



Press Release

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Re: Ashtabula County Choral Music Society commission to celebrate 30th Anniversary Season

The Ashtabula County Choral Music Society has commissioned a cappella educator, composer/arranger, and Geneva native **Brandy Kay Riha** to develop a new choral piece for the *Chorale* in celebration of 30 years of providing opportunities for singers and audiences in Ashtabula County. She has chosen to base her arrangement for choir on a pop song by artist Avril Lavigne entitled “Keep Holding On” and it will be premiered by the *Chorale* (led by Brandy) at their concert holiday December 2 at St Peter’s Episcopal Church in Ashtabula. The commission and performance of this piece is also a way to celebrate Brandy, who began her experience with choral singing as a member of the ACCMS Children’s Choir. She “kept holding on” to her dream to make music and is now providing opportunities for others around the world to sing their dream.

With a **Master of Music in Choral Conducting** (Kent State University) and a **Bachelor of Arts in Music Theory & Performance** (Ashland University), Brandy Kay Riha has a special interest in building treble repertoire. Her innovative yet accessible arrangements have been performed by middle school, high school, and collegiate singers around the world. She has founded and directed numerous collegiate and professional groups and has published arrangements with Hal Leonard. She has also led several workshops on arranging, music theory, and vocal percussion.

Brandy is currently Adjunct Instructor of Commercial Voice and Director of the Pop Choir at Tiffin University. She was the 2018 Education Intern for **THE VOCAL COMPANY**, where she assisted with programming for Next Level, a series of transformative, week-long summer a cappella educational seminars held across the US. This past summer she founded, directed, and arranged for Zero to Sixty a cappella, a five-member Akron-based group who competed in the 2018 Varsity Vocals Open. Brandy also recently coached and arranged for Vocal Intensity at Kent State University in preparation for their first competitive performance, the 2018 Midwest Quarterfinal of the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella (ICCAs).

Brandy is also active in the choral world as both a conductor and chorister. She has performed at Severance Hall with the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus and recently sang with the Akron non-profit chorus, **SINGERS COMPANIE**, who toured Ireland in 2017. Brandy currently serves as the Choir Director at the First Christian Church in Ravenna.

Brandy's love for contemporary a cappella started with a performance by Tiffin University's *Up in the Air* at Geneva High School during her junior year. After performing in her school's a cappella group senior year and dabbling in beatboxing, she went on to pursue music at Ashland University. During Brandy's sophomore year at Ashland, she co-founded the student-led co-ed cappella group, **SURROUND SOUND**. From 2013 to 2016, she assisted with the female a cappella group **KANGA BLUE** at The University of Akron, including leading beatboxing & arranging workshops, choreographing concert numbers, and helping the group to become a recognized student organization at the university.

The ACCMS concert December 2 at 4:30 pm is sponsored by Huffman-Mayer Wealth Management Groups of Wells Fargo Advisors and is provided free of admission. Donations of non-perishable food items for the St Peter’s Food Ministry and contributions in support of future ACCMS performance events will be gratefully accepted.