



GEORGIA ACDA NEWSLETTER

10/29/75

Vol. IV, No.1

Bruce E. Borton, Editor

October, 1975

BARR TO GUEST CONDUCT AT NORTH GEORGIA FESTIVAL

The first North Georgia College Invitational Choral Festival will be held on the campus of North Georgia College in Dahlonega on November 10. Guest Conductor for this event is Robert K. Barr, Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky.

High School choirs participating in this event are Cherokee High School in Canton, Don Stafford, Conductor, Gainesville High School, Gainesville, Bill Davis, Conductor and North Hall High School, Gainesville, Lynn Woffard, Conductor.

Works to be performed by the Festival Chorus are the "Song of Democracy" by Howard Hansen and "Tantum Ergo" by Anton Bruckner. In addition the North Georgia Chorale will perform "Nun Danke Alle Gott" of Pachelbel and "O Vo Omnes" by Pablo Casals with Michael O'Neal conducting.

CHANGE OF OFFICER

Diane Woodward has been appointed as the secretary of Georgia ACDA to replace Mary Robb. Diane is the Director of Choral Music of Babb Junior High School in Forest Park.

BICENTENNIAL CHORUS AUDITIONS SET

Auditions for the 1976 ACDA Bicentennial Chorus will be held in the chorus room of Georgia State University on November 15 beginning at 1 pm. Applications must be returned by November 1 to Hampton Kicklighter, 101 Apache Drive, Carrollton, 30117. If you need more copies of the application please request them as soon as possible.

The 200 voice chorus will assemble at Interlochen, Michigan July 19-24 to perform a commissioned work by Lukas Foss with the National Symphony. ACDA will pay lodging and food expenses and the Georgia Music Educators Association has agreed to pay travel expenses for the selected members.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Georgia Choirs to appear at the ACDA Southern Division Convention in Williamsburg, Va., February 19-21, 1976.

- First Baptist Church Choir, Decatur, Wayne Grinstead, Conductor.
- Georgia State University Choir, John Haberlen, Conductor.
- Jonesboro High School Concert Choir, Ada Weaver, Conductor.
- Fredrick Douglas High School Choir, Muriel Harper, Conductor.

THE EARLY AMERICAN CHURCH ANTHEM

by Wayne M. Grinstead

Our understanding of the Early American church anthem will be more complete if we are able to view it in perspective with the development of the church choir, since the acceptance of the latter meant the proliferation of the former.

The only music brought to America by the Pilgrims was the Psalter, and in a society that recognized no dichotomy between religious and everyday life, the practice of psalmody was the major part of the first 100 years of church music history.

By the end of the 18th century, Puritan ministers were complaining (probably with good reason) about the poor quality of singing in their churches. Agitation among these ministers led to a call by Rev. Symmes in 1720 to institute "Singing Schools." A by-product of the singing schools was an institution we now recognize as the church choir. The best singers of the church, unified by their social association in the singing school and their superior musicianship, chose to sit together during the worship services and thus began the first American church choir (1750-1770) with its trained singers who were attracted to music too difficult for use by the congregation at large.

The first Early American anthems were written, for the most part, by amateur musicians who had little formal education in music. First and foremost among these composers was, of course, William Billings, a tanner by trade who wrote 47 anthems during his lifetime. Other notable anthem composers included Jacob French, a music teacher whose style was like that of Billings; Daniel Read, the most active composer and promoter of church music in Connecticut during the 18th century; Justin Morgan, breeder of the original Morgan horse and teacher of grammar schools, singing schools, writing schools and a tavern keeper; Oliver Holden, a composer in the vanguard of reaction against the Billings school who advocated singing "slow and soft, not harsh" and wrote the music to the hymn "All Hail the Power"; Abraham Wood, a dresser of cloth and one of the few Early American composers who was not a teacher of singing schools; Jacob Kimball, a Harvard graduate and lawyer who gave up the bar for music. He did not give up drinking, however, and died an alcoholic in an almshouse; Elias Mann, carpenter and musician, helped organize the Boston Musical Society; and Supply Belcher, nicknamed "The Handel of Maine" (undeservedly).

Unfortunately, performing editions of Early American anthems, other than those by William Billings, are rare at this point. While many can be found in Early American tune and hymn books they have yet to be extracted and published in usable and affordable editions.

William Billings is well represented in a series of performing editions published by C. F. Peters (edited by Oliver Daniel), Concordia (edited by Leonard van Camp) and Walton. Carl Fischer publishes a series of Early American Fuguing Tunes (edited by William J. Reynolds) which, although short, are enjoyable for the performer and the listener. Marks Music Corp. publishes a series of Early American moral music (edited by Irving Lowens) which includes anthems and fuguing tunes by such composers as Uri K. Hill and Oliver Brownson.

The Early American anthems were patterned after English examples written by such composers as William Tans'ur and William Knapp. These anthems, American and English, share some characteristics which make them distinctive.

- 1) They tend to be short, usually less than 5 minutes. O Sing Unto the Lord, Jacob French (manuscript) is around 3:30. Peace on Earth, Billings (Peters No. 66341) is a little over 5 minutes. Salisbury, Oliver Brownson (Marks No. 65) is less than a minute.
- 2) The structure of the anthem is based on the text. When the Lord Turned Again, Wm. Billings (Concordia 98-2189) is divided into five sections as follows:
1st text 1st text repeat 2nd text 3rd text 4th text
20 measures 19 measures 24 measures 6 measures 24 measures
- 3) There is usually section contrast by means of changing meter, tempo or texture. This allows for great variety within the short space of the composition. O Praise the Lord of Heaven, Wm. Billings (Concordia No. 98-2196) begins in $3/4$ and then changes meter eight times in the following 104 measure.
- 4) The tempo of the anthem was related to the meter signature. Most introductions to collections of church music assigned specific tempo to the different meter signatures. Conductors desiring an authentic performance of Early American church music should take into account these "Moods of Time". (A full explanation of this practice is presented by Leonard van Camp and John Haberlin in The Choral Journal, November, 1973 in their article "On Performing the Music of William Billings!")
- 5) One tonal center is usually maintained throughout. It was, in fact, a limited harmonic vocabulary on the part of the composers which accounted for the brevity of the anthems. In only 2 of 47 anthems does William Billings modulate.
- 6) The majority of writing is 4 part familiar style. This is, four part, chordal, syllabic settings. Many anthems do, however, contain fuguing sections.
- 7) The melody is in the tenor voice as was the practice with psalmody and hynody during the period. A common performance practice during the period consisted of allowing some sopranos to sing with the tenors and vice-versa.
- 8) The harmonic rhythm is generally fast. In The Bird, Wm. Billings (Peters No. 66335) the harmony changes almost every beat during the first section.
- 9) Incomplete triads are often used, creating a hollow or open sound.
- 10) Vocal range, by today's standards, is limited. Ranges in The Bird, Wm. Billings, are as follows: Sopranos $f\#^1-e^2$ (minor 7th); altos d^1-g^1 (a perfect 4th); tenors $f\#-e$ (minor 7th); bass D-g (8ve and perfect 4th) . . . lower notes are doubled at the octave by the baritones.

11) The text is usually from the Psalms in the King James translation.

The body of Early American church anthems contains a wealth of musically valid materials for the church, high school and college choral director. Hopefully as the nation turns its thoughts toward the Bicentennial, music publishers will be encouraged to take more of this material from the tune books and collections and make it available in modern performing editions.

Wayne M. Grinstead

Mr. Grinstead received his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees at the University of Georgia. He is Director of Music at the First Baptist Church, Decatur, Georgia and sings in the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus and Chamber Chorus.

COMING EVENTS

- October 2 GSU Seminar (GSU Fife and Drum Corp, Sacred Harp Singing, and Donald Robinson: "A Bi-Centennial Preview". Art and Music Bldg., Georgia State University. 9:30am
- October 16-19 Atlanta Symphony Chorus (Berlioz - Te Deum). Symphony Hall 8:30pm (Shaw, conductor)
- November 1 GSU Seminar (Harold Decker: "Conducting and Rehearsing the Chorus"). Art and Music Bldg. G.S.U. 9:30am
- November 2 Augusta Choral Society (Dello Jow - Affirmation of Faith, Thompson - Testament of Freedom). St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Reynolds at 6th St., Augusta. 3:30pm (Emily Remington, Conductor)
- November 10 North Georgia Invitational Choral Festival, North Georgia College (Robert K. Barr, Guest Conductor)
- November 13 Carrollton City Schools Fall Concert, First Baptist Church, Carrollton. 8:00pm (Hampton Kicklighter, Conductor)
- November 18 West Georgia College Chorus (Handel - Messiah) Tabernacle Baptist Church, Carrollton, 8:00pm (Bruce Borton, Cond.)
- November 20-22 Atlanta Symphony Chamber Chorus (Mozart - Requiem, Bach - Cantata 131). Symphony Hall, 8:00pm (Shaw, Conductor)
- November 24 Georgia State University Choirs Fall Concert (Bach - Jesu, der du mein Seele, Britten - Festival te Deurn, and etc.) Recital Hall, Art and Music Bldg., G.S.U. 8:15pm (John Gaberlin, conductor)
- December 3-4 West Georgia College Chamber Singers (Early American Christmas Celebration) Cashen Recital Hall, West Georgia College, Carrollton 8:00pm (Bruce Borton, Conductor)
- December 4 North Georgia College Choirs (Annual Christmas Concert) North Georgia College, Dahlonega (Michael O'Neal, conductor)
- December 5-7 Augusta Choral Society (Amahl and the Night Visitors) Performing Arts Theater, Augusta College. Fri.-Sat.=8:00pm & Sat.-Sun. 3:00pm (Emily Remington, Conductor)
- December 11 Carrollton High School Choir (Distler - A little Advent Music) First Baptist Church, Carrollton. 8:00pm (Hampton Kicklighter, conductor)
- December 13 All State Chorus Auditions
- December 14 Augusta Choral Society (Cullum's Festival of Christmas) Bell Auditorium, Augusta. 3:00pm (Emily Remington, conductor)
- December 16-17 Atlanta Symphony Chorus (Annual Christmas Concert) Symphony Hall, Atlanta, 8:30pm (Shaw conductor)