

# OCD A NEWS

## BULLETIN OF THE OHIO CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 1996

### FROM THE OCDA PRESIDENT

Happy New Year! As I write, I find myself reflecting on performances and auditions heard in the year just past, and on opportunities awaiting ACDA members in the year ahead.

Our choir's sound always seems to reflect our attitudes and personalities, doesn't it? Performances led by the most competent musicians can sound brittle, phoney, or perfunctory when the motivation seems eschew, when sincerity is missing, when the humanness is forgotten, when only technique is showing. Regardless of the age of the singers, the simplest or most profound poetic messages can sound like lies if the poetry isn't brought to life with honest expression. What was the advice James Cagney gave to the young actor? "Make your entrance, look the other fellow in the eye, and tell the truth."

The investment many of you are making in teaching music reading in your school, church, and community programs is making a difference. The several hundred students (majors and non-majors) who have auditioned for me over the last 2-3 years have been more competent sight readers. Those whose teachers had used numbers OR syllables (it didn't matter which)

were more successful than those who sang only on a neutral syllable. (Those using "la" rarely sang with a secure sense of pitch relationships.) As a result of your work, singers are becoming more musically literate and loving it. Ever onward!

We all thirst for experiences that refresh our teaching and renew our spirits. I hope you won't miss opportunities for both at the upcoming ACDA Central Division Convention at the Omni-Netherland Hotel in Cincinnati. Among the many and diverse offerings, you will have opportuni-

ties to hear the following: first-rate choirs from Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan; diverse performances by Anonymous 4 and the Mats Nilssons Vokalensemble from Sweden; lectures on choral tone, gospel singing, vocal jazz, technology, and more; plus a Church Music Festival, the Central Division Children's Honor Choir (Angela Broeker, conductor), and the All-Ohio Collegiate Honor Choir (Charlene Archibeque, conductor). Come listen and learn!

—Peter Jarjisian

### OCDA/ACDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Wednesday-Saturday, February 28-March 2, 1996**  
ACDA Central Division Convention in Cincinnati

**Sunday-Wednesday, July 7-10, 1996**

OCDA Summer Conference at Wright State University, Hank Dahlman, host. Learn from keynote clinicians Henry Leck and James Jordan. Hear the Kettering Children's Chorus premier a work by John Carter. Enjoy performances by professional ensembles *MUSICA* and *COVENTRY GREEN*.

**March 5-8, 1997**

National ACDA Convention, San Diego, California

**February 11-14, 1998**

Central Division Convention, Detroit, Michigan

## POST-HOLIDAY REFLECTIONS AND PLANNING

*'Tis winter now: the fallen snow  
Has left the heav'ns all coldly clear.  
Through leafless boughs the sharp  
winds blow.  
And all the earth lies dead and drear.*

I think Samuel Longfellow's poem pretty well sums it up! 'Tis also the time of year when one feels an incredible emotional letdown following the excitement, exhilaration, and exhaustion of the holidays.

I did have one musical holiday surprise which spoke very strongly to me. On December 18, I made a mad dash to the Columbus City Center for some Christmas shopping. As I entered I could hear very nice singing coming from the center of the mall. As I got closer, I saw that all 10 or 12 men in the group of about 30 singers were wearing yarmulkes. For about 45 minutes, I enjoyed hearing a wide variety of Chanukah music, from the very simplest of children's songs to more sophisticated liturgical settings. There, amidst the glittering symbols of commercial Christmas glitz, I heard the voice of a community rarely heard outside the Synagogue. The group, Koleinu, was made up of members from the wider Jewish community including orthodox, conservative, and reformed congregations—something of a miracle in itself. I was grateful that they had shared a bit of holiday "craziness" with the rest of us. Having combined forces with three other church choirs for an October festival, I began to think how exciting it would be to do a joint concert with Koleinu! Are there similar and/or different groups in your community with whom you could create something larger than either could produce alone?

I would like to recommend the following SATB octavos for your post-Easter consideration.

*In Thee Is Gladness, (In Dir Ist Freude, Gastolde)*, setting by Daniel Kallman.  
Needs competent organist to accom-

pany medium easy choral parts. Includes canon of whistling and "la, la, la." Morningstar Publications, MSM-50-9058.

*One Faith, One Hope, One Lord.* Craig Courtney's setting, based on Ephesians 4:4-6, 13 is one you can't quit singing. Set for either organ and solo trumpet, or brass quintet, this is a great festival piece. Sacred Music Press S-462.

*Come Sunday.* Duke Ellington's classic, included in many new hymnals, has been artfully and faithfully set by Alice Parker. Effectively gives choirs a taste of jazz in worship. Piano accompaniment with mezzo solo. Close harmony. G. Schirmer HL50481495.

As you work toward Lent and Easter and look forward to seeing flowers and green things again, I remind you of the final stanza of Longfellow's poem:

*O God! who giv'st the winter's cold,  
As well as summer's joyous rays,  
Us warmly in thy love enfold,  
And keep us through life's wintry  
days.*

*Joel Mathias, author of this article, is Director of Music at Broad Street Presbyterian Church in Columbus and OCDA Repertoire and Standards Chair for Music and Worship.*

## OCDA SEEKS ADVERTISING EDITOR

OCDA is searching for an OCDA NEWS Advertising Editor who would:

- Work to increase the advertising base for OCDA NEWS.
- Attend tri-annual OCDA Board meetings
- Join collective efforts to increase the viability of our state organization.
- Share in the satisfaction accompanying organizational leadership.

Interested persons should submit a letter detailing relevant interests and experiences to:  
Peter Jarjisian, OCDA President  
P. O. Box 1260  
Athens, Ohio 45701

## Educator's Music

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## TUNING UP YOUR SINGERS

General music teachers: during group singing activities do you and your students really know which children are singing in tune and which ones are fumbling along in that aural desert of half speaking and half droning? Here is a technique to help you, your students, and their classmates become aware if the child is singing in tune.

Going from class to class, I use a mini-cassette tape recorder to enliven children's aural perception. In some classes, I tape each child individually, moving quickly from one to the other using a variety of aural examples. In other classes, all sing together while I move from individual to individual holding the tape recorder close to children's mouths.

With younger children, I use many variations on the familiar "yoo-hoo" (sol-mi) chant, singing, for example, "what is your name" and asking the child to sing back "my name is Johnny." I also use fragments from familiar or new songs in their repertoire (for example, the first phrase of "Over the River and Through the Woods" or "Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly").

With older children, I use longer or more challenging fragments. As much as possible, children should have the opportunity to hear themselves individually during each class session. Many children merely sing along with recorded music at home, never actually hearing their own unaccompanied singing.

I try to keep ranges very high as I strongly believe that 99% of our children can develop wonderful head tone—and the sooner the better. The best chance to develop in-tune singing comes with children up through fourth grade. If children are unaccustomed to these procedures in the younger grades, they become more set in their ways and are more easily embarrassed about experimenting with vocal techniques which encourage head

tone development. If these techniques are familiar to them, older children have no problem volunteering as often as do the younger ones.

The process of tape recording seems to be a key to success. In our electronic age, children are fascinated with hearing themselves during the playback. In some classes, I play back the entire taping session (3-4 minutes), while in other classes we listen to only a few student examples. This procedure can become old if done exactly the same way each time.

You should see the hands fly up when I head toward the tape recorder, ask for volunteers, and model a melodic fragment for them! Sometimes they want to try and try again because they hear that they are not quite on pitch and want to experiment vocally. They are more courageous than most adults! As individuals improve, the cheers go up as children support their classmates' progress. If melodic fragments are fun, and if the experience is presented as a game, their interest is heightened even more fully.

A variation on this technique is to send individual children into the hall to tape their melodic fragment. This works well if they are old enough to operate the tape recorder without erasing previous tapings, and if they are given a source like a tone bell for the initial pitch. Otherwise, they slip too easily into that "basement range." A disadvantage of taping outside the classroom is that other students lose the opportunity to hear others match pitches, which is excellent for their aural development.

Listening to tapes after class, I learn even more than when I listened to them "live." At this point, I make notes in my class register to record students' progress.

This taping procedure is helpful in keeping track of fourth graders on their recorders. When they play "en masse," it is difficult to know who really is playing the correct notes. Individually, they go into the hall or a quiet spot in the building, and tape a current recorder song. Seeing the children twice a week for 40 minute classes, it takes three to four weeks to

tape record the entire class. This procedure holds children individually accountable for their musical output, and encourages them to practice and improve.

One of the greatest benefits of this tape recording technique is the self-esteem that develops as children take pride in their growth and progress. Happy taping!

—Sandra B. Brown

*Sandra B. Brown is Director of the Ashland Symphony Youth Chorus, Music Specialist K-6 for the Ashland City Schools, and OCDA Repertoire and Standards Chair for Children's Choirs.*

## "MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL . . ."

Let's see, how will I conduct that? Will that be *sub-divided* there? Or should the term just be *divided*? Can you *sub-divide* something if you haven't yet *divided* it? Hmm, is it the *beat* we're dividing, or is it perhaps the *measure* and then the *beat*? But wait, does the whole *idea of beat* produce musical results? Is the thought of *pulse* a better concept? Oh, you like the term *ictus* better? Now with that, does the arm fall *into* the ictus or spring *out* of it? Should my hand be directly in front of my solar plexis or to the right? Does anybody in my choir care? Does anybody really follow me anyway? But, if they did *follow* me, would that mean they were *behind* me? What do the people behind me see? Are my pants too short? Is my skirt too tailored? Do I stick my elbows out to the sides? Do I *bounce* up and down on every *beat*, or *pulse*, or whatever? I hope I don't look like I'm going to take off? Oh brother, I really am going to videotape myself tomorrow.

—Submitted by Peter Jarjisan

*OCDA NEWS*, the official publication of the Ohio Choral Directors Association, is published three times a year from Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and is distributed without charge to members of the Association as well as to selected members and officers of the American Choral Directors Association.

ACDA reserves the right to edit any application for appearance and to edit all materials proposed for distribution.

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## 3,000 VOICES WILL CELEBRATE CHORAL MUSIC

More than 3,000 voices will be raised in song May 18-19 when **SING CINCINNATI!**, a festival highlighting popular choral music, makes its debut during the Cincinnati Arts Festival. Featured groups will include the renowned a cappella group Rockapella, the Georgia Sea Island Singers, the Canton Spirituals, and more than 30 local and regional children's choirs, gospel choirs, barbershop ensembles, show choirs, and university glee clubs.

Seven downtown venues will house daytime concerts that will complement May Festival. A \$5 festival pass allows entry into all performances except Rockapella; a Rockapella ticket includes admission to all performances. Artistic director David Bell hopes for 14,000 visitors in this initial year, and envisions future festivals involving over 5,000 singers. Call 513-744-8820 for additional information.

## ALICE PARKER WORKSHOP FEBRUARY 23-25, 1996 ATHENS, OHIO

### Saturday, February 24

Church of the Good Shepherd, 64 University Terrace

10:00 A.M.    Reading Session  
                  (\$15.00 Registration)

1:00 P.M.     The Spirit Sings:  
                  Hymns and Congregational Singing

### Sunday, February 25

First United Methodist Church, 2 South College Street

8:00 P.M. CONCERT

Ohio University Singers and Choral Union,  
Alice Parker and Peter Jarjisian, conductors

For information on open rehearsals and lectures,  
call: 614-593-4231

Sponsored by the Ohio University School of Music,  
Southeastern Chapter American Guild of Organists,  
and The Church of the Good Shepherd, Athens, Ohio.

# CHORAL PERFORMANCES ACROSS THE BUCKEYE STATE

## January 27

Miami University High School Choral Workshop, Rodney Eichenberger, guest conductor. Hall Auditorium, 9:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

## February 6

Ohio State University Chorale, Hilary Apfelstadt, conductor, Weigel Hall, 8:00 P.M.

## February 9 and 10

*Beethoven: Symphony #9*, Miami University Choir and Orchestra, Jacob Chi, conductor, Hall Auditorium, 8:00 P.M.

## February 10

High School Male Chorus Workshop, James Gallagher and Frank Bianchi, clinicians. The OSU Men's Glee Club, Medina High School Men's Chorus. Medina High School, 7:30 P.M.

## February 12

Kinderchor at Otterbein College, Chamber Choir, Amy Chivington, conductor, Central College Presbyterian Church, Westerville, 7:30 P.M.

## FEBRUARY 14

*Valentine's Rendezvous*, The Summit Choral Society, Frank S. Jacobs, artistic director. O'Neil House, Akron, 8:00 P.M.

## February 16-19

Winter Tour, Miami University Choraliers, Clayton Parr, conductor. Pittsburgh, Washington D. C.

## February 18

*Winter Pops Concert*, All-Ohio Youth Choir, Coshocton Community Choir, Roscoe Brass and Percussion, Charles R. Snyder and Christopher L. McManus, conductors. Coshocton High School, 3:00 P.M. 614-622-3960.

## February 23-25

Alice Parker Workshop, Ohio University School of Music. See Page 4 for details.

## February 24

Ohio State University Men's Glee Club, James Gallagher, conductor. Weigel Hall, 8:00 P.M.

## February 25

Wright State University Gospel Chorus, Brenda Ellis, conductor. 4:00 P.M.

Ohio University Singers and Choral Union. Copland, *In the Beginning*; Parker, *The Hollering Sun*. Alice Parker and Peter Jarjisian, conductors, First United Methodist Church, Athens, 8:00 P.M.

## February 26

Ohio State University Chorale and Women's Glee Club, Hilary Apfelstadt, conductor, Weigel Hall, 8:00 P.M.

## February 27

Ohio State University Symphonic Choir, James Gallagher, conductor, Weigel Hall, OSU, 8:00 P.M.

## February 29

64th Lake Erie League Choral Festival. Cleveland Heights, Garfield Heights, Lakewood, Mentor, Normandy, Parma, Shaker Heights, Shaw, Valley Forge, Warrensville Heights High Schools. Dr. Keith Hampton, guest conductor. Normandy High School, Parma, 7:30 P.M.

## March 2

Miami University Men's Glee Club, Clayton Parr, conductor, with the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club, Hall Auditorium, 8:00 P.M.

*Lancaster Chorale Sings R & B*, Robert Trocchia, artistic director. Renaissance and Baroque music with the Lancaster-Fairfield Youth Choir. St. Mary Church, Lancaster, 8:00 P.M. 614-687-5855.

## March 3

*All-American Concert*, The Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati, Earl Rivers, conductor. Copland, Barber, Gershwin, Sond-

heim, and Bernstein. Premiere of Jeffrey Van's "From the Shadows." Omni Netherland Plaza, Cincinnati, 3:00 P.M.

The Cecilian Singers of Columbus, James Myers, conductor, St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church, Columbus, 3:00 P.M.

Ohio University Women's Chorale, Peter Jarjisian, conductor. Templeton-Blackburn Auditorium, Athens, 8:00 P.M.

## March 5

OSU University Chorus, David Monsieur, conductor, Weigel Hall, 8:00 P.M.

## March 6

The Concordia College Choir, Moorhead, Minnesota. René Clausen, conductor. Bay Presbyterian Church, Bay Village, 7:30 P.M. 216-871-3110.

The Singing Men of Ohio, Templeton-Blackburn Auditorium, Athens, 8:00 P.M.

## March 8

Wright State University Chorus, James Tipps, conductor, 8:00 P.M.

## March 9

Miami University Men's Glee Club, Clayton Parr, conductor, at IMC National Seminar, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

*Gourmet Buffet of Choral Masterworks*, Civic Chorale, Collegiate Chorale, Renaissance Singers, LCCC Vocal Jazz Singers of Lorain County Community College, Nancy Davis, conductor. Music of Berger, Brahms, Duruflé, Haydn, Vivaldi, and Bach. Lorain County Community College, 8:00 P.M.

Children's Choir Festival, The Kettering Children's Choir and Springfield Lyric Children's Choir, Mary Lynn Bergsten and Natalie DeHorn, conductors, Columbus, 4:00 P.M.

## CHORAL PERFORMANCES ACROSS THE BUCKEYE STATE

### March 10

Wright State Men's Chorale, James Tipps, conductor. Wright State Women's Chorale and Choral Union, Hank Dahlman, conductor. Thompson *Frostiana* and Mozart *Vespers*, 3:00 P.M.

### March 15-17

*Tetelestai (It Is Finished)*, A Greek Passion Play at Bay Presbyterian Church, Bay Village. March 15/16, 7:30 P.M.; March 17, 3:00 P.M.

### March 17

Kinderchor at Otterbein College, Chamber Choir, Amy Chivington, conductor, Blessed Sacrament Church, Toledo, 4:30 P.M.

### March 22

The Hiram College Choir, Ronald Morgan, conductor, and the Hiram Men's Chorus, Tina Dreisbach, conductor. Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Bach motet *Lobe den Herrn, alle Heiden*, works by Copland. Hiram Christian Church, 8:00 P.M.

### March 26

The Shaker Heights High School A cappella Choir and Orchestra, Ronald Morgan, conductor. Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Haydn's *Creation*, Part I. Shaker Middle School, 7:30 P.M.

### March 29

*Monteverdi 1610 Vespers and Faure Requiem*, The Summit Choral Society, Frank S. Jacobs, artistic director. St. Bernard's Church, Akron, 8:00 P.M.

### March 31

*A Psalm Sunday Concert*, Bay Presbyterian Church, Rick Fortney, conductor. 7 choral works on the Beatitudes; the Fetteke/Kirkland musical "God With Us." Bay Presbyterian Church, Bay Village, 7:30 P.M.

### March 31

The Broadstreet Choir, Joel A. Mathias, conductor. Mozart's *Requiem*. Broad Street Presbyterian Church, Columbus, 4:00 P.M.

### April 2

Handel's *Messiah*. Miami University Collegiate Chorale and Chamber Singers, William Bausano, conductor, Hall Auditorium. 8:00 P.M.

### April 12

*Spring Concert*, Miami University Choraliers, Clayton Parr, conductor, Hall Auditorium, 8:00 P.M.

The Denison Singers, William Osborne, conductor, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Pemberville, 7:30 P.M.

### April 12 and 13

*An Elizabethan Tea*, The Hiram College Madrigal Ensemble and Recorder Consorte, Damaris Peters Pike, conductor. Pendleton Gardens, Hiram College, 4:30 P.M.

### April 13

*Spring Concert*, Ashland Symphony Youth Chorus, Sandra B. Brown, conductor. 1:30 P.M.

The Denison Singers, William Osborne, conductor, St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Monroe MI, 8:00 P.M.

### April 14

*Celebration of the Children*, Kettering Children's Choir, Mary Lynne Bergsten and Natalie DeHorn, conductors. With Dayton Philharmonic Junior Strings, Ballet de Jeunesse, Dayton Junior Harp Ensemble, South Dayton Suzuki Strings. Fairhaven Church, Centerville, 3:00 P.M.

The Denison Singers, William Osborne, conductor, Forest Hill Church, Cleveland Heights, 7:30 P.M.

### April 17

The Denison Singers, William Osborne, conductor. Works by Byrd, Palestrina, Brahms, Bennett, Bush, Locklair, MacDowell, Lang, and Hagemann. Burke Recital Hall, Granville, 8:00 P.M.

### April 18

The Copenhagen Boy Choir, Ebbe Monk, conductor and Kinderchor at Otterbein College, Amy Chivington, conductor, Worthington Christian Church, 7:30 P.M.

### April 19

Ashland Symphony Youth Chorus, Sandra B. Brown, conductor, with the Ashland Symphony Chorus, 8:00 P.M.

### April 19-20

All-Ohio Boychoir Festival hosted by the Dayton Boys Choir, Daniel Greene, artistic director. Scott Franklin, massed choir director. April 20 Concert, 7:30 P.M. Call Cynthia Douglas: 513-837-3647.

### April 20

*Voices in the Groves*, Show Choir Competition. Call Peg Weber: 614-276-1235.

### April 21

Kinderchor at Otterbein College, Cadet Choir, Emily DePaul, conductor, Concert and Chamber Choirs, Amy Chivington, conductor, Battelle Fine Arts Center, Otterbein College, 3:00 and 7:00 P.M.

### April 26 and 27

Spring Concert, Miami University Men's Glee Club, Clayton Parr, conductor, Hall Auditorium, 8:00 P.M.

### April 27

*Women's Choir Festival*, Ohio State University, Bowling Green State University, Grove City, Bexley, and Worthington-Kilbourne High Schools. Hilary Apfelstadt, Mark Munson, Peg Weber, Lora Moore, and Larry Griffin, conductors, Bexley High School, 7:30 P.M.

# CHORAL PERFORMANCES ACROSS THE BUCKEYE STATE

## April 28

25th Anniversary Spring Concert and Alumni Reunion. Coshocton Community Choir and Coshocton Children's Choir, Charles R. Snyder, conductor. Coshocton High School, 3:00 and 7:30 P.M. 614-622-3960.

Ohio State University Women's Glee Club, Hilary Apfelstadt, conductor, and Bowling Green State University Women's Chorus, Mark Munson, conductor at Worthington United Methodist Church, 3:00 P.M.

## April 29

*Spring Concert*, Miami University-Oxford Choral Union, Clayton Parr, conductor, Hall Auditorium 8:00 P.M.

## April 30

Kinderchor at Otterbein College, Chamber Choir, Amy Chivington, conductor, Central Trinity United Methodist Church, Zanesville, 7:30 P.M.

## May 3 - 5

*Promise Concert*, The 150-voice Promise Choir, Marcia Stuckert, conductor, Bay Presbyterian Church, Bay Village, 7:30 P.M.

## May 5

The Kettering Children's Choir, Mary Lynn Bergsten and Natalie DeHorn, conductors. First Lutheran Church, Dayton, 4:00 P.M.

## May 7

Ohio State University Symphonic Choir, James Gallagher, conductor, Weigel Hall, 8:00 P.M.

## May 10-12

The Kettering Children's Choir, Mary Lynn Bergsten and Natalie DeHorn, conductors, at the Great Lakes Children's Choir Festival, Chicago.

## May 11

Ohio State University Men's Glee Club,

James Gallagher, conductor, Weigel Hall, 8:00 P.M.

## May 12

Ohio State University Women's Glee Club, Dr. Hilary Apfelstadt, conductor, Weigel Hall, 3:00 P.M.

## May 15

Ohio State University Chorale, Dr. Hilary Apfelstadt, conductor, Weigel Hall, 8:00 P.M.

## May 16 - May 27

Miami University Collegiate Chorale and Chamber Singers European Tour, William Bausano, conductor. Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, France.

## May 17

Wright State University Chorus and Men's Chorale, James Tipps, conductor, and WSU Women's Chorale, Hank Dahlman, conductor. 8:00 P.M.

## May 18

52nd Annual Spring Concert, The Dayton Boys Choir, Daniel B. Greene, artistic director. Dayton Convention Center Auditorium, 7:30 P.M. 513-837-3647.

*Sounds of Spring*, Summit Children's Choirs and Summit Youth Choir, Frank S. Jacobs, conductor. Coventry Conservatory of Music, Akron, 7:30 P.M.

## May 19

*Spring Showcase of Choirs*, Riverside Children's Choirs, Sevilla B. Morse, Marjorie Hildebrandt, and Marcia Katzman, conductors. Rocky River United Methodist Church, 3:00 P.M.

*A Choral Collage*, Ohio State University, Weigel Hall, 8:00 P.M.

The Cecilian Singers of Columbus, James Myers, conductor, Church of the Messiah United Methodist Church, Westerville, 3:00 P.M.

## May 19

Kinderchor at Otterbein College, Concert Choir, Amy Chivington, conductor, Aronoff Center, Cincinnati, 3:00 P.M.

## May 22

The OSU University Chorus, David Monseur, conductor, Weigel Hall, 8:00 P.M.

## May 24-27

Spring Concert Tour, The Kettering Children's Choir, Mary Lynn Bergsten and Natalie DeHorn, conductors, Philadelphia.

## May 28

Findlay High School Choirs in Concert, FHS Heminger Auditorium, 7:30 P.M.

## May 29

Spring Concert, The Kettering Children's Choir, Mary Lynn Bergsten and Natalie DeHorn, conductors. Commissioned work *The Concert* by John Carter, Frazee Pavilion, Kettering, 7:00 P.M.

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Findlay High School Choirs in Concert, FHS Heminger Auditorium, 7:30 P.M.

## May 29

Spring Concert, The Kettering Children's Choir, Mary Lynn Bergsten and Natalie DeHorn, conductors. Commissioned work *The Concert* by John Carter, Frazee Pavilion, Kettering, 7:00 P.M.

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## 1996 QUEEN CITY CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

•**Thomas Moore, author of *Care of the Soul*.**

Other best-selling books include *Soul Mates*, *Rituals of the Imagination*, and *Meditations: On The Monk Who Dwells in Daily Life*. Founder of the Institute for the Study of Imagination.

•**Anonymous 4**

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•**Mats Nilssons Vokalensemble**

Sweden's Mats Nilssons Vokalensemble has won first prize at the international choir competition in Gorizia, Italy, and ultimately won the 1994 European Grand Prix for choirs.

•**All-Ohio Collegiate Honor Choir, Charlene Archibeque, conductor.** Over 40 states and six Canadian provinces have invited Dr. Archibeque to conduct all-state and festival

choirs, and her workshops and clinics have been attended by thousands of choral directors nationally and internationally.

•**Central Division Children's Honors Choir, Angela Broeker, conductor.** Ms. Broeker is Director of Choral Activities at Westminster College (PA). She has served as guest conductor and clinician at national conventions of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and the Organization of American Kodaly Educators.

•**Performances** by the Cincinnati May Festival Chorus and Cincinnati Symphony, Gold Company from Western Michigan University, a Madrigal Dinner featuring the Wright State University Madrigal Singers, and a Church Music Festival.

•**Interest sessions:** developing tone in the adolescent female voice; gospel singing and vocal health; vocal jazz styles; physical stress and the conductor, and technology for the choral director.

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## AN ALTO IN LIFE: A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

As I walk into choir class, my eyes scan the room. My teacher is at the piano, sorting through stacks of music and humming quietly to herself. I see the basses, standing macho and proud, chins dropped as low as the notes they hope to hit. The tenors are arching their eyebrows and stretching their throats; they would do anything to hit their girlishly high pitches. As I glance beyond the tenors, I notice the sopranos, imperious and self-absorbed, cautiously sipping their bottled water and adjusting the maroon scarves that protect their fragile vocal cords from the violent abuse of the school's heating system. There is one other group, huddled together off to the side of the room. They're chatting quietly, unaffected by the room's bustle, patiently waiting for class to begin. That is my group—we are the altos.

I love being an alto, and I will always be an alto. With our low range, we give a piece of music its depth and complexity, just as roots give a beautiful flower support and nourishment. Our counterparts, the sopranos, sing the melody. Both sections are part of the same larger group, the choir, but our roles within this classroom society are quite different.

Class begins, and we snap to attention. Throats are cleared one last time as I hear warm-up scales played loudly and clearly by my teacher. Being a soprano means singing the high parts, and as the scales go higher and higher, the sopranos' voices become more and more strident and overbearing. Usually singing the high parts means singing the melodies, those obvious and undisguised themes which are terribly easy to pick out. While melody is the simple, accessible path, harmony is the challenging course, filled with hurdles to be vaulted over and obstacles to be overcome. Altos like this latter road. We struggle to become the foundation of the group's sound. We must listen, not to the piano, as the sopranos do, but to each other so we can create a harmony that blends. Like the butter, eggs, and flour of a cake, altos

contribute to the main ingredients of a song, while the sopranos merely provide the icing.

While listening to the sopranos sing their soaring scales, I am reminded of a squawking parrot. Our low alto tone is more like the purr of a cat. Sopranos are capable of breaking glass with their high, piercing sounds. Their notes are shrill and often nasal, like a siren screaming a warning. An alto's tones are warm and welcoming. The notes are full and strong, yet they can also be gentle, like a mother's cooing lullaby as she rocks her baby to sleep.

As we begin rehearsing our music, I notice that the sopranos are always conspicuous. They sing the part that everyone remembers; during the intermissions of a concert or musical, no one stands in the candy line humming the harmony. The altos are the unsung heroes. Very few people appreciate our accomplishments or acknowledge our essential role. Like a flashy, sequined evening dress at a party, the sopranos demand attention. But no one every comments on the lining of the dress that makes it lay just so, or the various undergarments that shape the bejeweled gown. People just notice the surface.

And sopranos expect to get noticed. They just love the spotlight. A soprano feels that every performance is her individual chance to shine. When my teacher pauses during rehearsal to ask the sopranos to quiet down to help the choir's balance, they appear proud to have been heard, and give each other congratulatory glances. Altos know that a functional unit is more effective than ten or fifteen prima donnas all trying to out-do the others. Even the biggest star needs a strong supporting cast. To be this strong, the altos know they must constantly toil. As we practice we cup hands behind ears to focus on our part, concentrate on our teacher, and do whatever possible to improve our sound. On the other hand, sopranos stand around, bored and apathetic, having easily learned their part. An alto's hard work is not for the spotlight, but for self-improvement.

So being an alto is about much more than just vocal range. I may never be able

to shatter glass, but I am able to understand the meaning of my role. Some people don't need to be dramatic to be effective. I may not be able to hit a double high-C, but I give a song depth and intricacies to make it a true work of art. Some people are not content to deal only with the surface. I may not get to sing the melody, but I am willing to sacrifice my recognition for the sake of the choir as a whole. Some people don't have to bask in the spotlight to be happy. As the bell rings, the basses congratulate each other with slaps on the back and high-fives. The tenors run either to lunch or to grab a book to cram for a late afternoon test. The sopranos re-wrap their delicate throats while humming their latest arias and then flounce out of the room. Finally, the altos amble out as a group, having gone all class period without being specifically noticed. But I am too proud of my group to care. I AM AN ALTO!

—Caitlin Ryan

*Caitlin Ryan is a student at Bexley High School. This essay was submitted by her choral director Lora Moore, who serves as Repertoire and Standards Chair for High School Music.*

### ARTS IN CRISIS: VOICE YOUR CONCERN

- Mail the letter on Page 10 to your senators to combat threatened cut-backs in arts funding.
- For heightened impact, personalize your own letter or make a direct phone call to your representatives.
- At the ACDA National Leadership Conference, it was stated that legislators assume that every registered opinion represents 150 more people with the same conviction. One voice does make a difference!

The Honorable John H. Glenn, Jr.  
503 Hart Building  
Washington, D. C. 20510  
202-224-3353

The Honorable Mike DeWine  
140 Russell Senate Building  
Washington, D. C. 20510  
202-224-2315

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_:

As the recent Leadership Conference of the American Choral Directors Association\*, the members expressed grave concern over recent actions taken and/or being considered by our national government to negate progress toward providing goals and standards for a viable arts education for all students in our schools. Specific concern was expressed regarding the following:

- Elimination or reduction of funding for Public Broadcasting
- Elimination or reduction of funding for the National Endowment for the Arts
- Elimination or reduction of funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities
- Elimination or reduction of funding for Goals 2000: Educate America Act
- Elimination or reduction of funding for the National Standards for Arts Education

In expression of our mutual concern that all children receive an adequate education in the arts, the leadership moved to adopt the following resolution on August 12, 1995.

*Whereas the government of the United States of America has adopted Goals 2000: Educate America Act; and*

*Whereas the government of the United States of America has adopted the National Standards for Arts Education;*

*Therefore, be it resolved that the American Choral Directors Association in defense of the children of the United States recommends that funding not be reduced for Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the National Standards for Arts Education, Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, or the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

As a member of the over 18,000-member American Choral Directors Association, I commend you in your attempt to balance the budget, but am concerned that the degradation of the education of our children not be an outcome of your action. Thank you for acting on behalf of the children of the United States!

Sincerely yours,

\*An associated organization of the Music Educators National Conference

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