

# Georgia Sings!

The Official Newsletter of the Georgia branch of the  
American Choral Director's Association

Volume 7, Issue 1

Spring 2008

## Table of Contents

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Annual Summer Conference Announcements (July 8 - 10, 2008)           | p. 2  |
| A Word From Our President - Dr. Eric Nelson                          | p. 3  |
| Repertoire, Warm-Ups, and Resources for Men's Choirs - Amy Hughley   | p. 4  |
| Introducing our new Music and Worship R & S Chair - Bryan Black      | p. 6  |
| Jazz: JAMmin' all over Georgia - Mito Andaya                         | p. 7  |
| Children's Choirs: Where it All Begins - Mary Hoffman                | p. 9  |
| Introducing Janice Folsom, R & S Chair for Community Choirs          | p. 10 |
| Tone Building Through Unison Singing - Franklin Green                | p. 11 |
| Introducing Jeff Bauman, R & S Chair for Two-Year Colleges           | p. 12 |
| Adam Con on Chi (or is that Qi? Hmm....)                             | p. 13 |
| Beginning Part Singing in Middle School - Rachel Green               | p. 16 |
| Rehearsal Models for Increasing Individual Musicality - Vaughn Roste | p. 17 |
| Guest Article: Value Enhancement for Life - Dr. Z. Randall Stroope   | p. 19 |
| Registration Form for GA ACDA Summer Conference, July 10 - 12        | p. 20 |
| List of the Members of the Executive Board of Georgia ACDA           | p. 21 |
| High School Honor Choir Nomination Form                              | p. 22 |
| Middle School Honor Choir Nomination Form                            | p. 23 |
| Last Word: Alicia Walker, GA ACDA President-Elect                    | p. 24 |

**Welcome to the new larger-than-ever-  
before edition of Georgia Sings!**

**It's bigger, it's more thorough, it's more illuminating, it's even edible!**

(Um, we were just kidding about the edible part. Please do not try this at home.)  
GA ACDA assumes no liability for indigestion arising from or claiming to be caused by  
the consumption of this newsletter.

**Reminder! Georgia ACDA Summer Conference will be held July 8 – 10, 2008 in Spivey Hall in Morrow, Georgia**

**Rod Eichenberger to present at annual conference**



Rodney Eichenberger teaches part time at Florida State University and continues to lecture and guest conduct throughout the world. He has conducted more than 70 US All-State Choirs and guest conducted or lectured at more

than 60 US Universities. His recent international appearances include guest conducting the National Chorus and leading conducting workshops in Brazil, France, Austria, Australia and New Zealand. He has also served as guest conductor of the Singapore Youth Choir Festival and International Schools Choral Festivals in London, Vienna, Tokyo and Berlin.

His instructional video on Choral Conducting with Hinshaw Music, "What They See Is What You Get," is now in its thirteenth printing. In 2001, a second instructional video, "Enhancing Musicality Through Movement," was released through Santa Barbara Press.

Eichenberger will present several sessions at our conference, including a choral conducting masterclass for grad students and more seasoned area professionals. His gentle demeanor has a way of disarming any nervousness on the part of his students, as well as endearing him to his audience.

**Readers who are interested in participating in the choral conducting Masterclass with Dr. Eichenberger should email Dr. Eric Nelson to reserve their spot.** Take advantage of this opportunity! We are lucky to have this chance to learn from such a landmark name in the choral field!

**Top Ten Reasons to attend this year's Summer Convention:**

1. Um, Rodney Eichenberger... hello!
2. Networking with other choral colleagues from across the state (joint concerts, anyone?)
3. Some of the best choral performances our state has to offer (in July, at least!)
4. ...in Spivey Hall no less, perhaps Georgia's greatest acoustic concert hall...  
...and for free... (once you've paid the conference registration fee of course!)
5. The opportunity to make new friends and create connections in the field
6. Sessions and presentations by experts recognized both locally and nationally
7. A chance to improve your skills and knowledge as a conductor and educator
8. Reading sessions of quality music (not just "this year's offerings from a given publisher") carefully selected by our Repertoire and Standards Chairs
9. The chance to get rejuvenated and refreshed about our common profession
10. ...and the unparalleled opportunity to complain about Georgia Sings! to the newsletter editor in person and finally effect some changes there!

**Conference registration forms are available on page 20 and are being accepted now. Plan now to attend!**

## A Word from Our President, Eric Nelson



Let me begin my portion of the newsletter with this most important reminder and announcement:

**THE GA ACDA  
CONVENTION IS JULY  
10-12 AT SPIVEY HALL!!**

Each of our state conventions is jammed-packed with interest sessions, reading sessions, performances, and chances to meet and greet new and old colleagues. It's a chance for us to compare notes with people who do exactly what we do in another part of the state and also to chat with those that work in entirely different circumstances. And, of course, we always have the great privilege of learning from some of the leading choral musicians in the field.

This year our headliner is Dr. Rodney Eichenberger. Rodney is an absolutely brilliant teacher. I have had the opportunity to watch him work and to hear him speak on a number of occasions, and I can't wait to experience what he will bring to this summer's conference. He has a way of pointing out those things that matter most in our craft and technique and doing so with grace,

kindness, and warm good humor. Dr. Eichenberger was the choral professor at Florida State for many years and he continues to teach at FSU part time, while lecturing, teaching and guest conducting throughout the world. He has conducted more than 70 All-State choirs and is the author of the acclaimed instructional video, "What They See is What You Get." Professor Eichenberger will be giving six sessions during our conference, including both lecture/seminars and hands-on conducting workshops.

In addition to Rodney Eichenberger, our summer convention will feature a concert by the extraordinary Spivey Hall Children's Choir, a performance by our High School and Middle School honor choirs, and still another showcasing some of Georgia's finest church choirs in a variety of sizes and styles. And, of course, there will be plenty of reading sessions and interest sessions presented by our own Georgia teachers and educators.

Speaking of our Georgia teachers and educators....I have just returned from the Southern Division ACDA Convention in Louisville, KY and Georgia was extremely well represented!

Donna Thomasson served as Honor Choir Coordinator and Alicia Walker (our state President-elect) as Performing Choirs Chair. Alicia also presided over an interest session on the Choral Director as Voice Teacher. Rita Johnson, Christy Ray, and Tom Yackley all serve on the

Southern Division Repertoire and Standards Committee. Tom and Christy presided over interest sessions and led the High School and Middle School reading sessions, accompanied Robin Yackley. Rita presided over the Community Choir R&S roundtable. Kathy Wright accompanied the Show Choir reading session. Our Jazz R&S chair, Mitos Andaya led the jazz reading session and served as a clinician for the Vocal Jazz roundtable. Amy Hughley, presided over the Male Choirs R&S roundtable. Another of our R&S chairs, David White was one of the clinicians on the developing male voice from the boy choir perspective. Georgia State professor Patrick Freer presented a live, real-time demonstration of how to work with boys whose voices are in the midst of change.

Our performing choirs were also extremely well represented. A huge "bravo!" to the Lassiter High School Concert Chorale (Brian Williams, conductor), the Peachtree Presbyterian Church Chamber Choir (Bryan Priddy, conductor), the North Cobb Bella Voce Choir (Stephanie Cash, conductor), and to my Atlanta Sacred Chorale for outstanding performances. Congratulations!

Wow! Music education and choral performance are flourishing here in Georgia. I am proud to be a part of GA ACDA. Come to Spivey Hall on July 10-12 and make it a point to invite a colleague who has never attended before. Let's keep the momentum building!

See you at Spivey Hall!!

## Collective Ideas on Warm Ups, Repertoire, and Resources



Amy Hughley  
R & S Chair for Men's Choirs

Now that spring is here, we choral directors have a chance to rehearse and perform lighter repertoire with our choirs. Summer approaches as well, which gives us opportunities to rest, recharge, and gain perspectives on our teaching.

This spring, I polled several middle school, high school, and collegiate directors of male choirs from the southeast to discover reliable warm up exercises, favorite spring repertoire, and resources for summer reading. Hopefully you will find a few of the suggestions below helpful, whether for planning your spring concert or preparing concert music for 2008-9. You'll find even more repertoire suggestions at the Summer Georgia ACDA conference held at Spivey Hall July 10 through 12, so please mark your calendars!

### Tried and True Warm-up Exercises for the Male Voice

1) I am a firm believer in beginning with the falsetto range on a closed vowel, (i) or (u), and singing stepwise descending 5-tone scales.

A helpful trick is to allow

the hands to float upward as the scale descends. This helps reinforce space and maintain the center of pitch.

2) 5-4-3-2-1 (in a major scale pattern) on guh (shwa vowel). This exercise focuses on chest resonance. The hard G sound brings the vocal folds together and works against breathiness. The uh vowel is vertical and drawn to incorporate chest sound.

Instruct the men to aim their sound towards their sternum, they can even use their hands in a V pattern to add physical motion to the exercise.

3) Instruct students to place a hand on the chest. Beginning in a high head voice, descend on a five-note scale on the syllable [lu]. Instruct students to raise the other hand when they feel the voice in the chest voice. (Specify that the idea is to keep the voice out of the chest for as long as possible.) Then discuss the difference between singing in head voice and chest voice.

Ask students to swing their arms in front of them (like a pendulum) as they sing do-sol-do to a steady beat. Ascend by half steps. (To energize the body)

4) Begin with a descending arpeggio (sol-mi-do) on "pwee pwee pwee."

Instruct the men to puff their cheeks, and we sing it really quickly. Start at F major below middle C and transpose upward until all men have moved to the head voice. It seems to get the voice moving without a lot of weight, which can be a major feat at 8am!

5) Use buzzing lips and plosive consonants such as

t, k, and p over 4 beats. Siren to work the head voice. Begin warm ups in head voice and work downward to exercise the transition to modal/chest.

6) Perform falsetto exercises every week. Use a five note descending passage on [u] at C above middle C and instruct them to maintain the falsetto as far downward as they can.

7) The following websites may be of use for those of you with barbershop groups:

Warm-up like a professional athlete.

[http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub\\_id\\_107943.hcsp](http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub_id_107943.hcsp)

Visual opportunities to support good vocal production in warm ups

[http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub\\_id\\_021209.hcsp](http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub_id_021209.hcsp)

On the next page you'll find a compiled list of suggested repertoire that works well for male groups, as well as a list of video resources you could use for more information. Thanks to Susan Messer (Ridgeview Middle School), Jefferson Johnson (University of Kentucky), James A. Rode (Timber Creek High School), Amy Hughley (Riverwood High School) Zelda Albright (Pope High School), Erin Clark (Renaissance Middle School), Cristy Ray (Autrey Mill Middle School), Amanda L. Sali (South Gwinnett High School), Drew Bowers (Milton High School), Jim Moore (Youth In Harmony VP, Barbershop Harmony Society Dixie District), and Patrick Freer (Georgia State University) for their suggestions!

## Favorite Spring Repertoire for Male Chorus

|   |                                 |                           |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| "And So It Goes" (TTBB)                 | arr. Kirby Shaw                 | Hal Leonard 08200760      |
| "The Awakening" (TTBB)                  | Joseph Martin                   | Shawnee C-286             |
| "Ballad of the Cross-Eyed Sailor"       | Don and Jean Perry              | Shawnee Press             |
| "Bridge Over Troubled Water" (TTBB)     | Kirby Shaw, arr.                | Shawnee Press C0337       |
| "Brothers Sing On" (TTBB)               | Grieg, srr. Belwin              | J. Fischer 6927-5         |
| "Calendar Girl" (TBB)                   | arr. R. Emerson                 | EMI 403-03261             |
| "Coney Island Baby/We All Fall"         | SPEBSOSA arr.                   |                           |
| "Day-O" (TTBB)                          | arr. Ned Ginsburg               | Cherry Lane Music.        |
| "Deo Dicamus Gratias" (TTB)             | Victor C. Johnson               | Lorenz 15/2127H           |
| "Down in the Valley" (TTBB)             | arr. George Mead                | Galaxy 1716-5             |
| "Duke of Earl" (TBB)                    | arr. Ed Lojeski                 | Hal Leonard 08212985      |
| "Gentle Annie" (TTBB)                   | S. Foster, arr. Parker/Shaw     | Lawson Gould 859          |
| "Goin' to the Holy City"                | Joseph Martin                   | Shawnee Press             |
| "Grace"                                 | Mark Hayes                      | Lorenz Publishing         |
| "I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow" (TBB)   | Kirby Shaw, arr.                | Hal Leonard 08201494      |
| "In the Still of the Night" (TTBB)      | arr. Ed Lojeski                 | LLEE Corp                 |
| "Kiss Him Goodbye" (TTBB)               | arr. Ed Lojeski                 | LLEE Corp                 |
| "Kpanlongo" (TTBB)                      | West African, Derek Bermel      | Santa Barbara SBMP 186    |
| "Lennon & McCartney for Men" (TBB)      | Kirby Shaw, arr.                | Hal Leonard 08201883      |
| "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" (TTBB)        | arr. Roger Emerson              | EMI 403-12311             |
| "Little Innocent Lamb" (TTBB)           | Spiritual/arr. Bartholomew      | G. Schirmer 9907          |
| "Loch Lomond" (TTBB)                    | Scottish, arr. Dede Duson       | Kjos 5564                 |
| "The Longest Time" (TTBB),              | arr. Roger Emerson              | Joel Songs                |
| "Naturally" (TTBB)                      | arr. C. Strommen                | Hulex Music 7470.         |
| "New River Train"                       | Donald Moore, arr.              | Hal Leonard               |
| "The Pasture" (TBB)                     | Randall Thompson                | E.C. Schirmer 2181        |
| "Prayer of the Children" (TTBB)         | Kurt Bestor, Arr. Andrea Klouse | Alfred CH96166            |
| "Ride the Chariot" (TTBB)               | Spiritual/arr. Henry Smith      | Kjos 1102                 |
| "Silhouettes" (TTBB)                    | arr. Ed Lojeski                 | Hal Leonard 08258305      |
| "Soon-ah Will Be Done" (TTBB)           | Spiritual/arr. William Dawson   | Kjos T101-A               |
| "Song of Peace" (TTBB)                  | Vincent Persichetti             | Presser 362-00130         |
| "There Is Nothing Like A Dame" (TTBB)   | arr. Stickles                   | Hal Leonard 00346949      |
| "Widerspruch" (TTBB)                    | Schubert                        | Lawson-Gould 513          |
| "Yellow Bird" (TB)                      | Norman Luboff, Arr. Davison     | Walton Music 08501610     |
| "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling" (TBB) | Kirby Shaw, arr.                | Hal Leonard 08721835      |
| "Vive L'Amour" (TTBB)                   | Shaw/Parker                     | Alfred/Lawson Gould 51026 |

## Video Resources on the Male Voice

"Working with Male Voices" (Jerry Blackstone, Santa Barbara Music Publishing)

"Ready, Set, Sing" Terry Barnam (Santa Barbara)

"Master Teachers Speak" Jefferson Johnson (Santa Barbara)

"Success for adolescent singers: Unlocking the Potential in Middle School Choirs." Patrick Freer  
([www.choralexcellence.com](http://www.choralexcellence.com))

"The boy's changing voice: Take the high road." Henry Leck, Hal Leonard, Inc.

**Bryan Black, R & S Chair for Music and Worship**



Does your church choir have any idea why you miss the occasional rehearsal or Sunday morning when an ACDA event comes along? At the very least they happily anticipate your trip because it brings a respite from your unceasing self-righteousness. At the very most they understand ACDA's importance in their musical formation and send you forth with glad hosannas. If the second outcome seems overly optimistic, then read on with good courage.

Church and Synagogue choirs are hands down the hardest-working, most isolated ensembles in our family of singers. They serve virtually fifty-two weeks a year at the same address in ministry with the same congregation. It is a life worthy of the Foreign Legion or a Benedictine habit. Why, then, are we puzzled when our church choir seems a touch arid or seemingly numb to beauty? Could it be that

church choirs stay at home to a fault and don't know the earth is actually round? This homebound outlook is not surprising since church choirs (which generally do not compete against themselves) lack that essential experience which largely motivates academic, community and professional choirs.

A competitive outlook seems perhaps contrary to a sacred endeavor, but I am convinced it is part of a vital paradox. The lack of experiential reference points puts church choirs at a significant disadvantage and limits the singers' imagination to what we can conjure up by thrashing about in front of them. Let us consider that good teaching and effective conducting may also require loading up the old van with your singers and putting them in the middle of an ACDA gathering. One hour spent in the presence of choral excellence could potentially awaken the dullard who is testing your soul in rehearsal.

Tell your singers what ACDA is. Tell them over and over until they say it back to you. Then bring one or two of them along for a concert evening or at least get them to attend local performances by great choirs. One enthusiastic lay person is easily worth ten professionals or a hundred consultants.

These "enlightened" disciples will never again settle for

commonplace music or half hearted singing. They will also utter dark prophesies forbidden to your tongue, such as: "Gee, Mildred. Let's not roll our eyes next time (your name here) suggests we use a simple tone and listen to the chord's tuning. That's how those folks at ACDA do it, y'know."

You may not choose to actually apply for a convention appearance with your church choir but they can still be active convention participants. Your singers must learn the shape of the "musical earth" and realize their spiritual vocation does not exempt them from the never-ending, blood-soaked toil from which beauty springs.

We go about our work in space and time but a friend of mine says singing in the church rehearsal room has eternal consequences. I suspect he is right—get busy!

PS: If you missed hearing Don Hustad in Louisville, take advantage of his appearance on May 17/18 at Northside Drive Baptist Church in Atlanta. Call (404) 237-8621 for more information or contact Irwin Ray at IRay@Oglethorpe.edu

**The 2009 annual conference of the Society for Catholic Liturgy will take place in Omaha, NE, from 29 January to 1 February 2009. Submissions for papers are invited in fields related to sacred liturgy. The topic of the conference is *Missale Romanum*. For details visit [www.liturgysociety.org](http://www.liturgysociety.org).**

## JAZZ: Made in America – Are We JAMmin’ Yet?



Mitos Andaya  
R & S Chair for Jazz

April is Jazz Appreciation Month, otherwise known as *JAM*. Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue as well as other governors across the country have taken up the initiative sponsored by the Smithsonian National Museum of American History and have proclaimed April as a time to recognize and collectively celebrate America’s great art form. What can you and your students do to celebrate jazz? In the box below are tips taken from the International Association of Jazz Educators website ([www.iaje.org](http://www.iaje.org)).

Monthly celebration aside, perhaps a more important question is: how can we educators not only continue to foster the appreciation of jazz, but also expand our students’ knowledge and performance opportunities of this American musical style?

Having grown up in the Pacific Northwest (which is rich in vocal and instrumental jazz school ensembles – both junior high and high school), then attending universities with strong jazz groups (in the

West, the Rockies, and Midwest), I know that I was fortunate to have had teachers who were well-trained in both classical and jazz. These teachers had training and degrees in the classical style, and not in jazz. However, they had listened to, learned, sang, played and loved jazz, in addition to many other styles of music. The ‘classical’ ensembles of these teachers scored ‘1s’ in district contests. Their students made it to state level solo/ensembles contests and all-state choir, and often times, these students were the very same ones who were in the select jazz ensembles, all-state jazz and the like. Most colleagues concur that students who are involved in jazz are more advanced in reading, ear-training and overall musicianship, and that, in turn, jazz training can further develop these skills and build confidence, enabling students to be musical leaders.

How did these teachers do it? When I asked, I discovered no mystery. They in turn had had good teachers – most of whom were the jazz ‘greats’ on recordings and live in concert. They did not follow a common text or method book back then, though there are more resources nowadays. Even the ‘greats’ learned by listening, practicing, singing and playing on the bandstand. They took chances, not only in improvisation – an essential element of jazz – but also took risks in exploring their own freedom of expression. As a result of their boldness, the art of jazz evolved – the style, the language, the means of expression and communication. For each one

of these musicians, however, ‘getting started’ meant taking the first step into what was once the ‘unknown.’

Before heading up to Louisville for the Southern Division ACDA Convention, I asked colleagues who direct vocal jazz ensembles around the state to express concerns and suggestions, as well as explanations as to why there are few vocal jazz ensembles in Georgia. Instrumental jazz ensembles are now more common in our state, but still rare are vocal jazz ensembles, though I am happy to say that there are more than there were two years ago. **Bravo! Keep up the great work!**

Many concerns and explanations were offered, but the most common was ‘a general lack of knowledge and experience in jazz, therefore, teachers avoid it.’ I was not surprised to hear the same sentiment echoed by other southern delegates represented at the round-table. All of us present, including the state chairs, were enthusiastic about being proactive in vocal jazz education. As your state chair, I am happy and ready to offer service and help in whatever way I can, so please contact me for assistance. In fact, I am so eager to help with jazz, that I may make the first move and contact you to see how I can be of service!

When the issue of ‘lack of knowledge’ was discussed, one of our Tennessee colleagues put it like this – “Are you fluent in German? We ask our students to sing in German, and yet how do we teach them?” Surely, we invest time in learning as much as we can in order to give the students

the best opportunity to turn into expressions of Kim Neidlinger, John Odom, perform the language and the thought and so on. and Kathee Williams.

music well. For many of us, There were also many For more information on the first step in jazz would be to other issues ranging from training, keep checking the listen to excellent recordings. scheduling, administration IAJE website ([www.iaje.org](http://www.iaje.org))

Forgive the redundancy, support for starting an for the 2008 Teacher Training for I think I may have ensemble where there was Institutes. You can also bring mentioned the 'L word' in none before, finding good your choir or soloist, at any every article since 2005 - literature, teacher training and level, to perform in the 'Listen.' Listen and learn. For resources, workshops and UGA/Athens Twilight Jazz anyone attending any festivals, improvisation, Festival, April 25-26, 2008 workshop in jazz or teacher arranging, and more than our ([www.uga.edu/music/jazzfestival](http://www.uga.edu/music/jazzfestival)). There, we will have two training session, you will hear 60-minute roundtable would outstanding vocal jazz that word time and time again. allow for discussion. In the clinicians – LaMont Ridgell I cannot overemphasize the end, it was resolved that a (California-based solo artist importance of this when it regional listserve and vocal jazz who was schooled in Steve jazz, let alone teaching it. newsletter would be Zegree's Western Michigan From listening, we learn to established and put forth. If 'Gold Company') and Lauren imitate – the nuances, in this listserve, please send me Fowler-Calisto (our Jazz R&S articulations, inflections, the your contact information and I Chair for the Southern harmonic and rhythmic will forward it to our regional Division). Even if you are language - much the same way R&S Chair. unable to bring a group or a child learns language by first I wish to thank all who soloist, please come along and imitating sounds, which turn contributed to the regional enjoy meeting and watching into words, which turn into roundtable discussion, these artists work. sentences, which, when including our Georgia Again, please contact me combined with understanding, colleagues: Mark Lamback, anytime at [mandaya@uga.edu](mailto:mandaya@uga.edu).

*Let's JAM together, Georgia!!*

### 10 Quick Ideas to Celebrate JAM

(taken from International Association of Jazz Educators at [www.iaje.org](http://www.iaje.org))

1. Learn about Smithsonian Jazz Programs and Organizations – ([www.smithsonianjazz.org](http://www.smithsonianjazz.org)). Listen to sample interviews at the Jazz Oral History Project – ([www.si.edu/ajazzh/johp.htm](http://www.si.edu/ajazzh/johp.htm))
2. Visit NEA Jazz in the Schools ([www.neajazzintheschools.org/home.php](http://www.neajazzintheschools.org/home.php)) for lessons and activities, or visit A Gallery of NEA Jazz Masters for materials and resources to learn about the NEA Jazz Masters ([www.nea.gov/national/jazz/index.html](http://www.nea.gov/national/jazz/index.html)).
3. Get hip to jazz. Visit jazz magazines online, or subscribe. See IAJE's *JAZZ LINKS* for a list to get started.
4. Ask students to write and perform a skit or play about jazz and incorporate music.
5. Invite a jazz artist to guest solo with your jazz ensemble.
6. Help organize a jazz exhibit at a museum or art studio.
7. Explore different jazz styles and listen to representative recordings.
8. Join the Traditional Jazz Educators Network ([prjc.org/tjen/index.htm](http://prjc.org/tjen/index.htm)) and introduce yourself and your students to a great resource for learning about early jazz.
9. Found or donate to a jazz studies scholarship.
10. Listen to jazz radio. See IAJE's *JAZZ LINKS* for a list of some great stations.



## Children's Choirs - Where it All Begins



Mary Hoffman, R & S Chair  
for Children's Choirs

I am sitting in the grand ballroom of the Galt House Hotel in Louisville Kentucky. I am listening to a rehearsal of the ACDA Southern Division Children's Honor Choir, directed by Joan Gregoryk. It is a huge honor choir, around 300 treble singers ranging in age from 12-18, with an enviable, gentle sound. The music chosen for them is lovely, well-written, just challenging enough to keep them working at it, even after lunch. Part of me thinks I could sit and listen to this forever; part of me assumes that 20 minutes of this consistency will suffice, so I should just move on to the next event with grown-ups.

But as I sit here, I realize what I am really hearing. I am hearing children who have been prepared to sing for this particular moment - not just by their current choir director, but by many directors and teachers who have been teaching them to sing for many, many years.

The evidence is a well-trained choir, boasting some of the finest treble voices in the southern United States; but what I recognize are the efforts of the training choir teachers. I know in my heart the sacrificial investment of time by countless foundational coaches, teachers and directors, who lavished upon these children their own knowledge of music and their contagious love of singing.

Russell Robinson says that working with a children's choir is like "trying to keep ants in a bottle." He is so right; no one wants our job. No one wants to direct the training choirs. That job makes you gray and hairless before your time. Once, as I was directing a rather large group of elementary children who were costumed as 75 winged angels for Christmas Eve, running into our Sanctuary in a disintegrating dress rehearsal, one father was overheard saying to another, "Would you rather have Mary Hoffman's job or be dead?" It's true - large groups of young singers can scare you to death.

Who are these crazy people directing our training choirs? Who are these mad men and women sitting on the floor, singing with preschoolers, tapping on drums, pestering young piano students, signing their solfege, teaching new vocabulary, shaping young vowels, dancing wildly to the music with the children, directing school choirs AFTER school, indulging in heretical conducting styles for the sake of a 4-bar phrase...why do we do it?

In a results-driven culture, how can the training grounds be the place where a choir director honestly wants to live? Training choir directors rarely enjoy the fruit of their labors. They are sowers and planters, not harvesters. They prepare the soil, but seldom set foot in the marketplace. Most of us who initiate the choral journey will never perform at an ACDA convention - mind you, those who we train WILL be here. I'm listening to them right now.

This is why we take our vitamins and keep going to these conventions. We continue gleaning wisdom from experienced educators. We keep collecting the good ideas, experimenting with them in the cultural contexts of our own groups. We read, we apply, we learn, we change - because, though we don't see it yet, we KNOW where our children are going. No one else is going to prepare them for part-singing by drawing from them a finely-tuned unison sound. No one else is going to prepare them to internalize a beat by jumping up and down with it today. No one, except that wonderful teacher who trusts the outcome, will suit up and show up for every rehearsal and leave children trusting the outcome, too.

I remain in this rehearsal, listening to these marvelous singers, and I offer up a prayer for the hundreds of teachers who are here with me in spirit. They have loved the music and they have loved the children - God, bless them richly.

## Janice Folsom, R & S Chair for Community Choirs



"In all societies, a primary function of music is collective and communal, to bring and bind people together. People sing together and dance together in every culture." This quote from Anthony Starr in **Music and the Mind** sums up why most folks love to sing in community choirs. Our choirs come together each week to bond with others through the unspeakable beauty of choral music. Thus we have many community choirs throughout the state who provide a great service to the community at large as well as the singers.

In **The Robert Shaw Reader** on page 16 you will find a very interesting entry for November 14, 1961. "..... any worthy amateur choral organization is built around only a single idea extended two ways: a mutual and high regard for the music which is being performed, and a mutual and high regard for all the people with whom it is being performed. A distinguished amateur chorus is so materially the product of devotion and self-discipline that when these cease to be present there is no chorus." So it is our job as conductors to make sure that in each rehearsal, we nurture our singers through rehearsing quality literature in an organized and inspiring way

making sure that we use the time wisely and produce exemplary choral music. We should settle for nothing less than the full potential of our choirs. We should also instill commitment, and reinforce respect for each singer's worth to the group. There are so many singers out there longing for a quality musical experience. **It's out job to provide it!**

There are so many more quotes from **The Robert Shaw Reader** I could comment on - let me rather just let them speak for themselves:

"....noble musical dreams don't make a choir. People make a choir. If you have people, you sing."

"Where much is demanded - with reason and necessity - then much is learned."

"A chorus is not a lump of human talent and energy chipped, sliced, rolled, moulded and stamped into a maneuverable manikin of the lowest common artistic denominator, but a group of unique and varied human beings, voluntarily congregated, who accept personal responsibility, and bring to a performance of the whole each his utmost endowment, preparedness, and sensitivity."

"We bring to the work and to one another the absolute limit of energy and sensitivity - not for pay, but as a gift - hoping to find and to forge a community with the spirit and the specifications of the composer, searching for the unspeakable within the singable."

I hope that these quotes inspire you and your choir to great things for the remaining concerts of your season. The joy we experience and give to others through music can never be measured!

On another note, I just returned from the Southern Division ACDA convention. It was a tremendous experience as always. There were so many things to help a community choir conductor be a success. If you have not been attending these conventions for fear that there is nothing for you, please rethink that notion and make plans to go to the next convention.

Please send me the information below by April 15, 2008 so that I can include it in our report to the national office on Community Choir activities in Georgia:

**Chorus Name**  
**Mailing Address**  
**Contact Phone**  
**Chorus Email**  
**Website**  
**Voicing**  
**Current number of singers**  
**Director's Name**  
**Director's Address**  
**Director's Phone**  
**Director's email**

The criterion for a community choir is that the singing membership of the chorus must be drawn from the community at large rather than from a single institution such as a school or church. All kinds of community choruses are included making no distinction with regard to gender, age, or remuneration for the singers. This may cause some overlap for your organization but it will harm no one to have two committee chairs representing you.

I'd love to hear about any exciting things that you are doing so that I can share it with other directors in our state and nationally. My email address is listed on the Executive Board page in this issue - I hope to see you at the convention in July! Have a great spring!

## Tone building through unison singing



**Franklin Green, R & S  
Chair for Women's Choirs**

The Southern Division ACDA Convention in Louisville was an uplifting event. I gave it my all and made it to 25 of 26 concerts, trudging through 12" of snow to get to many of them. I was delighted with the repertoire for treble voices and also disturbed that many of my favorites were unpublished—Grrr! Congratulations to our president, Eric Nelson and the Atlanta Sacred Choral for their wonderful performance. All the choral performances were the fruit of several years work by directors and choristers: the songs were well chosen, well learned, interesting, and expressive. Even as I was thoroughly pleased by the performances, I couldn't help but notice a common flaw in most of the choirs with treble voices—an increasing tension in the tone quality as the singers moved into their upper ranges, particularly in approaching that E-F-F# zone of terror (upper *passaggio*), followed by a fair amount of out of tune singing above that range. A few groups were masterful in dealing with these issues, but many struggled.

I'd like to challenge directors of treble choirs to consider a strategy in tone

building that requires you to step back from your usual work with choirs. We are all looking for the most complicated, yet performable pieces we can find for our singers. We develop their part independence, their rhythmic sense, their ability to sing harmony and dissonance, and to tune all that complexity. But think how differently we are teaching the choirs from how we were taught as voice students - (if you have never studied voice, it is not too late now!). We were forced to use a large portion of our useful ranges on almost every piece we prepared. (Some of our choral "altos" seldom rise out of their "belting" ranges. Many of our sopranos rarely ascend above the upper *passaggio* and never sing in the bottom of their voices.) As voice students, our issues were creating a relaxed and perfect space for each vowel on each pitch. Remember singing through your literature on only one vowel at a time? Remember hearing yourself on recording and realizing that you didn't pronounce the words very well at times?

I think you can build your singers' vocal abilities by occasionally shedding the complexity to just work in unison. Choristers may think it insulting to tackle a unison piece when they can handle multiple parts, but if you insist on exquisite beauty and consummate expressiveness, a unison piece for a beginning or advanced choir may turn out to be an audience and choir favorite in the end. Failing the use of a "unison throughout" piece, find one that has extensive unison sections. Then work on it as vigorously as you do on those complex pieces. The vocal technique they learn by matching their vowels in unison to create

beautiful tone quality will help them on all their other work. Allow their unison singing to be loud. Remember that unison singing seems louder than part singing even when it is not (a psycho-acoustic phenomenon), but soft singing is a more advanced technique, so allow them to work at a moderate to full dynamic. I cringed to see nearly closed-mouthed singers wailing away on high G's and A's. I'd work on posture, keeping the ribcage high, the head in line with the body, relaxing the muscles under the chin and in the back of the mouth, and letting out a wail!

Some suggestions of interesting unison or nearly unison literature follow.

*Jerusalem*, Charles H. H. Parry, Gordon V. Thompson Music, c/o Warner Bros., VG 196.

*Two by Handel*, (*Ombra Mai Fu* and *Lascia Ch'io Pianga*), George Frideric Handel, ed. Z Randall Stroope, Alliance Music Publications, Inc., AMP 0607.

*Simple Song* (from *Mass*), Leonard Bernstein, Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers, OCTB6916.

*Two Songs of Winter*, (*God Bless the Master* and *Wassail Song*) Ralph Vaughan Williams, Oxford University Press.

*Let Beauty Awake*, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers, M-051-46591-0

*This Shall Be for Music*, Mark Patterson, BriLee Music Publishing, BL363.

*Bist du bei mir*, J.S. Bach, accompaniment by S. Calvert, Gordon V. Thompson Music, c/o Warner Bros., VG-183.

*To Music (An die Musik)*, Franz Schubert, edited and arranged by Doreen Rao, Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers, OCTB6366.

*Wie Melodien Zieht Es Mir*, Johannes Brahms, edited by

Henry H. Leck, Plymouth Music Co. HL-524. A couple of easy ones:

*Fancie*, Benjamin Britten, Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers, OCTB5611.

Let everyone sing all the time creating a mostly unison piece with:

*The Lord Bless You and Keep You*, SA, John Rutter, Hinshaw Music Inc., HMC-1169.

*Sleep My Baby*, (Suo-Gan) Welsh Slumber Song, arranged Alec Rowley, Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers, OCTB5449.

*The Path to the Moon*, Eric H. Thiman, Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers, OCTB6114

## Jeff Bauman, R & S Chair for Two-Year College Choirs



I haven't counted heads in a long time, but it seems to me that two-year colleges are increasingly outnumbered by both their four-year colleagues and the growing number of large high schools with powerhouse choral programs. The challenge lies in carving out a niche in this environment to offer a unique, challenging and educational choral experience to our students while moving our programs forward in a way that is artistically satisfying. Although we share many of the same difficulties from program to program, every situation is unique and I can only speak to my own experiences in this article. I hope you will find some commonalities within that apply to your situation.

Two-year schools in general are presented with some interesting problems regarding the building and maintaining of a choral program. In addition to the difficulties faced by our peers, the fact that our successful students move on after two years of training means that our groups have less experience and more turnover from year to year than both our high school and college colleagues. This lack of continuity makes selecting literature more difficult, and turns the planning of events for the coming year into an exercise in faith.

Programming a major work or sending off an application to perform on a convention knowing that 60 percent of your choir next year will be people you have not seen before is a scary prospect. This fear however, can be a wonderful motivator, and the benefits to the program can be tremendous. When the Young Harris College Choir was scheduled for an appearance at the GMEA convention last year, our students responded to the challenging literature and performance demands placed on them, and the result was one of the strongest groups I have had during my tenure.

There has also been a good deal of carryover into this year's group. They remember what they sounded like and how hard they had to work to achieve that outcome. The bar had been set, and everyone had a fresh perspective regarding our potential.

The Young Harris College administration, always supportive of the Fine Arts, recognizes the effort involved in these large undertakings, and has been very helpful in ensuring the growth of our program. Convention appearances and performing major works, and securing good recordings of these performances can make recruiting good singers for the next year much easier.

While we have been fortunate in the past to have a few mature students, the vast majority of our singers are first time freshman with limited individual vocal training. Another challenge that is a reality for many of us is to perform college-level choral literature with a group made up exclusively of underclassmen. This is an important factor when you consider the fact that some of our students matriculate from very large high schools with strong choral programs.

These students need to be challenged if they are to have a satisfying experience. It has been my experience that vocal pedagogy is the only way to address this problem. Proper vocal technique allows the singers to produce fuller, more colorful, comfortable sounds, and increases their range. This in turn makes possible a much wider variety of literature. We spend a great deal of time in the first semester on vocal technique and encourage all of our students to study applied voice. Applied vocal study is a requirement for most of our music majors and for choral scholarship recipients, but many other students take advantage of this opportunity as well.

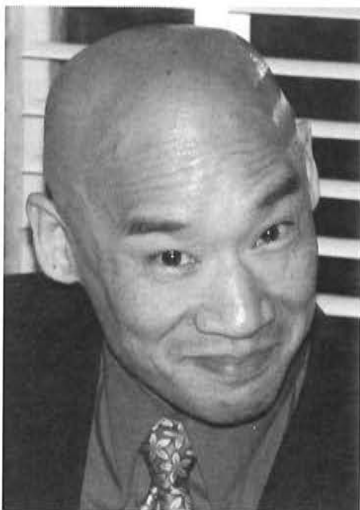
In spite the difficulties presented thus far, we are also afforded unique opportunities in our educational model. These must be embraced and taken full advantage of.

One advantage in this model lies in the opportunity of impressing upon freshman the fact that they have only one year to replace their outgoing classmates and become the leaders of the choir vocally, musically, and socially. After participating in choir for a semester, students have a reasonably good idea of who the strong voices and sight readers are and how many of them are sophomores. Many of our students choose to enroll in applied voice lessons and

really take ownership of the challenge presented.

Another opportunity afforded students at two-year institutions is increased attention given them due to the absence of upperclassmen. Freshman and sophomores sing all the solos in the choir, they are the section leaders, and they play the lead roles in musical theater and opera productions. For the right type of student, this can be a great motivator. High school seniors are thrown into positions of responsibility very quickly at two-year schools, and the result can be positive for both the student and the music program.

### Dr. Adam Con, R & S Chair for Ethnic and Multicultural Perspectives



I've heard Georgia ACDA board members and GMEA choral organizers articulate the need to provide a better conduit between our ACDA members and our Georgia MENC choral members. To this end, I thought I'd share with you some background

information about the big buzz word that circulated during the GMEA Choral All-State event this past February 21-23, 2008. I've received a surprisingly number of emails asking questions about this word and how it relates to choral conducting and singing. Moreover, this topic directly relates to ethnic and multicultural perspectives. From one of my respected mentors, Clifford Madsen, I evoke the sage saying, "Everything relates to everything."

The art of music making has many technical characteristics that are clearly identifiable and measurable such as dynamics, intonation or tone. There are other elements that are metaphysical or subjective and they are not as easily defined: feeling, intuition, aesthetics, emotion,

and spirit. While it would be easy to ignore these factors, they are, after all, the essence of human expression through the musical medium. This article is about providing information that can help conductors and singers experience the metaphysical in their music making.

Consider this ancient Chinese story: *There once were six blind men who were asked to touch a large animal and then describe what it looked like. The first man touched the animal's ear and said, "This animal is like a large fan." The second man touched the side of its body and says, "No, it is like a wall." The third one described the leg saying, "No, the animal is a pillar." The fourth one touched the nose and shouted, "The animal is like a big hanging branch of a tree!" The fifth one touched*

something like a hard cone, and says, "it is a large tooth sticking out of a huge mouth". The sixth one who touches the tail said loudly, "No, this animal is a large swinging broom sticking out of the wall". If these individuals were to put all of the information together, they might have a reasonable description of the animal. What animal image did you have in your mind? The animal they touched was an elephant. The point of this story is to remind us that we should not hold fast to only one viewpoint; often, we only see part of the story.

The Georgia All-State buzz word to which I refer is *Chi* or *Qi*. Before you start doing an internet search, you should be made aware of a few important aspects of Chinese language. Spoken by an estimated 1.2 billion people worldwide, Chinese or Sinitic language is really a family of languages. Depending on the classification system, there are six or twelve distinct regional languages or dialects that are unintelligible to one another. This would be similar to the differences between English and French rather than someone from England trying to understand someone with a Texas drawl! All the Chinese languages read the same Chinese characters which means the 1.2 billion people can read the same newspaper but they cannot talk to one another or read the paper aloud and understand each other. The use of the Latin alphabet to represent standard Mandarin Chinese was developed in 1954 and is called 'Pinyin'; however, there are other systems in use as well. Therefore, when you do an internet search on the word 'Qi', you will also find, 'Chi'. Don't be confused by the words. It's all the same the

word. It just represents different attempts to show pronunciation differences.

It would also be of some help to know how the western world was introduced to the eastern philosophy, specifically, *Qigong*. Prior to the 1970's China was a hidden society much like North Korea is today. In 1972, President Richard Nixon visited China, and this opened the doors to Chinese culture and philosophy. In July of 1971, Secretary of State, Henry A. Kissinger, traveled to China as part of the efforts to re-establish a relationship between the two countries. During that trip, one of the accompanying journalists, James Reston of the New York Times, had an acute appendicitis attack. Chinese physicians performed an emergency appendectomy on Reston. What made the surgery so unusual was the fact that it was performed without anesthesia. The technique used was acupuncture. Reston remained awake and alert throughout the entire operation. Reston returned to the United States and wrote about the experience. One year later during the visit to China, President Nixon and journalists observed several major surgeries in which patients were completely conscious being anesthetized using only acupuncture. This would be the beginning of a different cultural revolution: the exchange between Eastern and Western medical practitioners in the United States and China.

The theory behind the use of acupuncture to anesthetize James Reston is that the body is a network of bio-energy. This bio-energy is called *Qi* (*Chi*); it works in harmony with the body's circulatory, nervous,

muscular, digestive, and genitourinary and all other systems of the body. When this vital energy becomes blocked or weakened, a physical effect becomes apparent in the body system or specific anatomic location. Similarly, with the use of needles, the Chinese physician is able to block certain energy channels thus stopping feeling or sensation in a particular area or region of the body.

It is important to understand that depending on an individual's background and experience, the definition of *Qi* varies: heat, electric energy, or magnetic energy. However, these definitions limit the real meaning of *Qi*. ***Qi is the energy of natural force which fills the universe.*** It is found in all aspects of the universe, on earth and in every living being. The sunshine, moonlight and the moon's affect on tides are considered forces which are part of *Qi*. *Qi* is excessive rain forcing a river to flood and change its course. Loss of *Qi* is a lack of rain causing plants to die. These are all forces of *Qi*. Each human being, animal and plant has *Qi* and if any of these loses *Qi* balance it will begin to show sickness and eventually lead to death. Therefore, *Qi* can also be defined as any energy which is able to demonstrate power or strength be it electric, magnetic, heat or light. *Qi* is also expressed as the energy state of living things. This more global definition of *Qi* should help the reader to understand that all things are connected and in need of balance.

What is *Qigong*? You may have heard someone or your students say that they are practicing or studying *Qigong* or *Chi gong*. The word *Gong* is often used instead of *Gongfu* or *Kung Fu*, but it refers to the

same thing: energy and time. Any study or training which requires effort and time to accomplish a skill or knowledge is called *Gongfu*. Hence, Qigong is the study (through much effort and time) of Qi.

All martial arts involve some use of Qi. It is important to understand the three types of martial arts styles: hard, soft-hard and soft. The hard style uses more muscular power; Qi is mentally led to the muscles and the muscles are tensed to trap the Qi to maximize muscle power. The soft-hard style requires the muscles and tendons to remain relaxed and the movements are soft to allow free movement of Qi. Just before attack the muscles and tendons are suddenly tensed. In the soft style, the muscles and tendons are relaxed as much as possible to allow free circulation of Qi. The power of the soft style comes from the velocity of the lethal whipping action.

When someone erroneously says that they "do Taiji" they probably have taken on the Western version of what we commonly associate with

the practice of Tai Chi which is the use of specific slow relaxing movements or exercises to improve health. However, correctly expressed, a person who practices Taijiquan practices a soft-style Qigong based martial arts. Taijiquan is believed to have been created during the Song Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.) by Zhang, San-Feng. *Taiji* refers to a philosophy which is over 4,000 years old; it translates to **the art of the mind**. *Quan* translates as **the fist**; therefore, Taijiquan is **the fist of the mind**. Through the power of the mind, martial art becomes manifest and alive. In short, the practice of Taijiquan is the practice of moving Qi throughout the entire body (and beyond) while in motion. The movement can be slow or it can be fast; what remains constant is that muscles and tendons remain relaxed or soft allowing maximum Qi flow.

Similar to singing or conducting, Taijiquan facilitates relaxation of muscles and tendons through concentrated focus of the mind. One of the primary goals in successful singing or conducting is to allow our

bodies to be calm while in motion, and conversely, our bodies should have a sense of fluidity even while standing still. This all occurs without tension. The one aspect that makes Taijiquan unique is the harmonious flow of energy or Qi throughout the body. Similar to music, it is a feeling. While discovering what Qi feels like is not difficult, it does take the help of a good teacher. The more difficult aspect of learning Taijiquan is the daily disciplined practice throughout many years that allows the practitioner to develop strong levels of Qi and to experience deeper levels of knowing how to move Qi throughout the body effortlessly. The health benefits of studying Taijiquan and Qigong have been documented by western scientific research. The experience and practice of feeling Qi move throughout the body while singing and while conducting translates to a metaphysical, aesthetic and kinesthetic experience which transcends the black and white notes on a page.

#### References

- Chuckrow, R. (1998). *The tai chi book: Refining and enjoying a lifetime of practice*. Boston, Massachusetts: YMAA Publication Center.
- David, C. (1996). *The beauty of gesture: the invisible keyboard of piano and t'ai chi*. Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books.
- Loupos, J. (2003). *Exploring tai chi contemporary view on an ancient art*. Boston, Massachusetts: YMAA Publication Center.
- Rao, D. & Perison, B. (2005). *Circle of sound voice education: A contemplative approach to singing through meditation, movement and vocalization*. London: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
- Yang, J. (1997). *The root of chinese Qigong: Secrets for health, longevity, & enlightenment*. Roslindale, Massachusetts: YMAA Publication Center.

**Beginning Part Singing in Middle School**



**Rachel Green, R & S Chair for Middle School Choirs**

Do you have trouble getting your middle school singers to sing in parts? Some years seem to produce good listeners or more mature music students. In other years, the students seem to have had little

singing experience before coming into my class. Finding music for the more mature singer is a snap. My music library is full of SA and SSA literature. What can I do with the beginners to have success?

My beginners have similar problems - most cannot sing a major scale. Time is well spent on singing the scales. Later in the year the students will be able to sing the scales in a round, each new group beginning as the previous group gets to the third pitch of the scale. I divide the choir into as many as 4 groups doing this. Initially however, even singing in two parts will be difficult and very out of tune.

The sight reading method called *Let's Get Started!* by Jerome Gries, published by Masterworks Press, has levels

to address all abilities. For ease of use, the books are in a reproducible format. *Two-Part Treble, Volume 1* is an excellent beginning point for the scale-deprived singers. The examples are based on scalar passages and can be sung in unison or divide into two parts.

One of the most successful and fun ways to part sing with beginners (and also with older students) is to sing in rounds or canons. If you are lucky enough to have Orff instruments in your classroom, the instruments can provide a wonderful texture or atmosphere for round singing and help to keep singers on pitch!

I recommend any of the books below for learning and improving part singing.

*150 Rounds for Singing and Teaching*, Bolkovac and Johnson, Boosey and Hawkes. There is an alphabetical index with separate listings of rounds by different categories.

*The King's Singers Book of Rounds and Canons*, Hal Leonard. This book includes rounds such as: *Christmas Is Coming; Dona Nobis Pacem; Hava Na Shira; Jubilate Deo; Non Nobis Domine; Sumer Is Icumen In; Tallis Canon; and When Jesus Wept.*

*Look Before You Leap*, Gilpatrick, Alfred Publishing. This collection by a certified Orff instructor includes reproducible songs and activities. The music was written for elementary students, but it was not so long ago that our sixth and seventh graders were considered elementary students.

*Old and New Rounds and Canons*, Wilson, Shawnee Press. This collection includes 56 rounds and 34 canons as well as background and performing information for some of the songs.

## Your Advertisement Here!

Advertise in Georgia Sings! Our newsletter goes out to over 750 musicians and educators in Georgia and beyond. Please send electronic versions of your advertisement to [vaughnroste@yahoo.ca](mailto:vaughnroste@yahoo.ca) and payment according to the schedule below to Kathy Bizarth, GA ACDA Treasurer, 119 Woodbine Circle, Newnan, Georgia, 30263.

| Size            | Institution | Business |
|-----------------|-------------|----------|
| Per column inch | \$15        | \$25     |
| 1/8 page        | \$25        | \$30     |
| 1/4 page        | \$40        | \$50     |
| 1/2 page        | \$75        | \$100    |
| Full page       | \$140       | \$175    |



## Rehearsal Models for Increasing Individual Musicality



**Vaughn Roste**  
Newsletter Editor

I learned an interesting thing from my church choir the other night in rehearsal. I was trying to get my point across about some vitally-important and brilliantly elucidating fact about the music we were doing at the time (those details of which I've lost since then) and had to shush some more (shall-we-say) "verbally active" members in the back row (they're always in the back row, aren't they?). Now I can say that to them as I've been there for three years and we've grown to love each other, my church choir and I... but I got a smart-alecky remark back from a very smart person (one of the guilty perpetrators) which was completely deserved: "Will you listen to this Canadian? He thinks he's the only person in the room with something important to say!!!"

Now my choir can say that to me as I've been there for three years and we've grown to love each other... it depends less on what you say but how you say it – that phrase could be read as embittered but it wasn't uttered in that sense at all – it was said tongue-in-cheek with a genuine respect

behind it, so one can hardly complain. But it did get me thinking...

In my "shushing" the enthusiastic conversationalists in the back row, I need to be careful not to set up a modus operandi wherein others' verbal contributions about the music we are performing are not valued and even explicitly solicited. Now granted, often the conversations going on in our rehearsals are not musical but regarding events beyond the music room which ideally would be left behind for the rehearsal period – and even if they are musical they tend to be more about what bar we're starting at as someone can't find rehearsal letter "B" without also being told "p. 6" – but that said, given that the conversation of the loquacious choristers were relevant to the music being learned at the time, shouldn't I as the conductor be doing everything in my power to encourage such contributions rather than stifle them?

I found I needed to examine the motivations behind people being in a church choir. I am there for completely different reasons than they are. First off, I'm paid to be there - but I'm in the wrong profession if that's the only reason I'm there. No, beyond liking the extra money and conducting practice and increased range of repertoire exposure and community publicity and professional advancement (such as it is) that my church job offers, I'm there primarily because I have found that I really like being in a house of worship every Sunday morning. I like being part of a worshipping community where my talents are valued (and my absence

would be noted!). But those are my reasons for being there – not theirs.

My church choristers likely do not share a single one of the same reasons for being in the same room at the same time with me on Wednesday evenings. They're there because they're enjoying it – they're there to have fun, to use their talents in service of God, to learn, and (yes, we need to admit it) to socialize. There is nothing wrong with trying to channel the socialization to outside (before and after) of the allotted rehearsal time, but I've always found that the church choir was one of the easiest entry points into a new congregation and a new community – it's a small group wherein one has an immediate specific and valued role. Our choristers need to feel valued for their talents and presence – and perhaps their musical and intellectual contributions to the group as well.

I'm wondering if too often we conductors don't employ a "professorial lecture" type approach to our rehearsals – as in, one beknighted person stands before the group and enlightens them with her or his knowledge. While this model is necessary in some cases, I wonder if sometimes we couldn't employ a somewhat different approach. To what extent would it be possible to incorporate a model wherein the entire group contributes to the advancement of the group – where we each share our collective knowledge and in so doing all become more enlightened?

Let me give you an example of what I mean. Hopefully every able-eared musician will be able to recognize a beautiful phrase

sung well – I'm not talking about any specific phrase in particular, I'm talking about the phrase that any professional musician (e.g. you) would instinctively make in performing the music that you were rehearsing today. I'm talking about the lovely ebb and flow that should be inherent in every line of music we ever sing. As Robert Shaw said, "music can never be a series of repeated notes – each note must be going somewhere or coming back from somewhere." Or as Weston Noble says, "all music must dance."

How often have we as conductors begged and pleaded – verbally and/or non-verbally – for a larger sense of that ebb and flow in each phrase? How many different tricks have we tried – penciling in phrase marks, getting choristers to write in crescendos and decrescendos in the appropriate places (where the composer would not have bothered to include them because they would have been assumed in the proper production of that phrase), putting arrows down to the high point, underlining climaxes, assigning and writing in micro-dynamics, stressing our gestures in the sagittal planes... the list goes on. Have we not all wished that our choristers would somehow take on the relatively simple matter of "phrasing" for themselves and then we could move on to other musical matters? (If not, you conduct better choirs than do I...)

How might we teach our everyday choristers to phrase better (again, only as an example)? Might there be a means of making them more responsible for the phrase in the first place? Could it be that in the "conductor as

professorial lecturer" model of rehearsing we put too much onus on the conductor to make and communicate all musical decisions and to articulate every musical error or suggestion for improvement that might occur? What if we asked choristers their opinions about phrases and phrasing? Would that make them feel like their contributions to choir were more valued? Would that help instill in them an increased sense of how important it always is to listen to the sound that is being produced around you and to always be critically analyzing it for direction (or ebb and flow)? Would that help them – even if only in the long run – to assume more responsibility for themselves for having a sense of phrasing naturally in any piece they were performing? Could instilling in them a sense of the importance of listening to the sound(s) they are producing help automatically resolve other musical issues, such as balance, as well? Would a conversation about such musical concerns in the rehearsal take more rehearsal time than it was worth, or would it ultimately end up saving more rehearsal time as better choristers (who more readily assume responsibility for their own phrasing) are developed? And finally, do you know of anyone else who writes complete paragraphs composed entirely of questions? ☺ (Who edits the editor anyways? Shouldn't somebody? ☺)

Obviously this approach might be easiest with our adult (church and community) groups – they have the wisdom and life experience to relate. They know what a phrase will ideally sound like and hopefully can discuss issues such as part prominence and

balance intelligently. But how do we teach them this if they don't learn it at some juncture? Even our kid's choirs could use this idea judiciously.

My point is that the intelligent discussion of music is part of a good education, and if we aren't given people younger than adults the chance to articulate their opinions, comments, or questions than we aren't giving them a chance to develop into the adult choristers that we might cherish in our older choirs. By standing before the assembled crowd and imparting only our own wisdom to them, we may be hindering our own efforts to some extent to develop intelligent musicians out of that group who could in turn eventually conduct groups of their own (or be great assets to more advanced ensembles). We may even be hurting our own efforts to turn our own groups into more highly developed ensembles if we are in fact teaching them to rely on us to make the musical decisions instead of them.

The conductor may not be the only person in the room with something important to say – or something valuable to contribute to the musical improvement of the group. In fact, such comments may be even more valuable if they do not come directly from the conductor. Engendering an atmosphere wherein choristers are encouraged to make musical comments and air opinions aloud in the rehearsal room may have rich payoffs in added individual rehearsal and performance responsibility in the future.

Isn't it amazing how much one can glean from reflection on a snotty comment from such a valuable (and valued!) back-row chorister? ☺

## Guest Article: Value Enhancement for Life

Editor's Note: Each issue, as space permits, Georgia Sings! will include the best articles from other states' ACDA newsletters, with the author's permission. This issue's contribution comes from Dr. Z. Randall Stroope, who is the Director of Choral Studies at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. He studied conducting with Dr. Douglas McEwen and Margaret Hillis, and is one of the most active choral conductors and composers in this country today, with recent conducting engagements in Singapore, England, Salzburg, Washington DC, Vancouver BC, and New York. His compositions sell over 200,000 copies a year, and are performed regularly by ensembles throughout the world. He can be reached at [stroope@rowan.edu](mailto:stroope@rowan.edu).



### Z. Randall Stroope

Colleen Barrett, President of Southwest Airlines (483 jets), was recently quoted as running the business over the phone and with hand-written messages to her colleagues in and out of the office. She didn't use e-mail, amazingly. Now this article is not about promoting the discontinuance of e-mail, but....

I find a troubling paradox in the media bombardment of the "fast food", "do more in less time" message to us and our students on the one hand, juxtaposed with "craftsmanship is important", and the "quality assurance" message on the other. We buy cell phones, blackberries, electronic planners and the like so we can do more in less time and "simplify our lives." "Eat on the road, e-mail fifty people a day, and never have any private time without a cell phone ringing in your pocket

or the person's next to you (even in the restroom)." That sounds more like "complicate your life as quickly as you can in the least amount of time."

*But do you want to buy a house built in the least amount of time? Do you specifically remember ONE e-mail you got last year? (Most business people receive about 10,000 a year). Worse, do you remember even ONE e-mail that you sent? Can you quote it?*

Our gadget society was intended to simplify our lives, but instead it complicated them, increased our busyness, and worst of all - *made our daily communication so insignificant that we can't even remember one percent of it a year later.*

Choral music comes along and says "slow craftsmanship", "long range benefits", "hard work with results not always readily seen", "every piece is a work of art that you will remember for years to come", and "this work ethic will change your entire life". Your students need choir in this world of driving while eating a cheeseburger with one hand and holding a cell phone with the other. Do you want a singer "built in the least amount of time"? Did Notre Dame's Lou Holtz throw a team together, or Bill Gates run his investments in a fritz? Is that the way to "win"? Are you promoting

this with your students, or stopping it?

Proper training takes TIME. Teachers are providing *value enhancement* for students.

Meeting individually with every student (even for ten minutes) once a year takes TIME. Teachers are embracing the very core of students.

Besides being a wonderful musician, Robert Shaw was a wonderful human being, and he constantly talked about life and philosophy. (In fact, philosophy, English literature, and religion, not music, were his majors in college.) The most effective teachers and conductors are also the most *human* - believable, simply profound, and connected to the essence of life itself.

Keep yourself and your students connected to significance in life.

Never apologize about taking time (lots of it) in the quest for excellence

You may be the only compass in the life of so many. Be sure you are pointing in the right direction.

P.S. Colleen Barrett (SW Airlines President) can boast as running the most financially profitable airline in the U.S. today (w/o gadgets). A personal touch or handwritten note may be worth something, who knows.

Georgia Sings! Spring 2008 Page 22

**The Georgia ACDA High School SATB Honor Choir 2008**  
(Grades 9-12-College)  
July 10-11, 2008  
Dr. Stanley Roberts, Conductor

**NOMINATION FORM**

Applications must be postmarked on or by Friday, May 1, 2008.  
Please enclose \$45 per student payable to Georgia ACDA.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Mail to: John L. Odom</b><br>240 Browns Hill Court<br>Tyrone, GA 30290 | <b>Send 1 or more quartets (SATB).</b><br><b>Duplicate this form as needed.</b> |
|---|---|

ACDA Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

ACDA Member No. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Choir Director or Voice Teacher (circle one)

School/Church \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

**Singers Information**

**Soprano**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Alto**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Tenor**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Bass**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Rehearsals begin at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, July 10. The concert in Spivey Hall will begin at 8:15 p.m. on Friday, July 11.*

(Grades 6-8)

July 10-11, 2008

Thomas Yackley, Conductor

**NOMINATION FORM**

Applications must be postmarked on or by Friday, May 1, 2008.

Please enclose \$45 per student payable to Georgia ACDA. Music is included in the fee.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Mail to: Rachel Green</b><br>202 Collierstown Way<br>Peachtree City, GA 30269 | <b><u>LIST YOUR SINGERS IN ORDER FROM STRONGEST VOICE TO LIGHTEST.</u></b> This will be used for vocal assignment and placement. Duplicate this form as needed. |
|--|---|

ACDA Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

ACDA Member No. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Choir Director or Voice Teacher (circle one)

School/Church \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

**Singers Information**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Rehearsals begin at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, July 10. The concert in Spivey Hall will begin at 8:15 p.m. on Friday, July 11.*

## Last Word: Alicia Walker, President-Elect of GA ACDA



I hope many of you were able to attend the Southern Division ACDA Convention in Louisville. Having just returned, the experiences there are very fresh in my mind. It was my pleasure to serve as the Performing Choir Chair for this convention, and as such, I had the opportunity to work with all the fine choirs and conductors who were selected to sing. If you were there, you know that Georgia was wonderfully represented by four choirs! I know you join me in congratulating

Stefanie Cash and Bella Voce from North Cobb High School, Bryan Priddy and the Peachtree Presbyterian Church Chamber Choir, Eric Nelson and the Atlanta Sacred Chorale, and Brian Williams and the Lassiter High School Concert Choir. The level of singing and expressive music making was outstanding. We are so very proud of these fine musicians.

One of the singular impressions that I brought home from this convention is the incredible level of commitment that is demonstrated by the constituency of ACDA. Having served on two convention committees now, I am astounded at the number of hours of work that people give on a volunteer basis. There is no office staff at the division level, just as none exists for the states. The people that put conventions together do so because they love choral music and want to make the gathering together of choral directors as beneficial as possible. I went to conventions for years without giving a thought as to how they were planned and executed. Now I

think people would be very surprised at the number of "Type A" musicians that can gather around one table, attending to details, planning, evaluating, discussing, organizing, and even being creative! It has been an education and a privilege for me to work alongside such committed people.

In Georgia we have a deep well of talented choral musicians. The traditions here are rich and the expertise of our conductors rivals that of anyplace in the nation. Is ACDA benefiting from your experience? Rather, have you volunteered your leadership in an interest session, by submitting a tape, or just by being present at a convention? If you are waiting to be asked - don't! Start by coming to the state convention. Demonstrate your interest and commitment. Bring new teachers/directors in your sphere of influence with you. Be a mentor. Volunteer to help behind the scenes. There is a place for you at the table of leadership, whether it is backstage or in the spotlight. Roll up those sleeves and get involved!

Georgia ACDA online at [www.gaacda.org](http://www.gaacda.org) Thomas Yackley, webmaster

*Georgia Sings!*  
American Choral Directors.  
PO BOX 2720  
Oklahoma City, OK 73101-2720

PRSRST STD  
U. S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 188  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK



\*\*\*\*\*AUTO\*\*3-DIGIT 300

02693 ACDA 0 12/9999

THOMAS D YACKLEY  
Alpharetta High School  
3595 Webb Bridge Rd  
Alpharetta, GA 30005-4140