



The American Choral Directors Association
of Ohio

OHIO A.C.D.A. NEWS

Vol. 2, No. 2

1

February, 1970

State Convention Clinic at Ashland College

On June 21-24 the 4th Annual State ACDA convention will be held at Ashland College. The local chairman will be Calvin Rogers with Andy Gregerson and Jack Johnston assisting. A new air conditioned Fine Arts Building and convenient dormitory cafeteria fa-

ilities are among the features. The second annual Ohio Honors Choir will be presented and the first Award in the ACDA Ohio Composers Series will be given. Registration forms will be mailed with the April edition of the NEWS. Topics to be included in the

sessions are, Multi Choir Music, The Training Choir in Building a Choral Program, Organ and other Instruments in the Church. Ashland is located between Columbus and Cleveland just off Route 71, so it is easily accessible from most areas in the state.

Ohio Honors Choir Selected

The 2nd Ohio Honors Choir has been selected through auditions held in each region during January. More than 250 students were recommended by A.C.D.A. members and auditions arranged for them. Arrangements for guest director, repertoire, and spring rehearsal dates will be announced later. The group will meet and perform at the State convention on June 21-24 at Ashland College. The choir will also present the premier performance of the winning composition in the Ohio ACDA Composer Series at that time. The group will be meeting for the first rehearsal on Feb. 22 at Westerville High School at 3:00 P.M. A 100 voice choir was selected and alternate members chosen to replace any delinquent regular members.

250 Attend Reading Session

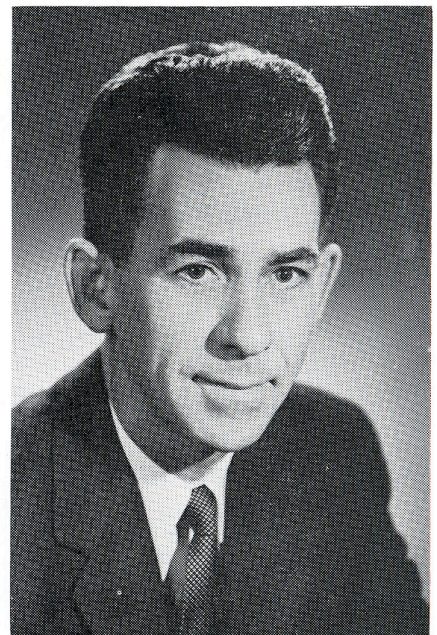
Over 250 choral directors attended the reading session co-sponsored on Thursday evening Jan. 8 in Cleveland by ACDA and OMEA. The session, chairmanned by President Elect John Van Nice, included a reading packet of over 40 selections and 10 directors. Educators Music of Lakewood prepared the music packets and arranged for all the music.

CANDIDATES FOR STATE A.C.D.A. OFFICE STATE PRESIDENT ELECT



RONALD KENREICH

Choral Director, Westerville High School. Graduate of Capital University and Ohio State University. Lutheran Church Choir Director. Has directed industrial choirs and barbershop groups. South Central Region Chairman of Ohio A.C.D.A.



LARRY TAGG

Choral Director, University of Dayton, Graduate of Illinois Western and University of Nebraska. Work at Western Reserve University. High School, Church Music experience, State adjudicator O.M.E.A. Various publications in articles and choral compositions. Former S.W. Region A.C.D.A. Chairman, State Treasurer Ohio A.C.D.A.

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ATTENTION
Delinquent members will NOT receive
further OHIO ACDA mailings.

Ohio Composers In State Competition

A very successful return of manuscripts was received from Ohio composers applying for the A.C.D.A. Series to be published by World Library Publications in Cincinnati. The state ACDA committee will select several finalists, and submit them to a final committee of directors and publisher. Plans are to have the music in print before the June state convention and present the first performance at that time. Rod Evans in Mansfield is committee chairman.

Berger Featured In Cleveland

A.C.D.A. member Jean Berger appeared at the State OMEA convention in Cleveland on Saturday, Jan. 10. His opera "Pied Piper", commissioned by OMEA, was given its premier performance by the John Adams High School Choir directed by Otta Mae Christy, also an ACDA member. The performance, before an enthusiastic audience, was conducted by the composer.

CONVENTION ITEM

A display of programs done by members during the past year will be erected at the Ashland convention. Send copies of your programs to Larry Tagg, University of Dayton, or bring them with you to the convention. Pictures or other materials also welcome.

OHIO A.C.D.A. NEWS

Official organ of the American Choral Directors Association of Ohio. Mailing address, Avon Lake High School, Avon Lake, Ohio. Vice Pres. Ernest Hisey; Editor. Oct.-Feb.-April.

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LEORA KLOTZ

Vocal Music, Louisville High School. Graduate Mt. Union College and Western Reserve University. A.C.D.A. Composers Committee, Church Music, Ohioana Library Composers award. Has served as officer in various music and education associations.



PATRICIA SCHRAMM

Music teacher Schiel School in Cincinnati. BMS at the Cincinnati Conservatory. ME at University of Cincinnati. Teaches classes at University of Cincinnati. Directs church choir. Accompanist for state and national A.C.D.A. reading sessions and Ohio Honors Choir. South West Region Chairman, A.C.D.A.

Miscellaneous

State Chairman in charge of organizing student chapters in Colleges and High Schools is John Wabrick of Miami.

Pat Schramm is accompanying the reading sessions at the North Central Regional ACDA convention in Chicago, March 20 and 21. She will also be the official Ohio representative.

A big welcome to our new advertisers joining us this issue, Community Calendars, Talk of the Town Photographers, Money Tree of Ohio, and the Eastmoor Concert.

STATE BOARD MEETS

The Ohio ACDA State Board met on Saturday, January 10 at 9:00 A.M. in the Cleveland Sheraton. Items discussed were the the budget, plans for summer convention, the NEWS, Honors Choir procedures, guest director, and communication among board members. Only one board member was absent.

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and Ohio State. Ohio A. C. D. A.
Honors Choir Committee. Served
as contest chairman.

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Editor's Corner

By Ernest L. Hisey

In an effort to make the NEWS
a real service publication, we hope
to present capsule descriptions of
college choral departments and be-
gin the series next issue. Will
college directors please send me
such a critique of about 150 words.

Response to the ACDA Ohio
Composer Choral series was most
gratifying. The marriage of the
Series to the Ohio Honors Choir
should be most healthy and an in-
teresting feature of the conven-
tion at Ashland College in June.
Remember, convention registration
will be in the next issue.

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Next copy deadline is April 1.
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Choral Conductors — *Technicians or Musicians*

By JOEL R. STEGALL

Mars Hill College, North Carolina

Not long ago a violinist asked me, concerning my choral work, "Are you a 'Shaw man,' 'Wagner man' or a 'Christiansen man?'" His perfectly candid question embarrassingly reveals the quality of choral directors. It points up the malady which afflicts many of us: we are so concerned with techniques and personality that we can be categorized easily on that basis. One wonders if the underlying problem is not that, in many cases, we have placed primary emphasis on a certain technique, leaving music a subordinate role.

One of the most obvious examples is the adoption of a technique of treating the text that makes words more important than music. To put the text above the music is to pervert the choral art. It is to place the poet ahead of the composer. Some will counter this by arguing that in the best choral music, the composer writes to enhance the text. True; but the instrumental composer uses form in a similar fashion. The text furnishes the choral composer with a framework for his musical ideas, just as form provides the instrumental writer with direction for his creativity. Both the instrumental composer and his choral counterpart must write music which transcends the form or the text; otherwise it is not art, but an exercise and, as such, is unworthy of performance. The fact is that after the composer has set music to words, the result is a musical creation which has aesthetic value in its own right, even though the text may have been its inspiration. The further

fact, and even more illustrative of the point, is that while a really bad text can ruin good music, great music may have a text of mediocre literary value.

Another symbol of an improper emphasis may be seen in choral directors who, in evaluating a concert, are very likely to be concerned most over the technique of tone production. Usually the first comment is, "They have a nice sound;" or, "The vowels are too open;" or, "The tone is pushed." It is uncommon to hear comments on the appropriateness of the style of singing as related to the composition. Little wonder! Too many pieces on the typical choral concert sound like every other composition on the program. Frequently, *Palestrina* is sung in the same style as *Bruckner*. Is it any surprise, then, that choral music is sometimes accused of being dull?

In addition to many works lacking authentic stylish distinction, some conductors superimpose their own style on every composition. There are cases where this is true to such an extent that the director can be recognized by listening for certain idiosyncracies in the sound. A few of these peculiarities are: consistently very dark sounds, consistently very bright sounds and extended humming on all m's and n'. How rare the director whose work is revealed in excellent readings of the composer, as opposed to demonstrations of his own technique.

A sign of this unfortunate placement of significance is the way we choral people divide ourselves into

camps supporting some favorite nationally known director or school. There are the Westminster followers, the Christiansen directors, the Shaw enthusiasts, the Wagner disciples and others. This tendency toward personality cults is strong enough that my violinist friend had come to expect most choral directors to be identified with one of these groups. The tragedy is that we often take, as an end in itself, one isolated technique or gimmick that our favorite conductor employs.

Then take a look at the rehearsals of many choirs. One observes conductors painstakingly spending a large portion of their time with diction or a particular type of tone quality and almost no time at all on even a cursory performance analysis of the music. In many places one can observe incorrect notes and rhythms going by over and over while diction is drilled and drilled. This not at all to say that diction and tone quality are unimportant; it is to say that many of us need to re-think our priorities. To work for perfect tone quality or diction to the sacrifice

(Continued on Page 5)

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of correct notes and rhythms is to turn things inside out.

At this point, it should be made abundantly clear that one thing I am not advocating is lack of technique or inattention to the text. What is of concern here is when technique or text takes the place of, or becomes dominant over, music.

But how is the choral conductor to place music first, other than in the obvious sense of having the choir sing the correct notes and rhythms? For a start, the conductor can analyze the music as to structure (form counterpoint, motives, etc.) and for the relationship of music to text, trying to find out what the composer was doing. He can point out the general results of this analysis to the choir, so that they may sing with musical understanding; so that the themes are heard, and so that the essentials of the music will be the matters of first concern.

Next, especially in the case of early works, the director can consider the matter of rhythm notation. Its performance can be greatly different from what the printed score would indicate. Ornaments in early music also call for special consideration.

The choral conductor who would put music first will try to find out just what the composer of a particular period meant when he indicated that his music should be sung in a certain manner, for example, *andante*. Far too often we apply today's meanings to terms of earlier eras; or worse, we ignore score markings and perform by how it happens to "feel" to us.

As concerns tone quality, the serious musician who is conducting a chorus will strive to teach his choir to sing with a quality that will meet the demands of the piece and the period. There is, for instance, perplexity in some circles over the correct tone quality for Renaissance music. Some hold that only a vibrato-less (straight) tone is acceptable. Others say that modern singers, especially amateurs, cannot perform this properly, so why try? But surely a motet by Josquin should not be sung with the type of quality that is demand-

ed by Verdi. Surely the timbre Bruckner requires is different from what Morales intended. And certainly there must be a better solution than to say it's too difficult to do, and so do nothing.

Size of ensemble is another important question for which there is no quick, easy answer. The astute conductor must, however, try to use a size appropriate for the particular composition. Was the *B-Minor Mass* really intended for a huge chorus? If not, then we don't actually hear what Bach wrote when the work is sung by a mammoth choir.

Composers are known to have written for specific types of places and arrangements of singers. If a Renaissance multiple-choir work is to be performed, it must be kept in mind that it was probably meant for the resonant interior of a cathedral and the choirs were almost certainly separated by some distance. To perform such a work with more than one choir on the same stage, perhaps even on the same risers (which of course, amounts only to *divisi* within one choir), is to do an injustice to the

composer, to his music, to the performers, and especially to the audience, for instead of exuberant musical dialogue, they hear a jumbled mish-mash of incoherent sounds. The careful conductor will avoid the atrocity which results from "beating" Renaissance or Romantic music in the same manner as Baroque, or in singing everything *rubato*. This later usually turns out not to be true *rubato*, but merely a fluctuating *accelerando-ritardando* pattern.

Text interpretation will be given a significant role, but never allowed to subjugate music. Diction and tone quality will be given due importance, which is great, but they will relate to the music of a specific composition in accord with the demands of the music. They will not be applied in the same way to every composition. Vocalises, if used, will be pointed to specific musical ends. The conducting pattern will likewise reflect the style of the music, not the conductor's narcissism. The director will learn all he can from other musicians, especially from the prominent con-

(Continued on Page 6)

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OHIO CHORAL EVENTS

- Feb. 14 — O.S.U. Chorus — Verdi Requiem — Vets Mem. — 8:30.
 Feb. 15 — 8 Industrial Chorus — Vets Mem. — Columbus — Wilhousky, Director — 7:30.
 Feb. 15 — St. Matthew Passion, Bach — Univ. of Cincinnati — E. Thomas, Cond.
 Feb. 22 — Univ. of Dayton Choir — L. Tagg (A.C.D.A.) — Theatre — 8:15.
 Feb. 22 — Univ. of Akron — Men's and Women's Glee — W. Nolin — 3:00.
 Mar. 1 — O.S.U. Chorale — M. Casey (A.C.D.A.) — Mershon — 8:00.
 Mar. 6 — Miami Univ. Choraliers — J. Wabrick (A.C.D.A.) — Concert Hall Aud. — 8:00.
 Mar. 8 — Collegium Musicum & Renaissance Consort, Univ. of Cincinnati.
 Mar. 17 — Akron Symphony Chorus, Orchestra, Univ. Singers — 8:30 — Armory.
 Mar. 22-29 — Miami Univ. Men's Glee — J. Wabrick (A.C.D.A.) — Tour of Chicago, Detroit, Western Ohio.
 Mar. 22 — O.S.U. — Beethoven's 9th & Pinkham Commission — Centennial Concert — 8:00.
 April 7 — University Choral Union — E. Thomas, Cond. — Univ. of Cincinnati.
 April 12 — Univ. of Akron — Choral Ensemble — J. MacDonald — St. Johns Episcopal Cuyahoga Falls.
 April 12 — Univ. of Dayton Choir — Theatre — 8:15.
 April 17-22 — Miami Univ. Choraliers — John Wabrick (A.C.D.A.) Tour to Painesville, Aurora, Cleveland, Akron.
 May 2-3 — "Solomon" Handel oratorio — Avon Lake High School.
 May 5 — Renaissance Consort, C. Callahan, Cond. — Univ. of Cincinnati.

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Wilhousky In Columbus

Peter Wilhousky gave a talk on "Choral Problems" Feb. 14 at Battelle Auditorium. He had a rehearsal with the industrial choruses of Columbus at 2:30 P.M. the same day and place. The concert was held Feb. 15 at Veterans' Memorial Auditorium. The concert was made up of each choir performing 1 or 2 numbers and ending with combined choruses directed by Dr. Wilhousky. OMEA cooperated in the event.

(Continued from Page 5)
 ductors of our day, but he will guard against discipleship of the sort that confuses methods with music. Of greatest importance, he will learn as much as he can about how the composer would want his music to sound, and will exert himself primarily to that end. And finally, he will become increasingly aware of the totality of the musical art, so that, in judging a choral performance, his own or someone else's, he will know that "too open" vowels are of little ultimate consequence.

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