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Former Carroll music teacher Rachel Morgan Im named artistic director of Children's Chorus of Maryland

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For Rachel Morgan Im, music education is more than a career; it's a passion and also a way of life.

Morgan Im, 41, who taught music in Carroll County Public Schools for more than a decade, will now serve as the artistic director for the Children's Chorus of Maryland in Towson.



"I enjoy helping others to fall in love with music, learn to express themselves, and connect with other people through the musical arts," Morgan Im said.

The educator received the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Teacher Award in 2015 and was a finalist for county teacher of the year.

She taught music at North Carroll Middle School from 2014 to 2017 and was responsible for debuting guitar classes at the school. Before working at North Carroll, Morgan Im taught music at William Winchester Elementary from 2005 to 2014. She later became middle and high school choral director at Gerstell Academy from 2017 to 2019.

Morgan Im, who lives in Owings Mills, said she has taken freelance music jobs in the past several years.

New Children's Chorus of Maryland & School of Music (CCM) Director Rachel Morgan Im (Courtesy Photo)

She has a master of music in music education from the Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University and a bachelor of music education from the Wheaton College Conservatory of Music in Illinois. She is an alumna of Glenelg High School in Howard County.

"I really value community," Morgan Im said, "and I think that students having a place where it is OK to take new risks, to try things, to question, to think critically, and to take personal ownership of your music, makes them able to grow as a young musician and an artist."

Morgan Im also has served as choral director for the Children's Chorus of Carroll County for more than 13 years. In that role, she directed the Carroll choir's most advanced ensemble of 10th to 12th graders performing college-level songs. She also has directed the choir's fourth-to-sixth grade ensemble and been responsible for conducting combined choir performances.

“I think you can be very serious about something and do something with excellence, and also have a really good time at the same time,” Morgan Im said. “So, I try to infuse a lot of fun, play and joking into rehearsals. I do a good bit of movement things in rehearsals, too, so that the kids really get comfortable with each other and they really build those relationships.”

Artistic director is a complicated position, said David Bielenberg, executive director of Children’s Chorus of Maryland & School of Music. The role must be filled by someone who is adept at choral music and seasoned at building rapport with children. The artistic director is responsible for selecting music, coordinating concerts, implementing 10 levels of curriculum and directing six rehearsals per week across three choirs.

“It’s really a multifaceted job,” Bielenberg said, “a little more complicated than it appears on the surface.”

Outgoing Artistic Director Susan Bialek, 59, served in the role for the past nine years. She said she is leaving the position to be closer to family, after commuting from New York every week during her tenure.

“At face value, what people see is a choral director conducting concerts,” Bialek said, “and that certainly is a part of it, as is the rehearsal of all the various groups, the selection of the repertoire, and the decision of which concerts and collaborations to do. There’s also a pretty substantial and significant teaching component.”



Children’s Chorus of Maryland & School of Music (CCM) (Courtesy Photo)

A selection committee to find the right person for the job was co-chaired by Bielenberg and Jennifer Shapiro, the Children’s Chorus of Maryland board of directors’ vice president, with advice from Bialek and other musical experts.

Bielenberg said Morgan Im’s familiarity with the area, as well as her exceptional music and education skills, made her the best candidate.

“Having somebody who is somewhat familiar with the area is definitely helpful from our perspective,” Bielenberg said.

Familiarity with local music professionals will be an advantage in securing concert venues and finding musicians to accompany performances, Morgan Im said.

Music education is in her blood, as her father was a music director and her mother was an educator, she said.

“I look at a lot of life through the lens of music,” Morgan Im said. “Every single note in a piece of music is extremely important. Life itself is really its own song, but each note is imbued with more significance when it is connected with all of the others. Through that idea, I see how people relate to each other, and I really value each individual singer. Every single person is important and each person has their own voice.” ##