michelyn Wright seconded.
- Motion carried.

6. Reports from Officers

6.1 District Governor: Lisa Cosens Brillon (on behalf of Gloria Gassi)

- Gloria prepared a Powerpoint presentation which Lisa presented on her behalf.
- The DG duties include membership, recruiting, diversity and inclusion, projects and events, advisory committees for ad hoc decisions, and nominations.
- The DG receives monthly reports from the Regional Governor, and invites members local to Ontario (both new and lapsed) to join our chapter, and welcomes new chapter members.
- Recruitment of all stakeholders occurs through a wide variety of channels.
- Our chapter follows the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles outlined by NATS at the national/international level and uses the toolkit provided.
- Projects and events include our annual vocal showcase and professional development day, our newsletter, NATS Chats/NATS ON Point, and our SNATS chapters.
- This year an ad hoc advisory committee was struck, and a nominating committee was convened in order to fill the position of secretary which was coming vacant, and the newly created position of assistant vocal showcase coordinator.

6.2 Treasurer: Mike Fan

- Mike expresses this thanks to Lisa for her mentoring in this, his first year as treasurer for NATS Ontario.
- Our income taxes have been filed, and we will soon be receiving our information from that filing in the mail.
- Our balances add up to just over \$30,000.
- The PayPal balance is approximately \$1,500.
- Our membership has slightly decreased over the course of the pandemic (we lost

22 members, bringing us down to 132), whether due to financial hardship, an overload of virtual events, or other reasons. Donations from the membership have also slightly decreased at this time. Our hope is that the excellent work of our liaisons and very active board will continue to engage the community in Ontario.

- Expenses have been low due to the virtual nature of our programming this year.
- Vocal Showcase - with low expenses, we were able to share more chapter money directly with participants through additional scholarships. Thank you to all of our members who donated, especially Joan Heels for her great generosity, year after year. Your support is critical for maintaining our ability to provide this service to our community.
- PD Day - last year we also had very few expenses due to the online format of the event.
- Overall, we have gained rather than losing money over the course of the pandemic. Let's continue to take advantage of the cost-effective nature of virtual events (though perhaps not for all of our larger events) as this allows us to use our resources mindfully and present more content to our members.
- Next year we hope to include an incentive program allowing non-members to use their Vocal Showcase fee towards NATS membership.
- This year we offered 6 PD Day bursaries but no applications were received for this opportunity, indicating that either these were not needed, or we should look into more/better/earlier promotion of this venture.
- We are also proposing membership bursaries to be given out in fall 2022.
- Joan Heels shared her wisdom with us, that we cannot vote to accept the treasurer's report without it having been audited. Some discussion ensued including Linda Condy and Lisa Brillon (both past treasurers). It was decided that the report should either be reviewed by/signed-off by a CPA (which would cost considerably less than an external audit) or reviewed by a NATS Ontario member with financial knowledge who is not on the executive board.
- NATS ON Point budget - the executive voted for a \$500/annual cap on the event budget for 2022, and will reassess this budget for future years. This will be offered at a "Pay-what-you-can" cost to the membership.
- NATS ON Point honorarium - the executive voted for a \$50 gift card/honorarium for non-executive presenters (executive presenters will not be offered an honorarium in order to avoid conflict of interest).
- Vocal Showcase Second VP Expense - the executive voted for a \$300 expense for the vocal showcase, to offset the expenses of the Second VP around responsibilities at an in-person event.

6.3 Special Events & Projects Director: Renée Salewski

- Another year of virtual offerings/events gave us the opportunity to connect with members from all over Ontario. Due to the benefits to virtual events discovered during this time, discussions are taking place regarding continuing to offer hybrid events, as this increases accessibility.
- NATS Chats were held leading up to the vocal showcase, and these have developed (under the guidance of the Programs and Services Committee) into NATS ON Point - our new and improved version of these events.

- PD Event - Planning this event was extra-exciting this year as we had our survey results to aid us in tailoring our choices to our memberships desires and needs.

6.4 Vocal Showcase Director: Bethany Hörst

- This was our second successful digital showcase. It has been interesting and beneficial to work in this format, and we intend to continue offering a digital showcase in all upcoming years in order to increase accessibility. Our hope is to return to running a live showcase, so we will have two streams running in upcoming years.
- We had nearly 300 singers again this year, from about 50 studios, including some new ones. We are grateful for long-time attending studios, but are excited to see expansions of our community, and hope to meet many of these in-person in the future!
- Our in-person showcase details for next year are still TBA, but the hope is for it to take place at Western (UWO) the third week of November 2022.
- With lower costs due to operating virtually, we were able to offer more scholarships again this year. We may or may not be able to continue these additional scholarships when our costs rise again due to a return to an in-person showcase, but we were happy to be able to share this extra monetary bounty with the students again this year.
- Details about changes to our showcase will be shared later in this meeting during updates regarding survey responses. We are hoping to be able to continue to offer some additional scholarships, have added new registration categories, etc.

6.5 Liaisons: Irene Ilic

- The main focus this past year was to implement the survey results, and we have made significant progress on this venture.
- 87 teachers completed the survey, which is a tremendous response, and a strong majority of our membership. The information gleaned will support our work for years to come.
- The board received a wonderful Powerpoint presentation from data analyst Tim Hanson interpreting the data for us. He generously donated his time and expertise to assist us with creating and implementing the survey, and analyzing the data which emerged. A link to this presentation was shared with the entire membership via email on December 15, 2022 in the winter newsletter. We encourage you to take a look at this easy-to-follow breakdown of the data.
- Several committees were formed in fall 2021 in response to the survey results, and liaisons are serving on a variety of these committees, including several serving on more than one committee.
- More detailed information about the progress we have made implementing responses to the survey results will be forthcoming in committee reports.
- Liaisons are here to help the members in any way we can, and now have a dedicated email to which you can reach out: liaisons@natsontario.org. We encourage you to reach out with questions and ideas.

6.6 SNATS Chapter Updates

6.6.1 U of T – presented by Anna Boyes (co-president) on behalf of herself and Maeve Palmer (co-president)

- Kickoff event was “Build Your Own Larynx” in which students learn about laryngeal function as they create a large paper model of the larynx including moving parts.
- Three online seminars were held, and fantastic guest presenters were welcomed for these events.
- The first online seminar was a virtual skills workshop with Eliot Britton who aided students in learning the skills to set up their online teaching studios.
- The second online seminar was given by Nikki Loney, author of The Full Voice series on training young voices.
- The final online seminar was a masterclass and Q&A session with Elaine Overholt, founder of Big Voice Studios, on contemporary commercial music.
- The chapter also held a “Looks and Books” formal-wear and score fundraiser sale, which was a great success.
- The year ended with the third annual Canadian Art Song Showcase in collaboration with U of T’s New Music Festival. This concert featured works by U of T composers sung by U of T students, with interviews discussing compositional aspects and their learning processes.
- U of T SNATS would love to collaborate with the other SNATS chapters, and the NATS Ontario Chapter in the future!

6.6.2 UWO – Patricia Wrigglesworth - co vice-president

- Throughout the year this SNATS chapter has held three online seminars, and one in-person luncheon and vocal health presentation.
- The first online seminar was a collaboration between SNATS and MESA (Music Education Student Association). NATS Ontario member Amie Debrone presented on her singing journey, including such topics as the “para-pro” program, NATS, what it is like to be an adjudicator, what it is like to have a home music studio (and what that looks like beyond 2020).
- The second online seminar was a discussion with 4th-year Don Wright Faculty of Music student Jennifer Wong who is pursuing a dual degree with the Ivy Business School. She presented regarding her experiences creating an online music school, including such topics as the business skills, financial tools, and marketing strategies necessary to begin and maintain an online music school.
- The final online seminar was a presentation and Q&A from registered holistic nutritionist Sheryl Wright. The presentation covered tips and healthy habits for voice students, including all the essential nutrients for vocalists to maintain healthy immune systems as university students.
- Next year we are hoping to hold more in-person events and initiatives, including a few that were not possible this past academic year - one is a collaboration with our choir council bringing together vocal and choral faculty members to discuss proper vocal and choral technique.

6.6.3 WLU – Amanda Brunk (faculty advisor) on behalf of Vanesa Hoffman (president)

- A major undertaking this academic year was to rebuild the chapter team according to the new goals of engagement and access to vocal music pedagogy. Emphasis was given to creating a welcoming space, music students were invited to learn alongside one another, supplementing their post-secondary educational endeavours.
- The first event of the year was a workshop by Amanda Brunk regarding healthy singing techniques in the music theatre genre.
- A follow-up event was held with Chad Louwerse who presented on ways to navigate cold and flu season, including tips and tricks to stay healthy, and remedies to help deal with negative throat-health impacts.
- A final event was held with guest Carlos Morgan, Juno award winning artist and teacher, who conducted a workshop on singing in the R&B style. It included both singing and teaching techniques.

- Shannon Coates moved to accept the reports from officers, and to accept the treasurer's report, pending review.
- Michelyn Wright seconded.
- Motion carried.

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Bylaws Revision Committee: Linda Condry

- Linda thanks her fellow committee members Michelyn, Gloria, and Lisa.
- The reasons for these revisions were changes to how the board is operating, especially the addition of a number of committees, some of which are more permanent than in the past. That needed to be reflected.
- **Below find a partial listing of some of the major changes:**
- More membership categories have arisen, and been edited.
- The vice president and special projects director now will use the titles first vice president and second vice president.
- Board members will now be allowed to be removed from office for missing three consecutive meetings.
- It was clarified that auxiliary committee members can be invited to board meetings, but do not have voting privileges.
- New marketing and communications elements were added to the bylaws to reflect how these elements are now being handled.
- The new Policy and Procedures Manual will now be regularly updated by the First Vice President.
- Committees must submit written reports to the executive.
- The bulk of the changes were made to the Vocal Showcase section of the bylaws in order to reflect what we do differently as NATS Ontario from other chapters. It is annual, a new committee has been set up to support the coordinator, wording

was edited to reflect charitable organization rules surrounding showcase expenses for certain committee/board members, communication will take place via email. These changes really just correspond with what we are actually doing, rather than being real changes to current procedures.

- Motion to accept the revised Bylaws as recommended by the Bylaws Revision Committee.
- Bethany Hörst moved.
- Renée Salewski seconded.
- Motion carried.

7.2 Vocal Showcase Committee: Bethany Hörst

- A thorough update of the handbook was undertaken both as a routine matter and in response to the liaison survey results.
- **Below find a partial listing of some of the major changes:**
- CCM and pop categories have been added.
- A number of categories have been renamed.
- There have been some revisions to the repertoire.
- There has been some expansion of age groups including offering classes for younger students than before.
- In tandem with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, we have been working towards more inclusive practices and reflecting this in the handbook updates of terminology, etc.
- We investigated the possibility of using different registration software, particularly Canadian software. However, after much research we are staying with AuditionWare, because it is the only program catering to the complexity of our showcase scheduling. AuditionWare continues to do amazing customization for our unique needs.
- Recommend that a committee be struck to work with the Vocal Showcase Coordinator to work on vetting and database of official accompanists.
- Recommend that there be an assistant to the Vocal Showcase Coordinator, who will cover many/most responsibilities for the digital vocal showcase, becoming essentially the Digital Vocal Showcase Coordinator. Amie Debrone will be voted on for this position today.

- Many thanks to Irene and Lisa for doing the bulk of the handbook revisions, which was a huge amount of work, including meetings for the committee, and the executive. We look forward to the membership's feedback as well.

- A question was raised regarding how tabulation will work in young categories with only two judges.
- This is an experiment which will be revisited pending the level of success with it. One of the concerns is having enough judges, with new categories having been added, and this was a compromise struck to attempt to deal with that issue.

- Motion to accept the revised Vocal Showcase Handbook as recommended by the

Vocal Showcase Committee.

- Jen Carter moved.
- Erin Milley-Patey seconded.
- Motion carried.

7.3 Programs and Services Development Committee: Allison Arends

- A wonderful committee has been developed, including Irene Ilic, Elspeth Maynard, Erin Milley-Patey, and Renée Salewski, and Allison Arends as chair.
- The survey showed a strong interest among our membership in having more professional development opportunities curated by NATS Ontario, particularly to do with EDI training, commercial music and music theatre training, providing more resources for newer and younger teachers, and resources for private teachers (who make up the majority of our membership).
- We have been focusing on developing our new Zoom series, NATS ON Point, launched last month with Amanda Kind's session on CCM, contemporary music theatre, training, teaching style, technique, and adjudication, which was very well-received.
- Our second event will be on May 29th - a panel discussion on private studio practices - payment policies, resources, teaching style, communication style and methods, safe reopening in COVID-times, etc.
- In June we will be holding Bylaw Bingo for the executive and auxiliary committee in order to refresh and reinforce our familiarity with the bylaws in a fun and engaging way.
- After a summer break we will continue to plan and release further content - hopefully monthly or bimonthly. More CCM and music theatre content is coming, as that is a strong interest gleaned from the membership survey, and to help set up our membership for the new categories in the vocal showcase.
- We are also discussing sessions on EDI training for a variety of contexts. Ex. LGBTQ2S+, BIPOC, and neurodiverse communities, and in order to move forward with better practices in a Me-Too, Black Lives Matter, Reconciliation, and Every Child Matters world, and to engage in discussion around decolonizing the music studio. This will be done in collaboration with the EDI committee.
- The topics we are engaging with are being presented in order of priority based on level of interest indicated by the membership in the survey results. We also hope to engage with a broader demographic - younger teachers from diverse musical and cultural backgrounds and locations (including rurally located).
- This report again references the financial considerations already raised in the treasurer's report regarding budget and honoraria for the NATS ON Point initiative for 2022.

7.4 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee: Renée Salewski

- The first focus of this committee was on the Vocal Showcase Handbook revisions, primarily looking at revising classes and categories, and making adjustments to verbiage throughout, and creating an EDI statement for the handbook.
- Also looked at updating various official NATS Ontario documents and forms.

- Education/training opportunities are in the works in collaboration with the Programs and Services Development Committee.
- Resources are currently being compiled to make available on the NATS Ontario website.
- More to come soon!

7.5 Bursary Committee: Mike Fan

- We offered 6 PD Day bursaries with a goal of making this opportunity more accessible to our membership. Unfortunately, there were no applications this first time these bursaries were offered.
- We are also hoping to offer membership bursaries in the fall.
- Please spread the word. Additionally, we will be advertising these bursaries more widely and further in advance of application deadlines.
- Motion to accept the reports from the committees.
- Mike Fan moved.
- Linda Condy seconded.
- Motion carried.

8. Business

8.1 Executive Members:

8.1.1 End of Term / Resignations (with appreciation):

- Lisa Cosens Brillon – Treasurer (interim)
- Elizabeth Lepock – Secretary
- Colleen Morrison – Special Events and Projects Associate
- Abigail Freeman – Marketing and Communications

8.1.2 Motion to formalize newly established position: Lisa Cosens Brillon (on behalf of Gloria Gassi)

Assistant Vocal Showcase Coordinator

- As mentioned earlier, with the addition of new classes and a digital element to the vocal showcase, the coordinator will need an assistant.
- Motion to establish the Assistant Vocal Showcase Coordinator position on the NATS Ontario Chapter executive as an auxiliary member.
- Amanada Brunk moved.
- Renée Salewski seconded.
- Motion carried.

8.1.3 Election for the following positions: Lisa Cosens Brillon (on behalf of Gloria Gassi)

- Secretary – Thera Barclay Margie Bernal
- There was a very tight vote, in which Margie Bernal won.

- Assistant Vocal Showcase Coordinator – Amie Debrone
- President – Mei Lee (second term)
- Newly-named Second Vice-President (in charge of Special Events & Projects) – Renée Salewski (second term)

- Motion to accept this slate of officers - President Mei Lee, Second Vice-President Renée Salewski, Secretary Margie Bernal, and Assistant Vocal Showcase Coordinator Amie Debrone.
- Irene Ilic moved.
- Julie Ludwig seconded.
- Motion carried.

9. Other Business

- News from Torin Chiles:
 - He passes along greetings from NATS Executive Director, Allen Henderson, and NATS National President Carole Blankenship.
 - He has enjoyed his past two years serving on the national board, and looks forward to two more years!
 - One of his roles as Vice-President for Membership is chairing the membership committee. One task that the committee oversees is to solicit/approve members for the “NATS For A Lifetime” designation - recognizing long service, and a passion for singing at the chapter level. Mei Lee and the executive did the legwork to put forward a candidate from our chapter, and Torin has the privilege today to announce that our own beloved Dr. Joan Heels has been nominated for this award. It will be announced very soon nationally, and we hope to draw a lot of visibility towards it at the national convention in Chicago in July.

10. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn the meeting.
- Amanda Brunk moved.
- Mike Fan seconded.
- Motion carried.