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“Chronos” and “kairos” more than Greek to Pat Patton

By Patrick Patton, President, Wyoming ACDA

Time ... a main element relative to choral music dictates many things to us. It establishes the “pace” at which music travels. That relationship of time and pace establishes a “character” element of the music. The character relationship establishes how the facilitators of that work “perceive,” “identify with,” and “communicate” that music to their ensemble membership.

The ideas given above are unscientific, rambling thoughts by one conductor who was inspired by a colleague who came to Wyoming as the guest conductor of the Wyoming Intercollegiate Musical Arts Festival Choir. Dr. Nancy Moore, Director of Choral Activities at Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi and friend for many years, conducted the intercollegiate choir and presented a workshop for interested music instructors at the annual WMEA All-State Conference in Casper last week. Inspired by her divinity degree and practicing minister husband, she spoke of two elements of time in the Greek language ... “chronos” and “Kairos.”

According to Dr. Moore, “chronos” or the “quantitative” measured passage of time can be most effectively equated to “the ticking clock.” It represents deadlines, schedules, boundaries, ... in short, things that keep us “on time.”

“Kairos” on the other hand represents the “qualitative” passage of time. Nancy’s gist was that in *kairos*, “time flies by when you’re having fun!”

So why talk about this? We choir types are constantly seeking the *kairos* in our classes ... the moments in our rehearsals and performances when time seems to stand still and the deep artistry of a single musical phrase touches the depths of the spirit. Right about then ... the bell rings. Darn it (he said ... cleansing his Wyoming vernacular!) ... and suddenly ... *chronos* takes over.

What did Patton learn from Nancy Moore? First, that an extended article regarding the above needs to be written by her and shared among her

colleagues. Perhaps we'll see something in the Mississippi ACDA newsletter on this subject. Maybe we have and I've missed it ... that would be exemplary of the *chronos* in my life! I did learn that we need both to be realistic, but *kairos* seems to be what we choir directors long for.

We musicians thrive in an art that knows no completion. The fact that there is always room to improve is the driving force that inspires us to not only continue in this field, but allows us to constantly be in a state of change and evolution. Who in their right mind would long for a constant state of change? Sorry folks ... it's us! It's the very spirit of our art. What a privilege! And what comfort it is to know that all the rest of us out there are continuing to grow and evolve because of the art we have chosen as our friend and vocation. This writer thanks Nancy Moore for continuing to inspire colleagues to appreciate those who help us make our art and the moments in time we have to love it.