



AMERICAN
CHORAL
DIRECTORS
ASSOCIATION

Volume III, March 1, 1980

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CHORAL COMMENTS

KNOXVILLE 1980: The recent Southern Division A.C.D.A. Convention in Knoxville was a very happy and "warm" time for the Georgia members. We were all extremely proud of Ann Jones and the University of Georgia Women's Glee Club for their sensitive and most musical performance Thursday afternoon. Congratulations Ann!

After our social hour Friday, 23 of us went to dinner, most in the new Georgia A.C.D.A. van. Many thanks to J.C. Boehm for making arrangements.

Jim Bohart's session was very well received. People got 35 compositions plus "Wheels"; a musical about the "World's Greatest Invention". Many, Many thanks to the publishers.

We are in the process of planning a STATE A.C.D.A. Convention for the fall. Want to help?...share some of your ideas! Our state is beginning to move...we can be a vital force in choral music in Georgia...get INVOLVED!!!

SHARE AND CARE IN OUR ART FORM!

At the recent 1980 Unified Arts Conference, the Georgia Chapter of A.C.D.A. co-sponsored two sessions: "Choral Techniques and Interpretation in Action" with Dr. William L. Dawson and the All State College Chorus under his direction. We as a chapter thank Julian Creamer and Don Robinson for our involvement.

GEORGIA A.C.D.A. COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

BOY'S CHOIR. . . . .	.Elizabeth Kimble
CHILDREN'S CHOIR. . . . .	.Charles Doster
CHURCH CHOIR. . . . .	.John Heggleshuaite
COMMUNITY CHOIR. . . . .	..Michael O'Neil
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY. . . . .	..John Haberlen
HIGH SCHOOL. . . . .	.Bill Caldwell
JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE. . . . .	..J.C. Boehm
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL. . . . .	.Hampton Kicklighter
MALE CHORUS. . . . .	..James McRainey
VOCAL JAZZ AND SHOW CHOIR. . . . .	.Susan Beck Milton
YOUTH AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES. . . . .	.Mary Legler
ETHNIC CHORAL MUSIC. . . . .	..Alan Green
WOMEN'S CHORUS. . . . .	..Sylvia Ross

FROM OUR PAST PRESIDENTS

Do We Consider Students?

By: Hampton Kicklighter

How considerate are we of our students and ensemble members? A large number of young people are involved in music programs in our elementary and lower secondary schools. This number becomes much smaller at the upper secondary and college level and only a very small number of adults remain actively involved. From observation during over fifteen years of public school teaching, I wish to suggest that one reason for this attrition is the lack of consideration for the "whole" student on the part of the teacher-conductor at all instructional levels. This takes many forms, but irregular and over scheduling of rehearsals, and lack of efficient use of rehearsal-class time are the primary offenders.

There are many things that our students are not, and the one that affects us directly is that they are not professional musicians. Their life is not dedicated to performing in our ensembles. They participate in these various ensembles to receive an education as humans and as musicians, which includes performance at the highest level attainable. This of course means that a "shoddy" performance is intolerable.

This places much more responsibility on the teacher-conductor to select literature and prepare rehearsals to insure that there is always a steady progression toward the goal, which is the performance. In addition the musical goals to be accomplished must be planned before the first rehearsal and not just allowed to happen, if they happen at all. Without planning, in many instances, many of us resort to purely "rote" teaching just to "get the show on".

It is a source of grave concern to me that some music programs seem to demand not only their allotted portion of a student's school day, but too many of his "after-school" hours as well. So many that in some cases the student is forced into choosing between participation in music or athletics, music or debate, music or drama, and in some instances choral or instrumental music. While this may fulfill the objective of keeping the student busy "so he won't have time to get in trouble" this is hardly sound educational practice. It goes without saying that at times there is a need for an extra rehearsal or two to work in the performance hall or with visiting performers. This is certainly justified and not an encroachment on the students' time. But what about the group that finds it necessary to continually schedule outside of class rehearsals? These groups, or so it seems, intrude on the right of the student to participate in activities that are not available during the regular school day and penalizes the student that wishes to participate in extra-curricula activities or in athletics. What about the student who because of necessity or ambition has a part-time job? Is this fair or justifiable? In elementary and secondary education, especially music, the student should be encouraged to participate in many varied activities, not specialize in one activity. Any one activity that forces this kind of choice, musical or non-musical, continually needs to have its value to the student examined versus the value of spending the same amount of time in a variety of activities.

To add to this situation is the "calling" of extra rehearsals on the "spur of the moment" and then assessing penalties to those students that do not or cannot attend, rarely taking into account the students other regularly scheduled activities and commitments. This deplorable practice should be condemned by every organization of professional music teachers and school administrators.

Are there solutions to the dilemma that we teacher-conductors face who have both educational and performance responsibilities? Certainly, and they are not nearly as complicated as they may seem. First, the literature selected for performance and study must be within the capabilities of the ensemble to learn within the allotted class-rehearsal time. This includes both musical and technical aspects, and these should be thoroughly before the first rehearsal. Secondly, each rehearsal must be planned with specific objectives and techniques to be used. How many times have we waid to our students, "let's do it again" without explaining why, or even worse, without having a reason?

Thirdly, if extra rehearsals are needed, and they should be kept to the absolute minimum necessary, they should follow a regular schedule or, except in unusual circumstances, be called at least three weeks in advance to allow students to adjust their schedules if attendance is to be mandatory. In addition, demand promptness of yourself and your students. Begin and end

the rehearsal on time. If adequate rehearsal preparation has been done and proper literature is used, this is not a difficult thing to do, and is a small thing considering the appreciation that will be received from students and parents alike, especially the parents of younger students.

Last and most important, rehearse efficiently. Spend the necessary time to prepare the rehearsal and then work your plan making every minute count. Robert Shaw, in an address to the Southern Division ACDA said it well, "It is better for the conductor to spend forty hours working out a solution to a problem than to waste one hour of forty peoples time."

I believe if we as teacher-conductors were considerate of the time and non-musical activities of our students we would see more people involved in all types of musical activity. I am convinced that most students want music to be a part of their activities and reap the rewards that this can produce, but would rather not participate in music when this participation demands the exclusion of other things that have importance to them. Thus the student misses all benefits of music study. Music education and musical performance should NOT be an all or nothing choice, but a part of a balanced program of studies and activities.

Will being considerate of the "whole" student allow the achievement of the necessary public support that our performances and "Superior" contest ratings bring to our programs? Very definitely, and in addition we will receive considerably more support from educationally concerned administrators, teachers, and parents. The practice of this kind of consideration will also produce improvement in our own rehearsal-teaching techniques and ultimately improvement in the quality of our performances.

Thus we will win more friends for music that will remain friends when the "rah rah rah" of school days has passed, and our students will continue to participate in musical activities as adults. They will have learned that music can and should be a PART of their life that is enjoyable and rewarding while still allowing time for participation in other activities. Consequently if we continue to place unreasonable demands on the time of our students we will discover, sooner or later, that support for music programs will be much less than it is now.

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N O T I C E:

THE SHORTER CHORALE HAS BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 10th TRIANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE FRENCH POPULAR CHORAL MOVEMENT, A COEUR JOIE. IN CELEBRATION OF THIS 10th GATHERING, TWO CHORAL GROUPS FROM THE U.S. HAVE BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE, THE SHORTER COLLEGE CHORALE AND THE CONCERT CHOIR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE. OVER 7,000 SINGERS OF THE A COEUR JOIE MOVEMENT CHOIRS AND THE INVITED CHOIRS WILL PRESENT 75 CONCERTS IN THE SMALL TOWN OF VAISON DE ROMAINE AND THE SURROUNDING VILLAGES IN THE PROVENCE REGION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE. THIS WILL ALL TAKE PLACE DURING THE SECOND WEEK OF AUGUST. THE SHORTER CHORALE, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF JOHN JENNINGS, WILL PRESENT TWO OF THESE CONCERTS AND ITS MEMBERS WILL ALSO PARTICIPATE IN SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL CHOIRS OF 120 MEMBERS MADE UP OF SINGERS FROM THE OTHER PARTICIPATING GROUPS. TWO ADDITIONAL WEEKS OF TRAVEL AND PERFORMANCE ARE BEING PLANNED BY THE CHORALE TO COMPLETE ITS FIRST CONCERT TOUR TO EUROPE.

FROM THE STUDENT MEMBER

by:

Jone Hunnicutt and Peggy Ray

Co-Presidents
UGA Student Chapter ACDA

Having recently witnessed two successive high school choral clinics on the University of Georgia campus, the writers of this letter feel obligated to raise questions concerning the purpose of music education in the school system today.

Ourselves being choral education majors, we attended these workshops anticipating watching these young people be confronted with the exciting challenge of learning. It was not so much the students' being taught how to sing the several pieces in a correct and musical style that we had looked forward to; it was more the students' excitement at being in such an intellectually-stimulating environment, and their desire to learn more about the music they had previously rehearsed were the things for which we had waited.

How can we describe the disappointment and consternation we felt when it was evident that too great a number of the singers had no idea of what was happening in rehearsal, nor had they any desire to give every ounce of energy and concentration to the tasks at hand? Granted, some degree of disorderly conduct was anticipated. However, it was not the abhorrent attitude of some of those students that left us so dismayed. Rather, it was the apparently limited scope of concern which too many of the high school teachers showed that evidenced to us that choral music education in this state is not given the serious treatment which it deserves.

We all learn through imitation. If we are not shown at the earliest stages what high standards can be set, what exceedingly great goals can be achieved, and that perfection can be striven for, how can we expect those who follow us to attain these same heights? When a high school choral director allows his or her students to learn wrong notes or wrong voice part, to sleep through, talk during, or walk in or out of such workshop rehearsals at will, while their director takes that opportunity to socialize with his or her own peers, then we, as education students, feel pressed to ask these conductors why they even bother to attend choral workshops. How can they dare consider themselves teachers?

That mediocrity abounds is evident now more than ever. The implications of this state of mind bear serious consideration. Do we allow the next person the next teacher to undertake the task of coaxing these young people to do their absolute best? Do we even care? Is it ultimately left up to the colleges and universities to enlighten these students? It must not be so! The same apathy and aesthetic naivete prevalent in the majority of high school choral programs in this region is already far too obvious in our institutes of higher learning.

As musicians, we owe it to music itself to strive for and to maintain the highest quality possible, for if we do not, we cannot make music. We only fill up time and space. Young people must be shown that they can themselves strive for and achieve a goal, a standard of understanding and performance demanded by the music. We must require musical excellence from ourselves and from those with whom we share knowledge - the students. One day it will be they who hold the baton in their hand.