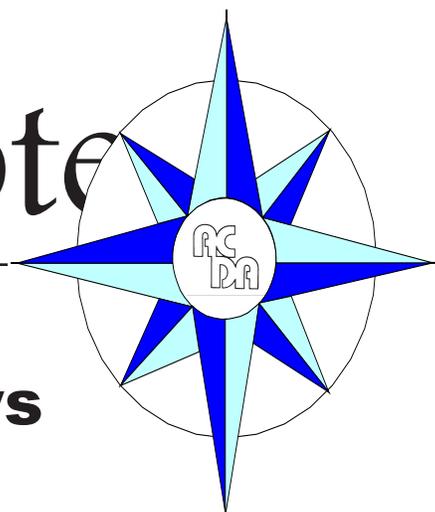


Northwest Note

Newsletter for the NW Division - The American Choral Directors Association

Volume IX, No.3

Spring -



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NW-ACDA News Summary

15 May - 2001

Summertime, a chance to catch up on the "3 R's," rest, renewal, reflection

Karen Fulmer (page 3)

OrcaSing featured on 60 Minutes II

Fred West, director of the City Cantabile Choir and of the Seattle Peace Chorus, sang for the whales in an event captured by 60 Minutes II. This fascinating article is noteworthy both for its moving tribute to other intelligent species and for the irony of which Fred speaks at the conclusion of the article.
Fred West (page 9)



Dr. Sandra Snow to conduct 2002 Children's Honor Choir in Tacoma

Roberta Jackson, chair of the children's honor choir for the NW ACDA Convention in Tacoma in 2002, announced that Sandra Snow, of the University of Michigan, will conduct. Children's Choir leaders will also note the list of repertoire that Snow will be using.
Roberta Jackson (page 10)

Attaining a good choral tone

This is Part III of articles on the subject of tone quality by Chris Lamb from Bend, Oregon. She has a Doctorate of Arts degree from Ball State University. In this issue she offers her suggestions on singing a tone with focus and with a consistent tone throughout the vocal registers.
Chris Lamb (page 18)

The information age ---really! Impressive technology not necessarily a blessing

Michael Sagun, NW ACDA's industry representative to the board, offers some pithy insights into "instant communication" and other marvels of technology.
Michael Sagun (page 15)



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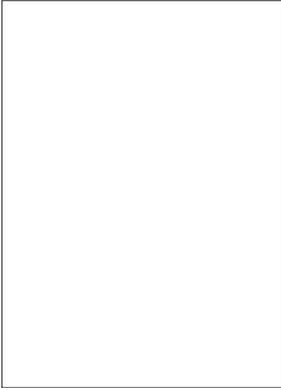
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Summertime, a chance to catch up on the “3-R’s”



Summertime....is it a beloved Gershwin melody or the most coveted word in the vocabulary of every choral director at this time of year? As we present our final concerts, attend graduation ceremonies and plan for the long awaited vacation, the

thought of summertime provides personal inspiration to help us make it to the end of one more busy year. As choral directors, we thrive on the cycle that gives us the opportunity to begin each fall with anticipation and excitement for the upcoming season and then close the year with a sense of fulfillment and exhaustion!

Summertime is our season for the three “R’s.”

Rest, Renewal, and Reflection. Rest for the body, mind and spirit... time to enjoy a slightly slower pace of life with fewer duties or deadlines than in the past months; Renewal to generate creative ideas, expand skills, and share learning experiences with others; Reflection to assess our strengths and choose areas for growth. As each of us prepares for summertime, purposefully include the three R’s. Find opportunities to enjoy our beautiful world by taking time to Rest. Renew your enthusiasm and energy for the profession by attending local music industry or college sponsored workshops, state ACDA summer institutes, or have lunch with a colleague for the purpose of sharing new repertoire ideas. Reflect on the tremendous honor it is to serve others through teaching and presenting choral music. It was through the power of music that each of us was drawn into this profession and now it is through the same power we annually pour out our talents, skills and passion to touch others in this world. Summertime and the three R’s will soon be here. May you feel enriched, refreshed and ready to begin the fall with the same exuberance as you did in your first years as a choral director when everything was new and exciting.

Grab a cold drink, put on a recording of Porgy and Bess and enjoy...Summertime!

The following is a summary of the national board meeting on Wednesday, March 14, 2001 in San Antonio, Texas.

1. Maxine Asselin was re-elected national ACDA treasurer and the proposed revisions to the ACDA Constitution and By-Laws were approved in the national election held last fall.
2. The two candidates who will run for national president-elect-designee are Bill Mayclin, former Northwestern Division President, and Michelle Holt. Both candidates have experience at the division and national levels. Please vote in the upcoming election!
3. Plans are progressing on the new national ACDA headquarters building in Oklahoma City, OK. The new facility plans include office and meeting space, a technology center, a music library, archive area and workshop training room.

Ground breaking is proposed sometime later this year.

4. The next national ACDA convention will be held in New York City, February 11-15, 2003. An exciting choral concert is being planned in collaboration with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and performance venues include many of the city’s finest. Audition information for choirs interested in performing at the New York convention will be printed in the September-December editions of the Choral Journal, 2001.

5. Richard Nance, Washington State ACDA President and first Northwestern Division composer to receive this honor, has been invited to write a composition to be premiered at the 2002 division conventions as a recipient of the Raymond Brock Commission.

6. Barbara Tagg, National Repertoire and Standards Committee Chair, announced that ACDA is ready to reproduce a handbook for organizing and administrating honor choirs. Northwestern Division National Committee member, Rebecca Rottsalk, chaired the handbook development team.

7. The 2001 National Leadership Conference for state, division and national officers and national R & S chairs will be held in Oklahoma City, August 1-4, 2001. National president, Milburn Price, is collecting feedback on two topics for discussion at the meeting: 1) What activities and services does ACDA provide that are beneficial to the membership, and 2) What improvements need to be made in the organization? Please

(continued on page 4)



Fulmer

(continued from page 3)

send your thoughts on these two topics to me at kpfulmer@aol.com so I can represent the Northwestern Division by expressing the concerns of our membership.

Mark your calendars for the next Northwestern Division Convention, Tacoma, March 6-9, 2002. Convenient location, great venues, local attractions, honor choirs, outstanding performances!

Northwestern Division R & S and convention committee summer meeting in Tacoma, July 24-25, 2001.

Congratulations once again to the Northwestern Division choirs and conductors who participated in the national ACDA convention in San Antonio. Bravo!

Note: IMC National Seminar in 2002

The Purdue Varsity Glee Club, under the direction of Brian Breed, and Purdue University will be hosting the IMC Na-

tional Seminar February 28 - March 2, 2002. For more information, please contact David Huhnke at 1-800-893-3041.

DJ Records

NW-Notes invites you to submit articles, reviews of books, CD's, or literature for publication in this newsletter. Many of you can share vast experience with church, community, or school choral work.

Deadlines for all contributors, including state presidents, R&S chairs, as well as advertisers are: September 15, January 15, and April 15.

Obviously we reserve the right to choose articles which meet ACDA needs and/or standards. All material is subject to possible editing.

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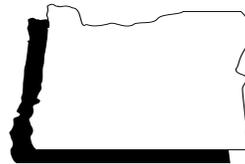


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Sail against the wind

by Paul French, OR-ACDA President



“In all history, nothing is so surprising or so difficult to account for as the sudden rise of civilization in Greece.” So begins Bertrand Russell’s brilliant, *A History of Western Philosophy*. Having got our attention, Russell proceeds to prove his point by naming a host of significant Greek innovations in mathematics, geometry, science, logic, philosophy, art and literature. It would be hard not to be impressed with the breadth and scope of their learning. They knew that the earth was round and measured its circumference more accurately than did Columbus. They speculated about the nature of the world and the ends of life, and created a body of myth that psychiatrists are still studying. Atoms, archetypes, cosmos; these are all Greek words, Greek thoughts. And what is it about Greek culture that prompted these Herculean accomplishments? Why the Greeks and not, for example, the Egyptians? There are many reasons, but a simple answer might be: they were curious. Which is another way of saying they were continuous learners. They had questions, they studied the existing solutions, and when these proved unsatisfactory, they forged into unknown waters. As our students are about to embark on their own journeys towards points unknown, it might also be an opportune moment to examine our own journeys, and specifically our “points known”; that is, the governing principles by which we teach. How long have we sailed these same routes? Have we remained curious, willing to venture into new territory? Are we good learning models for our students?

The first attribute of the curious is that they are not content to simply know a fact; they want to know why a fact is true. It is this desire to take things apart and see what is truly happening that protects the curious from blindly following poor advice. Medieval science stagnated for a thousand years through blind loyalty to errors in Aristotle’s writings. No one, not even Aristotle, has all the answers. I was taught to tune major thirds and leading tones high. Although I was often unhappy with the results, I clung doggedly to what I had been taught to be true. If I had been a bit more curious, I might have listened a little more carefully and discovered the resonant world of the lowered third. But this was a place that did not exist on my world map. If only I had been willing to navigate without a map or, more properly, to create a new map.

Sometimes we must throw away existing maps and navigate from our final destination backwards, taking guard that our daily goals (manifest in the techniques we employ) remain on course. For techniques can take us in a variety of directions, and only a determined focus on the ultimate destination will see one safely to artistry. I’ve always loved Debussy’s line, “Music is what happens between the notes”. Courage. Trust your intuitions; if something feels wrong, it probably is. You are not paid to follow formulae, but to make these very complex decisions. Stay curious, ask yourself “why?”. Question everything, and ask questions about what happens between the notes. Have I helped my choir discover how to learn? how to work together? how to integrate art and life? Do your performances move the listener? Do they move your choir? Do they move you? And remember, though you may feel all alone, you do have allies. The tape recorder and video recorder are honest evaluators (painfully so), and even the most isolated of us have teaching colleagues within earshot. Do not underestimate the value of a fresh pair of ears. Your own choir can also be a great source for feedback. They know where they need to improve, and

verbalizing these areas builds their investment towards finding solutions. As difficult and time-consuming as it is, there is no substitute for honest self-evaluation. As Yogi Berra once remarked: “You can observe a lot just by looking.”

Perception, of course, is a delicate thing. Although the human eye can distinguish among approximately twenty thousand colors, we also know our eyes have two literal blind spots in the center of our vision, which the brain fills in based upon what “should” be in the holes. In other words, our brain basically guesses. Similarly, we all have blind spots in our teaching, and we sometimes guess wrongly. And though these blind spots may not be obvious to us in ourselves, their effects, like the bending force of gravity on light, are readily apparent in our choir’s performance. Listen to multiple performances of your group over a period of years. The problems which persist from year to year, that are not intrinsic to other choirs of similar age, probably have to do with the central common denominator: you the conductor.

Consider, as example, your conducting gesture. If your choir has trouble singing flowing phrases, perhaps the heaviness of tone is not a vocal problem, but a reflection of the weight in your conducting gesture. In my own conducting this tends to happen when I feel frustrated or fearful. If we want our choirs to trust us, we must trust them and conduct musically. Try conducting in a larger division of the beat: two, as opposed to four. Be musical and trust your singers. A good rule of thumb: conduct the pattern to which a child would rock. As conductors, we need to accept ultimate responsibility for our choirs’ performance and do what is necessary to move towards artistry. Yes, artistry. Sometimes we simply

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Sail against the wind

(continued from page 6)

need to change our attitude (it is easy to become complacent--even friendly-with problems), and sometimes a solution is both complex and time-intensive. Sometimes the solution to musical problems lies in a reorganization of your program. As I know very few educators who don't work terribly hard, some solutions will only become clear with new information. This, then, is our motivation for remaining curious, for continued learning.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus is famous for his dictum: "Everything flows; nothing stands still." Just as you cannot step in the same river twice, for the water, having moved on, is fundamentally changed, we as educators cannot navigate by answers from the past. Each year, each rehearsal will challenge us with a unique set of problems. Teach in the present tense. Even the exercise you just used successfully may not work a second time. Its time has come and gone. I remember being convinced that a voice student needed to use more air to get through a registration problem. All the textbooks said that in this situation the singer needs to blow more air, and so I encouraged him to do so. Finally, after several failures, I heard myself saying: "Okay, try less air," and, voila, he sang right through the problem area. Knowing when to push on and when to try a new tact is a tricky business, but the more your focus stays in the moment, the better your chance for success.

If answers from another time do not work, neither do answers from another person. How many young conductors have you seen trying to be Rod Eichenberger or Charles Hirt? Although they may capture the surface techniques of these great educators, the result is often unsatisfactory because techniques are intrinsically wedded to personality, and the imitation of personality quickly descends to parody. Study a successful model (think of Bach hand-copying Buxte-

hude), but keep only what works with your own personality. As the Welsh proverb says: "We must sing with the voices God gave us." Ain't that the truth. And since it is useless to try to flee yourself, you may as well embrace your own individuality, as that is often what makes your music making interesting and unique. In fact, acknowledging your own personality is central to all meaningful artistic endeavors.

Heraclitus believed fire to be the fundamental substance. Everything, like the flame in a fire, is born by the death of something else. Thus, the more unanimity of sound, the less individual expression. The more diction is emphasized, the less beauty of tone, and vice versa. He further believed that everything, when pursued to its farthest extent, turns into its opposite. Thus, research organizations, over time, sometimes become vast organizations which seem to exist only to support themselves. What would happen, for example, if a cure for cancer was found? Large-scale unemployment? In rehearsal, continuous reminder to "sing the high note freely" sometimes only serves to remind the singer of the difficulty of the passage ahead, resulting in the very clutch you were hoping to avoid. If you continuously treat a passage with wrought-with-problems care, your choir will learn to have problems in this section. Do not ignore problems, but realize that your expectation plays a major part in your choir's success. The trick would seem to be found in another Greek concept, Aristotle's "golden mean". Often dredged up to defend an unadventurous mediocrity, I believe a more interesting interpretation is to view the golden mean as a call to seek unity in the delicate balancing of opposites. "Moderation in all things, including moderation".

Knowledge is power. If you want to be a more effective educator, seek knowledge. And an interesting aspect of knowledge is that it is

difficult to predict how seemingly inconsequential information can lead to sweeping change. Consider the arguably single greatest increase of knowledge in European history: the Italian Renaissance. What was reborn with the Renaissance? Greek learning. And how did Greek thought reappear in the west following the Dark Ages? In manuscripts preserved in Arabic countries (it's a good thing we lost the Crusades) and brought by sea from Arabic lands to Europe in ships equipped with a new type of sail, the lateen sail. The innovation of this sail was that it allowed vessels to sail against the wind. (continued on page 9)

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Northwest Notes



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Good singing is good singing, wherever it occurs

This past year has been one of great variety. While taking care of all the “normal” details associated with the life of a choral conductor and educator in Idaho, I have spent a good deal of time trying to finish up course work, etc., for my doctorate at Arizona State University. Perhaps the most daunting was my recent experience with comprehensive exams. Three days of writing and one of oral defense was about as much mental anguish as I care to handle. Looking back on the experience, however, I find it not only worthwhile, but one of learning and renewal.

Part of the renewal process of these exams were the intriguing, “real-life” questions that caused deep reflection. One in particular came poignantly close to reality as a concern choral conductors deal with frequently. The question is stated in the following form:

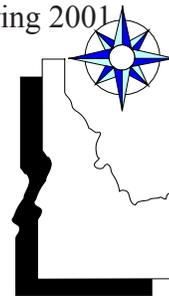
Occasionally a private voice teacher discourages beginning students from choral ensemble singing. To deal with this, describe the vocal pedagogy you would apply to the choral ensemble, the purposes for which it is applied, and how you know (or can demonstrate) that goals have been reached.

As a reader, I hope you will forgive an inclusion of some of my written and oral response to this thoughtful question. Though I will leave out many of the technical details necessary for an answer to a test question, an attempt will be made to include the essence.

In my current position at Ricks College (soon to be Brigham Young University - Idaho), I am fortunate to work with wonderful faculty, dedicated to their profession and the nurture and training of students. While members of our

SDG Press

by Kevin Brower,
President, Idaho
ACDA



voice faculty have been understanding and supportive of the choral area, some have expressed concerns over the years that might give them a bias toward not allowing their students to participate in a choral ensemble. In various conversations, common concerns are often expressed as follows:

- Singing in a choral ensemble tends to limit the vocal production of career-minded soloist
- Choral singers develop inappropriate posture
- “Bad” habits of breath management are allowed
- Signs of vocal fatigue tend to appear more often in the choral singer at the end of a semester

Given that many of these concerns can either be actual and only perceived because of bias, I have tried to evaluate what we do in a choral ensemble that might foster such concerns. In each case, I have found that I may have been guilty and/or able to negatively reinforce those things the private voice teacher is trying to help students overcome.

Paraphrasing a comment of Richard Miller in recent article in the Choral Journal, good choral singing is good vocal singing or in other words, good singing is good singing. Miller proposed that good “vibrant” singing is appropriate for the choral ensemble and the soloist. Similarly, noted baritone, Thomas Hampson remarked that there are many good things for the prospective soloist to learn by singing in a choral ensemble.

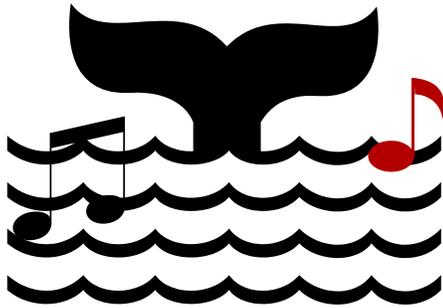
The limiting of vocal production in the choral ensemble is a real issue. Rehearsing and performing music of the late-fourteenth through the mid-sixteenth centuries is perhaps the biggest challenge. This type of music was most likely composed with

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OrcaSing featured on CBS 60 Minutes II; choir sings for whales

by Fred West, Director of City Cantabile Choir and Seattle Peace Chorus



Sail against the wind

(continued from page 7)

With the old Roman square sail, one basically had to sail in whatever direction the wind was blowing. But the lateen sail allowed one to sail almost directly into the wind, greatly increasing one's ability to navigate, and thus encouraging an exchange of goods and, ultimately, ideas between east and west. And so the seemingly mundane invention of a new sail helped spark one of the greatest intellectual and artistic achievements in world history.

Do you feel driven by the wind? Would you like to navigate with freedom and confidence? As an educator, you are called to be a life-long learner, for you are the transmitter of knowledge and culture. The great Roman poet Virgil, put it this way: "Primus ergo in patriam mecum...deducam Musas" (For I will be the first to bring the Muse into my country). The goal is worthy of our continued best efforts. Stay curious, seek knowledge, and learn to sail against the wind.

CB*S 60 Minutes II* ran a special featuring the *City Cantabile Choir* which I have directed for twenty years. That special reached 20 million people worldwide. We are thrilled and elated and are getting responses from as far away as the Fuji Islands.

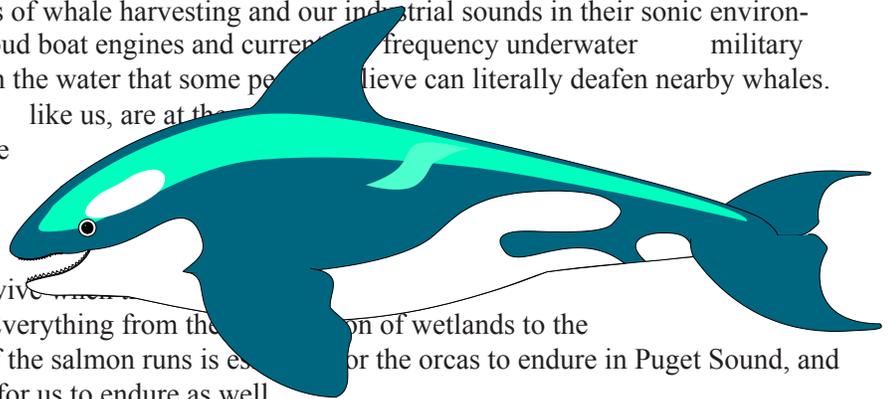
The special focused on inter-species communication and featured the choir singing through a unique underwater speaker system for a pod of Orca whales just off of San Juan Island. This was a huge project that we put together last June in conjunction with the *American Cetacean Society*, *People for Puget Sound* and *Friends of the San Juan Islands*. This is the second year we have done what has come to be called the "OrcaSing." The first project, in 1998, resulted in a major article in the *New York Times*, which was then picked up by newspapers all over the country.

Following the first OrcaSing, we had inquiries from *Good Morning America*, and the BBC concerning future projects. We also granted a number of national radio interviews. We settled on working with independent film producer Elena Mannes who later pitched the story to *CBS 60 Minutes II*. Elena is well known for her production of a documentary with Bill Moyers about the song *Amazing Grace*. Her interest was piqued because the *New York Times* article mentioned we had sung *Amazing Grace* to the whales. It's amazing how things work out sometimes!

Why was the choir singing for whales? As an avid whale watcher over the last two decades, seeing humpback whales in Alaska and Hawaii, and orcas in Puget Sound, I have developed a great respect and awe for cetaceans. I began to realize that most of what the whales know about human beings was through devastating years of whale harvesting and our industrial sounds in their sonic environment: loud boat engines and current frequency underwater military testing in the water that some people believe can literally deafen nearby whales.

Whales, like us, are at the top of the food chain and can only survive intact. Everything from the loss of wetlands to the health of the salmon runs is essential for the orcas to endure in Puget Sound, and perhaps for us to endure as well.

I felt that it was important that we approach this magnificent species as artists believing that they may be extremely intelligent and that we should bring to them the best of our culture, not the worst. Humpback whales in particular are known to have elaborate forty-minute song cycles. Perhaps they would appreciate the beautiful motet of Palestrina or folk songs from Brazil. My burning question was then, would they be curious about our singing? Would they perhaps respond with their wide array of vocalizations? One thing we share with whales as mammals is the ability to produce complex vocal sounds. I felt that the human



(continued on page 11)

Dr. Sandra L. Snow to conduct 2002 Children's Honor Choir

Roberta Q. Jackson, Children's Choir R&S Chair

I am delighted to announce that Dr. Sandra L. Snow will be the guest conductor for the 2002 Children's Honor Choir, which will perform at the upcoming NW-ACDA Convention in Tacoma. Dr. Snow is Assistant Professor in the School of Music at the University of Michigan with appointments in choral music education and conducting. She conducts the Women's Glee Club, appears regularly with university ensembles, and teaches conducting and choral methods. As a member of the graduate faculty, Dr. Snow serves on dissertation committees and trains Graduate Student Instructors in student teaching observation. Reflecting her commitment to young singers, Dr. Snow conducts the Michigan-Youth Women's Chorale, an auditioned choir of high school women from across the state of Michigan. Summer teaching includes the Summer Arts Institute choir program for middle school students, as well as teacher workshops for professional development in areas such as conducting and teacher training.

Dr. Snow has considerable experience with young singers, as Music Director of the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus, Founder and Music Director of the Carolina Children's Chorus, and as a K-5 elementary music specialist. Her ensembles have been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council in recognition of outstanding programming and educational opportunities for children. Especially important to such programming has been the commissioning of North American composers, and the creation of residency opportunities whenever possible.

Dr. Snow conducts festivals, workshops, honor choirs, and clinics across the U.S. and Canada. She is a founding member of the Association for Choral Music Education and is a member of the faculty at the annual Choral Music Experience Institute. She edits the Building Bridges Choral Series for Boosey & Hawkes and actively serves the choral profession as Central Division Repertoire and Standards Chair for Women's Choirs for ACDA. Prior to her appointment at the University of Michigan, Dr. Snow was Director of Choral Programs at Northern Illinois University, where she directed the undergraduate and graduate choral and conducting programs.

I have had the privilege of working with Dr. Snow at the annual summer CME Institute for Choral Teacher Education and as a fellow member of ACME. She is one of the finest choral conductors/teachers currently practicing in our profession. In addition to conducting the NW Children's Honor Choir, Dr. Snow will also present an open honor choir rehearsal as the convention's Children's Choir session. You won't want to miss it!

Participation in the 2002 NW-ACDA Children's Honor Choir will be open to 3 singers per choir in Grades 4 - 8 (an S1, an S2, and an A selected by director) per ACDA director/member on a first-come, first-served basis. Application forms will arrive in September. I will serve as the Children's Choir Organizing Chair, and we will once again be blessed with the services of Deanna Swenson as Administrator. Valerie Shields, Washington's renowned composer, will serve as accompanist.

Dr. Snow made her repertoire selections early, and you have the opportunity to program any or all of her choices for your 2001-2002 season.



2002 NWACDA Children's Honor Choir Program:

- Malcolm Williamson - *Ode To Music*
Weinberger (choral parts- singers - MO51305902
vocal score-teachers - MO570053452
- Pergolesi - *Stabat Mater* - G. Schirmer
HL50324120 - (*Stabat Mater- Inflammatus Est-Amen*)
- Nick Page - from *Nursery Rhyme Cantata* Boosey & Hawkes - MO51471775
(*Solomon Grundy - Fairest Lady*)
arr. Kesselman - *Mbiri Kuna Mwari* Boosey & Hawkes - MO51467921
- E. Amiran, arr. Shields - *Mayim, Mayim* earthsongs

I am very excited about the 2002 NW Children's Honor Choir! Participation is a unique opportunity for our finest singers to come together with other talented singers from the Northwest. Plan now to have your singers participate as it will be an experience they will never forget!

I look forward to hearing from you and working with you on this collaborative project. Please contact me via email: robertaj@gte.net with questions or to volunteer to help. As the spring season winds down,

A website of interest...



www.schubertline.co.uk
or

www.schubertline.com
Offers an opportunity to access songs by Schubert, Wolf, and others. By use of Scorch, a free download reader by Sibelius, you can take a look at hundreds of songs, print out a sample page of many, and have the song in any key you would like. A fee is charged for full printouts of each



OrcaSing in Puget Sound

(continued from page 9)

voice, more than any other instrument, would be likely to evoke a response from these marine mammals, especially if we were able to project the sound under the water (in an ecologically sensitive way) where whales do most of their listening.

What did we sing? I wrote a whole suite of pieces called *Songs for the Sea*, which were mostly a cappella. One piece used the text from *Ave Maris Stella*, another drew on the beautiful imagery of the river of life and the water of life from the revelations of St. John. Another piece, drawing on ancient Irish poetry, was called *I Am the Wind Upon the Sea*. These were all especially dedicated to "Everett" the whale from J pod who had washed up on the beaches of Vancouver last spring. As we sang, his family, J pod, processed into view. First it was the old male, J1, or "Ruffles," then the matriarch "Granny." As long as we sang, they stayed. They spyhopped, breached, and vocalized, all recorded by our underwater hydrophones. We commissioned Carol Sams, who is a gifted composer from Seattle, to write *Marine Mammals*, which was a big hit. And we sang folkloric material related to the sea, drawing on Brazilian and West African traditions as well as sea chanties.

We also gave them a magical touch of the final movement of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, starting with the *Allegretto Vivace* where the *Dona Nobis Pacem* text begins. Can you believe! We simply used one flute to play the running 16th notes of the string parts, but deliberately left a lot of silence between the vocal passages in order for the whales to respond. We also sang Palestrina's *Sicut Cervus* and the West African piece *O Si Funi Mungu*, a version of *All Creatures of Our God and King*.

This has been a very exciting project and we plan another OrcaSing on San Juan Island June 23, 2001. I'd like to share with you the irony of all this. I have labored for twenty years in the Seattle area, putting on a wide range of cross cultural concerts and received only a handful of reviews in all that time. I take a handful of singers out onto a boat and sing for the whales and CBS is knocking at my door. Next issue I hope to write about my current project; performing Afro-Brazilian music and the oceans of repertoire which lie undiscovered.

Good singing is good singing

(continued from page 8)

a small group of solo singers in mind. While today's performances often take place in the large space of a concert hall, theatre, or auditorium (sometimes a gym), these early small groups of performers would often perform in a church or other small arena in which extremes of dynamic expression were not required. In an attempt to try to recreate a historical sensibility of performance practice etc., choral conductors subconsciously (and sometimes consciously) ask for a small sounding blend that limits the voices of more advanced singers.

In response to this type of singing, Richard Miller noted that it is dangerous to force advanced singers to pull back and sing at the level of the beginning student. Thomas Hampson feels that an advanced soloist who is asked to limit their voice without proper instruction will develop poor habits of constriction or holding their voice in the larynx. My own experience is that proper instruction can alleviate most of these concerns and promote positive vocal development. Instead of holding back the voice, it is better to

instruct choral singers to maintain an open vocal tract (space between the vocal folds, pharynx, nasal, and oral cavities), sing with unrestricted soft dynamics, and allow more air flow in the sound production. In addition, Miller suggests maintaining the even balance of air pressure resulting from a flexible but balanced constriction in the muscles of the abdominal wall.

The concern that some voice instructors have with posture is a shock to me. I confess responding with disbelief when a voice teacher implies that their students are developing inappropriate posture from singing in the choir. Watching a video-tape recording of a recent concert, however, made me a believer. To my dismay, each time the choir would come to a rather sensitive or dramatic moment they would all lean forward on their toes and jut their heads or jaws and neck forward. More shocking, however, was the point when I noticed the singers were only mirroring the conductor. Whether as a result of cognitive or subconscious thought the singers in the choral ensemble were responding to the physical body

Malecki

CDs: A Resource for Treble Choirs

by Roberta Q. Jackson

NW-ACDA R & S Chair for Children's Choirs

Many directors use CDs to: 1) gather new repertoire ideas, 2) listen to repertoire interpretations, especially of contemporary works, and 3) use as models for their choirs. Here is a partial list of recordings by Northwest treble choirs, as well as some of my recent favorites from across the US, Canada, and Scandinavia. I realize that these are only a few of the CDs produced by our NW colleagues and encourage you to email me (robertaj@gte.net) with additional titles to include in the Fall Issue of NW Notes. Thank you to each director who sent me their CD information to include in this article. Please contact these choirs and/or their directors to purchase these CDs for your library. Enjoy!

CDs by NORTHWEST CHOIRS

Choir	CD Title	Conductor(s)
Alaska Children's Choir	<i>Spring Fjord</i>	Janet Stotts
Pacifica Choirs	<i>Circle the World</i>	Susan Senft
Portland Symphonic Girlchoir	<i>Sharing Our Song</i> <i>Celebrate! Just For the Joy Of It!</i>	Roberta Q. Jackson RQJ/Debra R. Burgess
Northwest Girlchoir	<i>Holiday Music From the Heart</i>	Rebecca J. Rottsoik <i>Inscription of Hope</i> <i>Echo in My Soul</i>
Seattle Children's Chorus	<i>Songs from the Heart</i>	Kris Mason
Seattle Girls' Choir	<i>Seattle Holiday</i> <i>Jackson Berkey: Cantate 2000</i>	Jerome Wright
Spokane Area Children's Choirs	<i>The Children's Gift of Grace</i> <i>Angels and Candlelight</i>	Tamara Schupman

CDs from the US, CANADA, AND SCANDANAVIA

Adolf Fredriks Flickkor	<i>Cantemus 2</i>	Bo Johansson
Amabile Youth Singers	<i>Music of Stephen Hatfield</i>	John Barron, Brenda Zadorsky
Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus	<i>Flights of Song</i> <i>Abbodanza!</i>	Emily Ellsworth
Madison Children's Choir	<i>Here's To Song</i>	Alan Rieck
Nebraska Children's Chorus	<i>Homeland</i> <i>The Circle of Time</i>	Z. Randall Stroope
Newfoundland Symphony Youth Choir	<i>Full Circle: NSYC Sings Hatfield</i>	Susan Knight
Northfield Youth Choirs	<i>Anniversary Album</i>	Cora Scholz
Phoenix Boys Choir	<i>The Best of 40 Years: Tribute to Harvey K. Smith</i>	Harvey K. Smith
San Francisco Girls Chorus	<i>I Never Saw Another Butterfly</i> <i>Music from the Venetian Ospedali</i> <i>A San Francisco Christmas</i>	Sharon J. Paul
The Manitou Singers of St. Olaf College	<i>Repertoire for Women's Voices: Vol. I & II</i>	Sigrid Johnson
Tapiola Choir	<i>Rainbow Sounds</i>	Kari Ala-Pollanen,
Toronto Children's Chorus	<i>Mostly Britten</i> <i>A Boy Was Born</i>	Jean Ashworth Bartle

**Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble
announces student choral
composition award program**

As part of its Tenth Anniversary Season in 2001/2002, Seattle-based *Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble* announces its third annual choral composition awards program open to students, the goal of which is to foster the composition and performance of new and existing choral works by talented young composers at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels. This program will be open to students enrolled as of Sept. 2001 in either public and private schools throughout the Northwest Region, including Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming.

One composer from each of the three categories listed above will be selected to have a work performed on the Opus 7 concert series during March 2002 at several major venues throughout the Seattle, WA metro area. In addition to performances of the winning student compositions, the program will feature newly composed works by northwest composers, including David Asplin, and Bern Herbolsheimer, as well as a major new work written especially for Opus 7's 10th Anniversary Season by the group's composer-in-residence John Muehleisen.

In addition to the performances, winners will share a total cash prize of \$2,000, divided three ways as follows: \$400 (high school), \$600 (undergraduate), and \$1,000 (graduate). Submissions should be in keeping with the "classical" or "serious" choral art music style and tradition. Works in pop or show choir style are not eligible. Deadline for submission of materials is December 15, 2001, but students may submit scores anytime between now and the official deadline.

During the first two seasons of the program, Opus 7 presented nearly \$1500 in cash awards to four student composers attending Washington state schools; one from a Seattle-area high school, one from University of Puget Sound, and two from Gonzaga Univer-



Offset apathy by changing daily procedures

by Dean Peterson, President, Montana ACDA



As I write this, my final article for the NW-Notes, I look out on a snowy landscape and wonder if spring will ever arrive. By the time you read this it will be springtime. Festivals will either be in full swing or will have come and gone and you will be picking out graduation songs and hearing Pomp and Circumstance. Nonetheless, winter/early spring can be a challenging time of year. It's easy to get into a rut and let bad habits develop. We may have even become numb or perhaps deaf to tone quality or intonation problems in our choir. Many singers have that "I don't care" attitude. When you recognize the onset of apathy, realize that it is your duty to change apathy and disinterest into caring and enthusiasm.

I resolved, for 2001, to make every effort to change daily rehearsal procedure into less of a routine and offer some techniques to beat the "blahs." Here are seven suggestions that have worked for me:

1) Change the seating chart, not just once in awhile, but weekly and perhaps even daily.

Rearrange your sections or mix your singers so that they hear a new part. It's not difficult to have your women sit in front of the men one day and the opposite the next. Try a new configuration such as in quartets or octets. Be creative. You may find that your numbed ears come back to life. (By the way, if attendance is made difficult by such changes, try taking roll by checking to see which folders are left in the slots at the beginning of class.)

2) Invite a guest conductor to work with your singers.

Four ears are better than two. It's amazing what a guest conductor will hear that you have overlooked. It's also a breath of fresh air for your singers to see a new face, learn new techniques, and watch a different conducting style. Perhaps you could job-exchange with someone in a nearby school for a day. Your singers might work harder to prepare for a new conductor, as they won't want to embarrass themselves.

3) Vary your rehearsal plan.

If you normally do announcements at the beginning, save them until the end. Who says sight-reading must be done as part of the warm-ups? Sing one or two songs and then jump into sight-reading. Skip warm-ups altogether now and then.

4. Do something new with warmups.

Encourage some physical movement. Work on harmonic exercises rather than unison. Teach some canons as warm-up songs. A good source of canons is *The Book of Canon*, by John Feierabend. First Steps in Music, Inc., P. O. Box 73, Simsbury, Connecticut, 06070. Sing a warm-up in a minor mode. Work on expressive elements. Turn warm-ups into musician builders. Other new ideas can be found in any number of videos. I have found *Group Vocal Technique*, a video featuring James Jordan, to be helpful. Hinshaw Music is the source for this one.

Bookmark the NW-ACDA Division Website. It can be found at:

www.nwacda.com

NW-Notes can be found on-line at that address.

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5. Select a new piece that doesn't have extreme ranges and teach it to your choir with everyone singing a part other than their own.

This is a great experiment and it will help your choir to listen more carefully and appreciate one another more. If the outcome is solid enough, perform it on a concert with the switch parts.

6. Run a full rehearsal without once making use of the piano.

You will quickly find the weak passages hidden by the piano. This technique will develop your musicianship and knowledge of the scores.

7. Communicate to the choir your rehearsal goals for the day.

You may know what you want to accomplish, but does your choir? Reaching a common goal gives singers a good sense of accomplishment and keeps them motivated and involved in the process.

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Scott Dean's Sacred Music Suggestions

Highlights of the San Antonio Worship Music Reading Session Review

Wond'rous Love-Stephen Sametz; SSAB, handbells, opt. Congregation; Oxford #98.218; . Simple and mystical setting of the traditional folk tune set to unison, two, then three part women's voices in canon with the men (and opt. Congregation) singing the melody in augmentation over a handbell ostinato. Etherialis!

Lord, I Know I've Been Changed-arr. Bruce More; SATB, piano Santa Barbara Music #SBMP335. A sturdy gospel song with an "authentic" accompaniment. Repeated vocal material, limited tessitura for everyone but tenors and an andante tempo make this a practical and appealing selection for youth and senior choirs.

Lenten Carol-Marc A. Robinson; SATB, piano, cello; Kjos Music #8924,. If you have a strong alto section and a cellist available this should be a strong consideration for next Lent. Set in d minor, two stanzas are presented by contraltos singing the melody deep into their chest voice. Choral parts are straightforward and mostly homophonic.

A Simple Thanksgiving-arr. Joseph Martin; SATB, piano, flute; Shawnee Press #7228.

This quodlibet tastefully combines *This is My Father's World* and *Simple Gifts* in a light, dance-like manner. Mostly two-part writing makes this a very practical selection for smaller choirs and those engaged in preparations for the big Christmas cantata.

Make Our Church One Joyful Choir-Jonathan Crutchfield; SATB, organ; Oxford Music/USA, #386191-7. A soaring and memorable tune set to a marvelous text by Thomas Troeger. Appropriate for Pentecost, festival days or Sunday with the theme of church unity or Mission, each stanza concludes with the refrain "Shape us, Christ, to live and claim all it means to bear your name." An alternative arrangement for brass, organ and timpani is also available.

Promised Land-David Ashley White; Selah # 425-817, SATB, piano, flute, side drum, finger cymbal. A folk-like texture with a flavorful use of modern harmonic language makes this setting of the traditional American folk melody unique and engaging.

Eternal God-John Rutter, Hinshaw, SATB, organ. Original hymn text and tune appropriate for festival celebrations of music in worship. The melodic breadth makes it a majestic tune for choir but less practical for congregation. A poignant postscript is the recent loss of Mr. Rutter's nineteen year old son, Christopher in an auto accident in Cambridge. "Eternal God we give you thanks for music, Blest gift from heav'n to all your servants here on earth: In time of joy a crown, in sorrow consolation; Companion through our days of tears and mirth."

Our heritage of sacred music: Renaissance motets

Our convention reading sessions are hosted by publishers promoting new publications. But a complete generation of conductors, singers and congregations are likely to miss a significant part of our musical and Christian heritage: the Renaissance motet.

To sing the motet of the Renaissance it would be well to teach non-metrical singing through chants. Most hymnals are resplendent with such resources,

unfortunately mostly barred. Another resource (unbarred) is Rutter's collection *Gems of Gregorian chant*, Collegium, CCS 208. Remember, recent research indicates it was more often the rule that the motet we previously thought of as being strictly sung in the cappella style was actually accompanied. Don't neglect this literature because you don't have a tenor section or dare not sing unaccompanied. As long as the complete text is sung, you can replace any missing part with an instrument, or double parts with keyboard or other instruments. Up-tempo, homophonic settings will be a more practical starting point for less experienced choirs.

Five recommended psalm settings for a successful start or renewal of Renaissance motet singing:

Cantate Domino-Pitoni; SATB; Bourne #018716. 95% homophonic setting of Psalm 149.

Cantate Domino-Hassler; SATB. No edition recommended. (Contact Scott Dean for his edition.) 75% homophonic setting of Psalm 96.

Exultate Justi in Domino-Viadana; SATB; Walton #W2153. Venetian spezzati technique is featured in this lively setting of Psalm 32.

Exultate Domino-Palestrina; SAATB; G. Schirmer #7672. Psalm 86 from the pen of the master in a typically more polyphonic style, but still rhythmic and animated.

Sicut cervus-Palestrina; SATB; E.C. Schirmer #2988. Flowing polyphonic setting of Psalm 42.

Conductor: A musician who is adept at following many people at the same time.

Musical Definitions

Musica ficta: When you lose your place and have to bluff until you find it again.



Opus 7 Composition Contest

(continued from page 12)

sity. Two of the works performed were world premieres written especially for submission to the awards program.

Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble, directed by Loren Pontén, is a resident ensemble at St. James Cathedral in Seattle and maintains a flexible membership with many of the Northwest's finest choral artists. The group is known for its innovative programming, which frequently includes works by Northwest composers, as well as masterpieces from the late 19th- and 20th-century choral repertoire.

For detailed information about the Student Choral Composition Awards Program, please visit the Opus 7 website at www.opus7.org or call 206-782-2899. John Muehleisen, composer-in-residence for Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble

Offset Apathy

(continued from page 13)

Some of these activities might move your singers outside of their comfort zones, but don't hesitate to do that. Once they have left that familiar comfort zone behind, they will be open to more teachable moments and you will grow as a conductor and rehearsal technician.

As this is my "swan song" for NW-Notes, I would like to recognize and thank our fine editor, Howard Meharg. I also wish the best of luck to our new Montana officers, John Haughey, president; Mary Senvold, president-elect; Rhonda Burghardt, secretary; and Scott Corey, treasurer. Our state organization is in capable hands and we can look forward to a solid future in MCDA.

"Go figure" says Sagun, "I love hearing the sound of the human voice"

THE INFORMATION AGE... REALLY?

by Michael S. Sagun, Northwest ACDA Industry Rep.

Imagine... While I am standing in front of my fax machine watching the little numbers flash on the display, the message I have addressed to our customer in Auckland, New Zealand, is at that very moment being received thousands of miles away! This is not only the "Age of Information," it is also the "Era of Instantaneous Communication." In fact, as soon as I finish this article, I will simply make it into an attachment and e-mail it to *NW-Notes* Editor, Howard Meharg, who will receive it in an instant, signaled by a little "beep".

But is all of this impressive technology a blessing? Sometimes, I think not. Especially when I am attempting to contact a customer for the sixth time, trying to get vital information about an order which had been e-mailed to me earlier. After all, we are not dealing with a commodity or even a product. In the music industry, we deal with an art form – an art form that is complex to say the least, at all stages of the game. From the fact that the same poem or text may be set by many different composers, to the reality that there are different keys, voicings, arrangers, editions, and publishers, "instant" ordering most often is NOT the answer.

Now that most businesses, including large print music dealers, do a significant amount of their business via fax, e-mail and websites, many consumers have found it extremely easy to "point & click" their way to what they want. While this practice is perfectly suited to the music educator and church musician, whose "business hours" are long and very busy, it is for the most part not a time saver. Sure, you can kick your shoes off after a hectic day of dealing with hundreds of children and dash off an e-mail to your favorite retailer ordering up your spring concert repertoire. After all, YOU know what you need. However, just forget to indicate the voicing, or the fact that you want one particular edition of a specific piece, or didn't know that the piece you really want to do is no longer published, or you have failed to identify whom should be billed or where the order should be sent, and you've just slowed up the entire process. For the next day, your retailer will have to e-mail you back - or try to reach you between classes if you were thoughtful enough to include your phone number - to inform you or ask strategic questions. If your e-mail reply does not exactly answer the questions posed (which happens more than you would think), it's another round of e-mail messages, and more wasted time.

What real value is present in a database listing of music inventories? What does a listing of titles and arrangers indicate? Other than the fact that you can almost immediately find out if Linda Spevacek or Moses Hogan have anything new out, what are these editions like? Will they really fit your particular needs? I remember when spring break or an in-service day meant that there would be standing room only around our browser tables here at the store. Directors would come in from around the Northwest and spend a day reviewing publications and visiting with colleagues. No one used the keyboard. Everyone browsing quietly could "hear" what he or she was looking at. Then came the "demo cassettes" from the larger educational print publishers. Now, the director could literally hear what that particular company was promoting for the season in the comfort of their own home or car. A time saver? Perhaps. But what about the publications that

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*** REGISTRATION FORM ***

18TH ANNUAL SUMMER CHORAL WORKSHOP
August 9-11, 2001 – University of Portland

Please join us for an exciting and valuable choral workshop co-sponsored by OREGON ACDA, UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND, and SHEET MUSIC SERVICE, featuring guest clinicians JING LING-TAM and CYNTHIA MCGLADREY

Schedule: Thursday, 6:30 PM to 10:00 PM – Sacred Choral Workshop and Reading Session / Friday, 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM – Choral Workshop with JING LING-TAM (all meals (3) included) / Saturday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM – Choral Reading Sessions & ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE SESSION with CYNTHIA MCGLADREY (breakfast & lunch included). Registration fees listed below are PRE-REGISTRATION only and must be received prior to AUGUST 4, 2001. After that date, registration will be at the door on a space available basis only and each fee will increase by \$10.00. DON'T DELAY! REGISTER TODAY!!!

-----Please detach here and mail or fax the completed form below -----

YES! I will attend the 18th Annual Summer Workshop at the U of Portland, August 2001 and am registering prior to August 4, 2001. Enclosed is my payment as indicated.

- Thursday evening sessions \$10 ACDA member \$20 non-member
Friday sessions \$55 ACDA member \$65 non-member
Saturday sessions \$40 ACDA member \$50 non-member
SPECIAL 3-day discount \$80 ACDA member \$110 non-member

I will be attending all 3 days and will also register for one Continuing Education Credit Hour from the University of Portland. I will bring a separate check made out to the University of Portland in the amount of \$100.00 to the Thursday evening check-in.

Vegetarian meal please (for Friday and Saturday registrants only)

NAME HOME PHONE

ADDRESS WORK PHONE

CITY/ST/ZIP EMAIL ADDRESS

SCHOOL/CHURCH/ORGANIZATION

Please charge my registration to the following credit card #: expiration date: /

Signature (for credit card charges only)

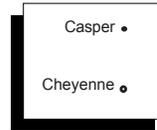
NOTE: You may place CREDIT CARD registrations via PHONE: 503-222-9607 or 800-452-1133 / FAX: 503-222-9600 / or Email: Choral@sheetmusic-service.com

Please mail completed form and corresponding payment made out to Sheet Music Service / Attn: Michael Sagun / 34 NW 8th Ave. / Portland, OR 97209-3591 to be received no later than 8/4/01



The Concert Evaluation process in the choral classroom

by Pat Patton, President WY-ACDA



Evaluation takes on many aspects of important significance at various levels in our current education system. Indeed political influence over student and teacher evaluation is at one of its highest peaks in our country. Administration-generated student evaluation of the teaching process has become the norm at the collegiate level in my experience of late. While these generic evaluations serve the general guidelines of teaching process improvement, more is needed to not only maintain but hopefully increase the vibrancy and energy that is so necessary to pilot a successful choral program. Because specific information pertaining to the choral program is generally not found in administration-generated evaluations, I have chosen to evaluate each concert for the past eight years. Students are required to complete written evaluation forms as partial fulfillment of their grades. There are no right or wrong answers and choir members are instructed to be honest in their responses. Frequently to encourage honest responses, students are not required to put their names on response sheets. Credit is given in the daily attendance gradebook for that day to account for student response sheets. Absent students may respond at a later time and their sheets are shuffled into the mix for their protection.

Some of the response questions included over the years have been:

- Cite three positive things you experienced in this concert
- Cite one thing that could have been improved
- What was your favorite part of the concert?
- What was your least favorite part?
- Cite one thing you learned from this experience
- Comment on the organization of the concert
- Comment on the concert venue (concert hall)
- Comment on your preparedness for this performance
- If you were the teacher, what would you have done differently to be better prepared?
- Comment on the selections performed. What was your favorite? Least favorite? Why?
- Comment on the “group dynamics” of our organization for this concert.
- If you were the teacher, what would you do to improve our “group dynamics”?
- Other ...

Some information received has directly affected the direction of the choral program at Casper College. Responses have led to:

- Organizational changes and improvements
- Literature changes
- Improvement in grading processes
- Addition of testing procedures
- Comparisons between prior student high school and current college choral experiences
- Improvements in “group dynamics”

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National Repertoire
and
Standards
Committee for Women's
Choirs Website

www.acdaonline.org/ncwc

- Excellent resource for:
- division and state R&S Chairs
 - downloadable repertoire list
 - repertoire exchange
 - directory of community-based women's choirs
 - bibliography of women in music

Sagun on the Information Age

(continued from page 15)

were NOT on that cassette (now CD)? What about the small independent publishers who couldn't afford to send thousands of CD's through the mail, let alone hire professionals to record their works? But I digress.

You see, whether you are a music student, educator, conductor, historian, composer, publisher, editor, or even a retailer, you are involved with an art form, not a product. And art takes time. Education in art takes even more time. Get used to it. Instantaneous access and speed may not be the true need for those of us in the music industry today. Attention to quality and value never comes cheap. And if the old adage that “time is money” is still true, it may be time to “pay a little more” for what we do.

If you have comments about anything that I've said in this article, I'd like to hear from you. Note, I said “hear”. Truth be told, I hate typing into and reading off of a little TV screen. I love hearing the sound of the human voice. Go figure...

World Festival of Women's Singing scheduled for July 10-14, Se-

AmericaFest will present its first *World Festival of Women's Singing* in Seattle from July 10-14, 2001, Artistic and Executive Director Carol Stewart has announced. The festival will present women's choirs of international stature, representing five countries and three continents. Leading international choirs who will perform include *Cantoria Alberto Grau* of Venezuela; *Serena*, from Finland; *Kanta Cantemus Koroa*, from Spain's Basque country; *Elektra*, from Canada; the *Bay Area's Peninsula Women's Chorus*; and the *Seattle Girls' Choir Prime Voci*. The Festival will feature five public concerts over three days in major downtown Seattle venues, affording music lovers a chance to hear outstanding choral music written expressly for women, including many works previously unheard in the U. S. Bringing together hundreds of singers from around the world and throughout the U. S., the Festival will also include seven U. S. academic and community choirs.

A highlight of the Festival will be the world premiere of *L'Ultima Amor*, by noted composer Jackson Berkey, which will take place at St. James Cathedral on July 13. The festival will conclude with a July 14 concert at Benaroya Hall,



which will include a "grand sing-in", in which Northwest women singers are invited to participate.

The Festival concerts will be preceded by a Symposium on July 10 and 11, open to the public, which will be of special interest to choral conductors. The symposium sessions will be led by conductors of guest choirs from the world and the U. S.

Tickets to all Symposium sessions are \$15.00 each, or three sessions for \$35.00 and all six session for \$60.00.

AmericaFest was founded in 1993, a not-for-profit organization headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa, and dedicated to international education and human understanding through the art of singing. The festivals have brought together thousands of singers from around the globe. The year 2001 marks the first time that *AmericaFest* will present a festival devoted exclusively to women's choral singing.

The full schedule of concerts begins Thursday, July 12, at 3:00 PM at Town Hall, 8th and Seneca. General admission tickets are \$12.00. At 5:00 PM, the Town Hall series continues with choirs from Utah, California, and New York City. Tickets: \$12.00

At 8:00 PM, groups from Spain, California, Finland, and Venezuela will sing. Tickets for this Town Hall event will be \$20.00.

Friday's concert will be at 8:00 PM at St. James Cathedral and will feature the Berkey premiere of *L'Ultima Amor*, with *Elektra* and Seattle's *Prime Voci*. Tickets are \$22.00 for this event.

Music of the World on Saturday, the 14th, at 3:00 PM will be held in Benaroya Hall. In addition to the international choirs, a 350 voice festival chorus will perform.

To order tickets for concerts online, use the web site at:

www.ticketweb.com or

call TicketWeb toll free at 1-(866) 468-7623.

Sheet Music Service



Concert evaluation process

(continued from page 17)

Charles Robinson, choral director and music education specialist at the University of Missouri at Kansas City has been and remains a significant mentor in my life as a choral conductor. While working on my doctorate there he once said, "If you want to find out something from a group of people, ask them." Sounded simple enough so upon my return from that institution, I started asking my choirs questions. The answers have led to student ownership of an improved program as well as an increased energy in this choral director over the years.

So why write an article like this, you ask? I ask too. The answer is that student input over the years has become increasingly more sophisticated. This speaks of the improved teaching that exists in our state. Students want an excellent experience in choral music at the collegiate level regardless of what their major is. At the junior college level, students still have the sparkle of youth that they bring from their high school experiences. However they still expect the collegiate experience to be a step forward from the place they left.

I guess if this article sparks energy into our constituency to find ways to improve their own programs, then this effort has been helpful. If not, we just weathered another snowstorm here in Wyoming over the last weekend and I need some paper to start the fireplace. Either way ... it's beneficial!

Peace ...

Good singing is good singing

(continued from page 11)

attitude of the conductor. While it may be a difficult habit to break, overcoming the issue of poor posture begins with the conductor. Understanding that the conductor's physical mannerism of expression translates directly to the body of the ensemble singer, however, is only the first step. In addition, there is constant need to reinforce correct posture. Singers must be reminded by example and instruction that correct posture includes a feeling of expansion in the body. The head should relax comfortably over the spine by keeping the ears aligned with the shoulders. The jaw should be viewed as an appendage of the skull and not the driving force. The head should not move in an up and down motion while singing (sometimes referred to as the alligator jaw syndrome). The chest should maintain an expansion to allow deep breathing and effective use of the diaphragm and muscles of the abdominal wall. Feet should be slightly apart with the weight of the body aligned or centered evenly without locking the knees.

Another weighty concern among voice teachers is that proper breath management is not developed or reinforced in the choral ensemble. Relying on other members of the ensemble, it is easy for an individual in a large singing group to feel they don't need to maintain proper breathing habits. Renewing your breath whenever you feel the need at a relaxed status and not allowing enough air intake are both common to the chorister. While it is impractical to watch every member of the ensemble while they sing, it is a good idea to implement breathing (and other musical concerns) spot-checks during the rehearsal. Asking a person to sing a particular line of a piece for a few seconds reveals much about the way they are singing and the way in which they manage their breath. Choral conductors should insist that ensemble singers exercise the same breath management they have learned or are being taught in their private vocal instruction. Asking a member of the voice faculty to conduct a mini-seminar on breath management is also very effective. Reinforced by the choral conductor,

(continued on page 20)

Portland Symphonic
GirlChoir

Good singing is good singing

(continued from page 19)



by private voice instructors, the ability of the conductor to foster, reinforce, and even teach correct vocal principles lends credibility to the profession and helps our students become better singers. In short, good singing is good singing no matter where it occurs.

the proper breath management taught by a private vocal instructor can become an integral part of the prospective soloist's training.

Vocal fatigue just before the end of the semester is common to the choral singer who is also participating in private vocal instruction. In an ideal world, performance scheduling would not conflict with end-of-semester vocal juries and recitals (and visa versa). In attempt to alleviate some of the frustration, rehearsal planning a proper pacing is essential. In addition, Miller notes that one of the causes for vocal fatigue is asking the vibrant singer to sing so that they blend with those around them. This can be damaging for the skilled singer surrounded by those of less skill or training.

Rather than ask those who sing well to hold back, a more positive approach is to train everyone to sing with a vibrant voice.

Developed in the development of vocal production can be in- of the rehearsal routine of the en-

Both Miller and Hampson agree that re-inforcement of good vocal production in the choral rehearsal will do much in improving the overall singing quality of the ensemble. In addition, solo-minded singers will gain by continually practicing these good techniques. Miller suggests the inclusion of the following three areas of vocal development in the choral ensemble:

- S Breath management including onset (attack of tone), release, and unrestricted breath renewal
- S Blend created by vowel tuning to harmonics of open vocal tract
- S Vibrancy through consistent air flow and a relaxed opened larynx

Miller goes on to propose that even though choral conductor may not have the work one-on-one with each singer in the ensemble, a conductor who has a valid vocal methodology can positively effect the singing of everyone in the ensemble. While conductors may not be the most renowned soloists, both Miller and Hampson also agree that effective choral conducting requires the ability to teach and reinforce correct principles of vocal production. Demonstrating these skills in the choral rehearsal will not only help develop good singing but also build a trust with prospective soloists and their teachers. In conclusion, the more one understands the role of the conductor in the choral ensemble, the more one recognizes their influence in the process of vocal development. While there may be biases and concerns leveled

Willamette Uni-
versity



REPORT FROM ALASKA

State's geography presents problems; still, regional festivals allow students to hear others



by Rosemary Bird, President, Alaska ACDA

Alaskan choral directors are in the midst of solo and ensemble activities which culminate in our state solo and ensemble festival May 4-5 at the University of Alaska--Anchorage campus. Meanwhile many regional festivals have taken place over the course of the past month, offering students the rare opportunity to hear each other in concert. This is an experience the geography of our state often prohibits. Nevertheless, our goal remains to teach solid repertoire and good vocal technique no matter the size nor remoteness of the school.

To that end we are also in the process of planning our biennial meeting and workshops to be held in conjunction with the AMEA conference and All-State performances on November 16 and 17 in Fairbanks. Tentative plans include hosting Lynn Brinkmeyer, who will conduct reading sessions and facilitate ACDA membership meetings. Work sessions offered by Alaskan teachers will include topics such as vocal solo repertoire and coaching, and elements in building a strong choral program. Vocal solo repertoire and coaching will be presented by Mark Robinson from Homer High School, Homer, AK, who will be taking over as president of ACDA--Alaska in June. On that note I will sign off as the retiring president, wishing Mark the best, and for all of us the opportunity over the summer to find new inspiration and commitment to our profession, our students, and our soulful art.

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Richard Nance to compose Raymond Brock commissioned work for ACDA

Richard Nance, Associate Director of Choral Activities at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, was recently commissioned to write the Raymond Brock work for ACDA for 2002. This commission is awarded each year to one professional composer and one student composer. Richard says that his work will be for mixed voices on the advanced high school or collegiate level. "I've been asked to set a sacred text, yet to be determined," he said. It is unclear as yet whether the piece will be performed by honor choirs or by auditioned choirs, but it will be performed at all seven regional conventions in 2002. Richard plans to write the piece over the course of the coming summer. He goes on to say, "this is a tremendous honor for me, and I am very humbled and grateful to be asked to write the work for 2002."

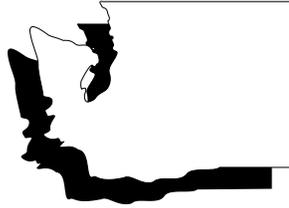
Richard Nance has been the Associate Director of Choral Activities at Pacific Lutheran University since 1992, where he directs the University Chorale, University Singers and Choral Union and teaches music education courses and private composition. He holds bachelors and masters degrees

from West Texas State University (now West Texas A&M) and the DMA degree from Arizona State University. Dr. Nance has studied conducting with Hugh Sanders, Douglas McEwen and David Stocker, and studied composition with Joseph Nelson and Randall Shinn. He is an active member of the American Choral Directors Association, presently serving as the state president for Washington and as the Choral Review Editor for the Choral Journal. Three choirs under his direction have appeared at ACDA regional conventions. Dr. Nance also serves as director of music at St. Mary's Episcopal Church of Lakewood and is active as a clinician and adjudicator. His compositions are published with Hinshaw Music and Walton Music.

Composer's Chorus
(center)



The “wonderful, the frustrating, and the bizarre” at national convention



by Richard Nance, WA-ACDA President

It has been a month or so since I returned home from the ACDA National Convention in San Antonio. I find my mind is still full of vivid memories—some wonderful, some frustrating, and some just plain bizarre. The Choral Union from Pacific Lutheran University, a community chorus which I conduct, was fortunate to be selected to perform for this mammoth event, and though after weeks of preparation we felt ready to sing, nothing could have totally prepared us for this amazing experience.

Notwithstanding some problems with our travel arrangements (it can never be easy to take eighty-seven people anywhere), our trip to San Antonio was the most positive, uplifting experience of my career. I couldn't have chosen a finer group of people with which to share this occasion. I was glad to be taking a close-knit group of “grown-ups,” and it was very gratifying to see new relationships forged and older ones renewed and strengthened during our time together on the trip. The choir had rehearsed diligently and was well prepared, so my primary worry was about singing in three huge venues, with very little rehearsal time on stage at each. In the back of my mind was also the famous pressure you always hear about. Singing in front of 6,000 peers can be intimidating!

Thankfully, my worries were totally unfounded. While it is true that the venues were large and acoustically challenging, that just forced us to be better musicians. We could hear pretty well on stage, especially at the Cockrell Theater and at the Scottish Rite Temple, and though we had to work harder than normal at creating resonance and shaping phrases, it was good for us. We normally perform in live rooms where the acoustic helps us. We found we didn't necessarily need that crutch, not that we won't appreciate it more when next we experience it. As for the “pressure” I had always heard about, from our perspective we never felt anything but warmth and support from our audiences. They are rooting for you, wanting you to do well. And if you sing up to your potential, there is great reward in their response.

The frustrations I mentioned in my introduction were minor, mainly due to our travel arrangements, including our buses getting lost in downtown San Antonio on our second performance day, causing us to be late for our warm-up rehearsal. And the way the convention schedule is now set, groups get only a fifteen-minute time on stage in each venue during which you find out how to walk on and off, where to stand, and get a brief taste of the sound of the room. You then have a little over an hour, not enough time to do anything or really even go anywhere, before your performance process starts. It's very tight, with no room for delays. However, our bus delay turned out to be a positive. Because we missed our warm-up, which would have been in a small choir room at First Presbyterian Church, we were taken straight over to the “holding area” at the Scottish Rite Temple. This was a large basement area with a nice tall ceiling and lots of hard surfaces. I asked the guide if we might warm up some if it wouldn't disturb what was happening on stage, and after a few notes he said it was fine. After some vocalises, we proceeded to sing through the Gloria from Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G-minor*. The sound in that space was phenomenal, and it was obvious to all of us how far we had come musically through this entire experience—very exciting! It was a fitting prelude to what would be our favorite performance.

The bizarre element mentioned above came about on our second performance day. As I explained, there is no real time to go anywhere after your warm-up, so I just had the choir stay dressed all day. Since we needed to grab some lunch, our bus driver suggested the River Center Mall food court—lots to eat, fast and cheap, and since it was at the end of lunch hour, it shouldn't be too crowded. Wrong! It was packed with people, including 72 singers and a conductor in formal attire. Here I was in my white tie and tails, walking around with a tray of food while searching for a place to sit, and not one person looked at me in any way other than normal. It was surreal! Then, to cap it off, the St. Patrick's Day parade was starting when the buses dropped us off for the performance. We couldn't get closer than two or three blocks to the venue, so here we were, trooping through the bands, clowns and floats, on the way to the biggest performance of my career. It puts it all in a different perspective!

Our experience at the convention lifted us to a new level as a choir and organization. We not only grew an incredible amount musically, but also gained such valuable experience from performing on that type of stage and for that type of appreciative audience. Watching my singers go through the process was like seeing a transformation, their level of confidence and self-worth increasing at every step along the way—I could see it in their eyes as they walked on stage. As we have begun new rehearsals at home, that spark and excitement is still there. And the singers are now eager for more travel experiences with high-level performances.

If you have ever thought about auditioning for a National Convention, put any fears you might have aside. Though there will always be logistical problems to take care of, the growth you will see in so many ways through this marvelous experience is surely worth it.

See you in Tacoma at the WA-ACDA Summer Institute, July 25-27, 2001.



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