

Irene Apanovitch-Leites is thrilled to join the faculty at the International Music Camp this summer! Currently the Artistic Director of the Torrance Civic Chorale in Torrance, California, Irene has worked with choirs of all ages and types - from children's and youth, to community adult ensembles. Canadian by nationality and Belarusian by birth, Irene's initial musical training started with piano lessons at the age of six. As early as age thirteen, Irene began to teach piano lessons privately in her community, building a vibrant studio in her hometown of Mississauga, Ontario. Her passion for music teaching and learning led her to pursue a Bachelor of Music Education at the University of Toronto which she completed with honors. Following the completion of this degree, Irene taught music appreciation classes at a local preschool and choral music in the Toronto Public School district.

In 2009, Irene moved to Edmonton, Alberta, to pursue a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting. In addition to excelling in her studies and winning multiple academic awards, Irene was involved in the province's choral organization, Choir Alberta, as an arts administrator. In this organization, Irene served as Program Coordinator for seven different music literacy and honor choir programs, building partnerships with urban and rural communities in and around the Edmonton area. Her dedication to arts administration inspired her to establish the first-ever Student Chapter with Canada's national choral organization, Choral Canada. As the Founder and Chair of the Student Chapter, Irene helped students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate music programs in Canadian universities to gain access to professional development opportunities, showcase their work on a national level, and participate in conducting masterclasses with esteemed Canadian conductors.

In Edmonton, Irene established Accord Ensemble - a young-adult community choir specializing in performing a variety of repertoire, from renaissance to arrangements of top-40 hits. With this ensemble, Irene created unique concert experiences in her community, which included performances with slam poetry artists as well as a collaboration choir with Cantares Venezuelan Choir of Calgary. Concurrently to her role as Artistic Director of Accord Ensemble, Irene served as an Assistant Director to iCoristi Chamber Choir - an award-winning semi-professional chorus. She also conducted the Festival Singers of Sherwood Park and the All-City Children's Choir with the Edmonton Public Schools district.

Irene is currently finishing her dissertation as a part of a DMA degree at the University of Southern California. Prior to moving to Los Angeles, Irene participated in numerous conducting masterclasses, including the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Princeton Festival, Conductors Institute at Bard College, and the Schlern International Music Festival in Völs am Schlern, Italy. In 2014, she was selected as the Apprentice Conductor to the National Youth Choir of Canada - an exclusive, biennial opportunity for one conductor within Canada. Most recently, Irene was selected as a semi-finalist in the 2017 Graduate Conducting Competition of the American Choral Directors Association. Committed to lifelong learning, Irene continues to pursue professional development in choral and orchestral conducting in the United States and abroad.

As a doctoral student, Irene was the Lead Conductor/Teaching Assistant for USC Oriana Choir, and the Instructor for Choral Conducting I - an introductory course for undergraduate students. Currently holding ABD (All But Dissertation) status, Irene is conducting dissertation research on empathy and perspective-taking with a community college in Northern California. She has presented at various conferences, including the 2018 NAFME Music Research and Teacher Education National Conference in Atlanta, GA, and the 2018 Symposium on Research in Choral Singing at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. She has also published with GIA Publications, as a contributor of Teacher Resource Guides to the Fourth and Fifth volumes of *Teaching Music Through Performance*.