

Norman Spivey

NATS and the NATS Foundation— Working Together for You

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ONE OF THE VISIONS I have had for NATS is improving communication at all levels—between NATS and its members, between members themselves, and also within NATS entities. I've spoken about our interdependent nature before and believe that increased understanding can go a long way toward building the future of our Association.

To this end I have been working to facilitate additional collaboration between NATS and the NATS Foundation. The relationship between these two bodies has not always been seamless; there have been times when personalities in place made it difficult to work as a team, when egos outweighed altruism. Happily, since that has not been the case for quite some time, the occasion seemed ripe to work through differences and to bridge gaps between the two organizations.

I am delighted to report that clear strides have already been made. Our previous model was one in which leaders of each group dropped in to the meeting of the other for a token report or greeting. We now have a model that fully includes leaders of both groups at all meetings. This will naturally lead to a better understanding of the workings and needs of each group. The Foundation president has already been dedicating time to attend NATS board meetings and thoroughly champions the work of the Foundation there. In addition, a new regular duty of the NATS president-elect will be to attend meetings of the Foundation, representing NATS and, perhaps more important, becoming fully immersed in the workings of the Foundation. (Having served on the Foundation board for a number of years, I know that a complete awareness of both entities helps lay the foundation of understanding, and I feel it serves me especially well when we discuss budget, new programs, and the like.) The boards of directors of both groups have embraced these changes, and I believe we are fully poised to move forward with great success. I am grateful to them, and am looking forward to the fruit I expect this increased collaboration will bear.

The NATS Foundation was created in 1976 and has helped to promote young singers, to educate our membership, and to further our art in teaching and singing by funding or cosponsoring many signature NATS programs. Board members are often joined at meetings of the Foundation by regional liaisons, who attend in order to share information back home with their local constituencies. Interestingly, our current president, Brian Horne, began his

affiliation with the Foundation as one of these regional liaisons. He may not have imagined where his service would lead him, but we are the richer for it. Do you have philanthropic energies? Would you like to be part of the Foundation? Do you have ideas for funding new or existing programs? I know that Brian and others at the Foundation would love to hear from you.

You may already be aware that your NATS membership dues include a regional allotment; ten dollars of every dues payment are made available to the regions to help fund member activities closer to home. What you may not know, however, is that every contribution to the NATS Foundation comes back to help the Association in some capacity. Dollars to the Foundation become dollars to NATS programs. Over the years a number of named funds have been established (funds that honor important figures in our profession, NATS regions, and teacher groups) that ensure a certain amount of stability, but in addition to these funds the Foundation has been doing its work through the generosity of about 300 members who donate annually. Given that our Association has well over 7,000 members, think of the possibilities with increased participation. I understand that member donations are increasing as a result of the unified online member renewal process, which is a wonderful trend. You may wish to consider making a donation to the general fund or to one of the funds that support a specific program of interest or in honor of an important mentor. Without the generosity of giving to the NATS Foundation we would likely not be able to offer the current diversity of programs. With additional giving, however, just imagine what our future could look like.

Brian Horne had a chance to address the recent Boston conference about the Foundation. In his remarks, he affirmed how important NATS has been to him, and how grateful he was not only to have been a part of the Association and the Foundation for many years, but also to be a part of the important tradition we share every day—a tradition of great composers, of great singers, of great teachers.

He detailed how the Foundation is able to provide:

- \$15,000 in scholarships for **NATSAA**;
- a third of the funding for the **Intern Program**;

- support for new **SNATS** chapters;
- the **Voice Pedagogy Award**; and
- shared funding for the **Emerging Leaders Awards** and the **Van Lawrence Fellowship**.

But the Foundation has bigger dreams, he went on to say; we would like to be able to fund NATS programs in their entirety, to be able to cover expenses for singers participating in competitions, to have some part in funding the National Music Theater Competition, to have a presence in the National Student Auditions, and to fund new independent teachers initiatives, for example. More support is needed to do all of this, of course, but please know that the Foundation is eager to help NATS members as they do their important work with students. “We need your help because they need your help,” was Brian’s clear message.

The Foundation will be launching a campaign for its upcoming 40th anniversary, and I heartily encourage you to begin considering how you might participate. Our Foundation can only be as firm as your generosity. Remember, we *are* stronger together!

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING

Membership:

Membership in the National Association of Teachers of Singing is open to any citizen of any country whose professional training and experience qualifying him or her as a teacher of singing.

Associate Membership is available for voice teachers and advanced students who have not as yet completed the requirements for full membership.

Affiliate Membership is open to persons or groups that are interested in vocal pursuits but are not actually involved in the teaching of singing, such as speech therapists, laryngologists, schools, publishers, and music stores.

Publications:

Membership includes a subscription to the *Journal of Singing*, the official journal of NATS, and to *Inter Nos*, the NATS Newsletter.

Information:

Applications for membership may be completed online at www.nats.org. The website contains detailed information about the qualifications for membership and the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Teachers of Singing. **Visit the Membership section of nats.org to learn more.**