



BULLETIN OF THE OHIO CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT



"I wonder if I am getting too comfortable here," was something that I often thought about all of those years ago. I was coming to the end of my seventh year of public school teaching in rural, western Pennsylvania and was concerned about professional growth. Don't get me wrong – those were good years! It was enjoyable to work with the junior and senior high school students, there was a good group of people in the church choir, singing with Robert Page in the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh provided a weekly fix of high-level music making, and there were plenty of friends around. As it is with most of us in the choral world these days, it was a busy time, but it really was quite comfortable.

So out of the comfort zone to a new teaching position I went, and soon after that, back to graduate school. Those transitional years provided many challenges and opportunities for professional growth, even though at times I longed to be back in my comfort zone.

Well, here it is sixteen years later, and after a decade and a half of working in academia, I have taken another leap out of my comfort zone. Because a large part of my work this year in Sweden is with teenagers, it did not take me long to remember what challenges go along with being the new choral teacher at a high school. Then there is that bicycle ride to the train stop every morning at 6:30 – rain, shine, or snow! Despite these unforeseen challenges, the adventure is proving to be culturally enriching for the entire family. I also believe that I am growing professionally as I learn more and more about choral music in this society.

So what about you? When was the last time that you stepped out of *your* comfort zone to realize some professional growth? Now, I am not suggesting that one must take a new job, work on another university degree, or move an entire family abroad to improve one's pedagogical or conducting skills. I would challenge you though, to consider how many years that you have been doing the same job, and for how many of those years you have done it more or less in the same way.

Maybe you really "have it down" by now, but what are your sources of fresh ideas? Perhaps it is time to sing in that community chorus or to take some voice lessons again. How about that German class at the local university to improve your language skills? Just how many choral concerts do you attend each year as a member of the audience? Wouldn't a week of eurhythmics during the summer provide some real stimulation? Of course you won't want to miss our OCDA summer conference where we will sing together and learn from outstanding clinicians!

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Winter 2006
Volume 26, Issue 2

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OCDA Summer Conference 2006

June 19-21

Otterbein College
Westerville, OH

any questions contact:
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OCDA Conference Committee Chair
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(740) 376-4689

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OCDA SUMMER CONFERENCE: JUNE 19-21, 2006

by Dan Monek, Chair, Summer Conference Committee

Mark your calendars now for the 2006 OCDA Summer conference to be held June 19-21, at Otterbein College in Westerville, OH. With an exciting lineup of some of the world's finest choral leaders coming to our own backyard, the chance to renew old acquaintances and form new ones with colleagues from across the state, and the opportunity to delve deeper into the wonderful field of chorale music; this is certainly a summer event you will not want to miss!

Headlining the conference are three wonderful clinicians. **Bob Chilcott** is one of the most active composers and choral conductors in the world today. He has been involved in choral music most of his life - he was a chorister in the choir of King's College, Cambridge and between 1985 and 1997 was a member of the British vocal group The King's Singers. He has been a full-time composer since 1997. Over the last eight years, he has poured his energy into choral composition, conducting, and promoting choral singing throughout the world. As a conductor he has worked extensively with choirs and festivals throughout the world and was the first non-American conductor to conduct a National Honor Choir for the American Choral Directors Association. **Ann Howard Jones** is the Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Boston University. Recognized for both her expertise in conducting technique, choral and vocal pedagogy, rehearsal procedures and performance practice and as a conductor, Dr. Jones was Assistant Conductor for Choruses with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra from 1984-1998, where she was closely associated with the late Robert Shaw. A Boston Globe review called Jones "a superb chorus trainer; for years she was a protégé and colleague of one of the great figures in the history of American choral music, Robert Shaw. Others copied all of Shaw's tricks of the trade, which in hands other than his can sound like mannerisms; Jones caught his more essential quality and brings a Shaw-like evangelical zeal to everything she does." **Emily Ellsworth**, who will also be serving as the director of this year's honor choir, has been Artistic Director of the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus since 1996. She is also the editor of the newly created Opera Workshop series for Boosey and Hawkes Publishing and has served on the music faculty of Doreen Rao's Choral Music Experience Institute for Choral Teacher Education since 1988.

Be on the lookout for even more information regarding the conference as we finalize local presenters and performing groups. Registration brochures will be mailed in April. So save the dates, tell a friend, and come prepared for several engaging and invigorating days in Westerville. My thanks to Gayle Walker, our outgoing conference coordinator for all of the wonderful work she has done. While it may be daunting to follow in her footsteps, the job has been made easier by her tremendous attention to detail. If you have any questions about the 2006 conference, please feel free to contact me at monekd@marietta.edu or (740) 374-6294.

DID YOU KNOW ... that every penny of ACDA life memberships goes to national headquarters and stays there? Our state organization receives a small portion of each regular membership fee, but nothing from life membership fees.

SO ... if you're perhaps a life member who is all or mostly paid up, and so inclined, a tax deductible contribution directly to the OCDA might be a nice gesture. Just a thought ...



OCDA News, the official publication of the Ohio Choral Directors Association, is published three times annually, from Ashland, 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.

OCDA reserves the right to edit any application for appearance and to edit all materials proposed for distribution on the basis of content and length.

Copy and Ad Deadlines

Fall Issue	September 15
Winter Issue	January 15
Spring Issue	April 15

Advertising Rates

Full Page 9"x 7"	\$130.00
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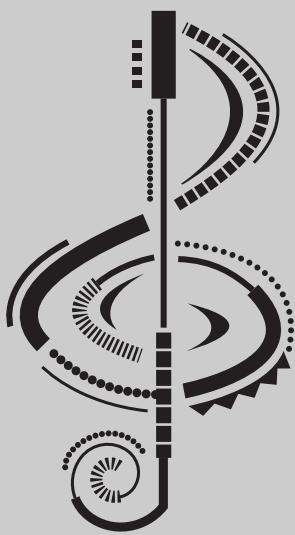
Prices above are for copy ready materials submitted on or before the specified deadline.

Advance payment must accompany materials.

Please make checks out to: Ohio Choral Directors Association.

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ACDA Regional Conference

February 15 – 18, 2006: Chicago

OCDA Summer Conference

June 19-21, 2006: Otterbein College

OMEA Professional Conference

February 8-10 , 2007: Columbus

ACDA National Conference

March 7-10, 2007: Miami, FL

OCDA Summer Conference

June 18-20, 2007: Otterbein College

IN THE SPRING 2006 ISSUE YOU SHOULD BE HEARING FROM YOUR:

President

Junior High/Middle School R & S Chair

Elementary Choirs Interest Area

Children's Choirs R & S Chair

Boys' Choirs R & S Chair

Southwest Regional Chair

(deadline April 15)

OCDA MENTORING PROGRAM

by Jim Gallagher, Retired Teachers' Representative

In the fall OCDA Newsletter you may have read an article aimed at the retirees in our organization. These individuals, with many years of teaching/conducting experience, can be a wonderful resource for less experienced conductors. Several retirees have responded to the article and now we need to link them with teacher/conductors wanting assistance with their current school, church, or community situation.

The purpose of this program is to connect persons needing assistance with a retiree in your local area, having expertise to help solve musical and repertoire issues, rehearsal techniques, classroom management concerns, or any other problems that are hindering your effectiveness in your daily work.

The length of time that you and your mentor work together is strictly up to the two of you. There is no fee involved with this service, although offering a small honorarium to cover travel expenses would be appreciated. This, and setting appropriate time(s) to meet with you and/or your choir will be between you and the mentor.

If you feel that an experienced mentor would be a great help to you, please contact Jim Gallagher at <jgall0444@yahoo.com>, noting your name, phone number and e-mail address, school/church name and address, and any other pertinent information that would assist in matching an appropriate mentor. If you prefer to discuss the mentoring program before committing to it, you can e-mail Jim or phone him at (614)891-0444.

ACDA ADVOCACY RESOLUTION

Whereas the human spirit is elevated to a broader understanding of itself through study and performance in the aesthetic arts; and

Whereas serious cutbacks in funding and support have steadily eroded state institutions and their programs throughout the country;

Be is resolved that all citizens of the United States actively voice their affirmative and collective support for necessary funding at the local, state, and national levels of education and government to ensure the survival of arts programs for this and future generations.

From Your President

(continued from page 1)

I like the catchy title of John Ortberg's book, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*. While I don't expect that any of us will be performing aquatic miracles, I do know that we can grow by occasionally leaving our comfort zones and stretching ourselves. And who knows, maybe the notion of living and teaching abroad for a year is not all that far fetched. Those early-morning bike rides are not really as bad as they sound, although on those really cold mornings I am glad that I have some Viking blood in me!

Stay warm and be sure to help your singers make some great music this week!

Mark Munson

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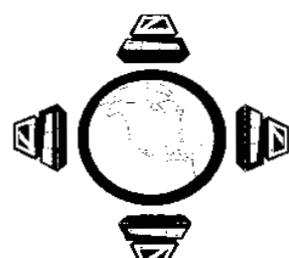
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

To have your concert included here in the next issue of the OCDA News, please e-mail the editor, Ron Blackley, at: rblackle@ashland.edu

Sunday, February 12, 4:00 p.m.

Westlake United Methodist Church
WUMC musicians Valentine Concert: free

Saturday, February 18

Teays Valley Classic Show Choir Invitational
Call (740) 983-5026 for group registration information.

Friday, February 24, 8:00 p.m.

St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Montgomery
Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati

Saturday, February 25, 8:00 p.m.

CCM Corbett Auditorium, University of Cincinnati
Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati

Sunday, February 26, 3:30 p.m.

Lorain Palace Civic Center, 617 Broadway, Lorain
Oberlin Choristers, all choirs: "Showcase of
Choirs"
admission: \$7.50

Sunday, February 26, 4:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church, 222 N. Broad Street,
Lancaster
Lancaster Chorale: "CIAO, Italia!"
Tickets: \$12/\$10/\$6 (740.687.5855)
20th Anniversary Season

Monday, February 27, 7:00 p.m.

Upper Arlington Lutheran Church, Hilliard
The Concordia Choir, Rene Clausen, Conductor
with Hilliard Darby H.S. Choir
no admission charge

**Monday, Feburary 27 & Tuesday, February 28,
various times**

Ashland University campus
Dr. Ann Howard Jones - Gretchen French Visiting
Artist in Music
all sessions free of charge; for details, call
419.289.5114

March 5, 7:00 p.m.

Westlake United Methodist Church
WUMC Celebration Singers, with Malcolm
Dalglish: "Hymnody of the Earth"

Wednesday, March 8, 8:00 p.m.

Stambaugh Auditorium, Youngstown
University Chorus and Dana Chorale of YSU:
"Choral and Vocal Chamber Music with
Piano - Mostly Mozart"

March 11, 7:00 p.m.

Trinity Episcopal Church, T\oledo
Masterworks Chorale: "Mainly Mozart"

Tuesday, March 14, 7:30 p.m.

Tenth Annual Teays Valley District Choral Festival

Saturday, March 18, 8:00 p.m.

Ashland University - Hugo Young Theatre
Ashland University Choir with Ashland Symphony
Orchestra: Mozart Requiem

Saturday, April 1, 8:00 p.m.

Plum Street Temple, 8th and Plum
Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati
Honegger *King David* and a commission by Aaron
Jay Kernis

Sunday, April 2, 3:00 p.m.

Lakeside Presbyterian Church, Fort Mitchell, KY
Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati
Honegger *King David* and a commission by Aaron
Jay Kernis

Sunday, April 2, 4:00 p.m.

Westlake United Methodist Church
WUMC Chancel Choir
Vaughan Williams: Five Mystical Songs

Saturday, April 8, 8:00 p.m.

Gamble Auditorium, Baldwin-Wallace College
Campus
Joint concert of Dana Chorale and B-W Singers

Sunday, April 9, 4:00 p.m.

Rocky River Presbyterian Church
Dana Chorale

Sunday, April 9, 7:00 p.m.

St. Andrew's Church, 300 Third St., Elyria
Oberlin Choristers Youth Chorale: "Sing for
Spring"
admission: \$7.50

Monday, April 10, 7:00 p.m.

Swasey Chapel, Denison University
Franz von Suppe: Requiem
no charge

Saturday, April 22, 4:00 p.m.

Wittenberg's Weaver Chapel
W. U. Women's Chorus Spring Concert
no admission charge

Sunday, April 30, 4:00 p.m.

Ashland University Memorial Chapel
A.U. Spring Choral Concert no charge

Wednesday, May 3, 8:00 p.m.

St. Columba Cathedral, Wood and Elm Sts.,
Youngstown
Dana Symphonic Choir: "Mozart Celebration"

Saturday, May 6, 7:30 p.m.

Avon High School, 37545 Detroit Rd., Avon
Oberlin Choristers Primary and Intermediate
Choirs and Parent Chorale
admission: \$7.50

Sunday, May 7, 4:00 p.m.

Southern Theatre, 21 E. Main St., Columbus
Lasncaster Chorale: "Celebrate"
Tickets available through Ticketmaster

Friday, May 12 and Saturday, May 13, 6:30 p.m.

Teays Valley H.S. Auxiliary Gymnasium
Cabaret 2006, with "Prominent Rendition" Show
Choir

Saturday, May 13, 8:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church, Maumee
Masterworks Chorale: "I Hear America Singing"

Tuesday, May 16, 7:30 p.m.

Teays Valley H.S. Spring Concert

Thursday, May 18, 7:00 p.m.

Hilliard Darby H.S. Performing Arts Center
Spring Choir Concert no charge

Sunday, May 21, 3:00 p.m.

Mathille Theater, Schuster Ctr. for Performing Arts
1 West Second Street, Dayton
MUSICA: Laughter and Tears: Concert III

Sunday, May 21, 7:00 p.m.

Westlake United Methodist Church
WUMC Monday Morning Handbell Choir

Sunday, May 21, 7:30 p.m.

Finney Chapel, Oberlin College Campus
Oberlins Choristers Concert and Touring Choirs:
A Singing Celebration:
admission: \$7.50

Tuesday, May 30, 7:00 p.m.

Hilliard Darby H.S. Performing Arts Center
Robing and Farewell Concert no charge

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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Announcing:

OCDA Children's Honor Choir

June 20-21, 2006

OCDA Summer Conference

Otterbein College

Emily Ellsworth, Guest Conductor

Cynthia Gray, Commissioned Composer

200 of Ohio's most talented young singers
grades 4-8 (present year)

Teacher-recommended participants will be prepared in satellite rehearsals in early June

Teachers do not need to be ACDA members to recommend singers.

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Details and forms available by emailing Robyn Lana at honorchoir@cincinnatichoир.org
or by visiting the OCDA website at www.ohiocda.org

Deadline: April 15, 2006

registration for singers and introductory offer for teachers

Please share this information with your colleagues in the Elementary schools!

OCDA is proud to present Emily Ellsworth as conductor of the 2006 Honor Choir. Nationally recognized as a leader in the field of youth chorus directors, Ms. Ellsworth has served as Artistic Director of the renowned Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus outside of Chicago since 1996. She brings to her work a passion for the vocal art, and a love for young people and their enormous potential. Ms. Ellsworth has prepared the Chorus for performances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Ravinia Festival, four CD recordings, national and regional ACDA conventions, live broadcasts on Chicago's WFMT radio and concert tours of Italy, Australia/New Zealand, Brazil, Newfoundland, and China. Under her direction, the GECC received the United States Library of Congress' Local Legacies Award, and the ASCAP Chorus America award for adventurous programming. She has over 20 years of college teaching experience as a music faculty member of the College of DuPage in Illinois, St. Andrews College in North Carolina, and the University of Southern California. Ms. Ellsworth has served on the Music Panel for the National Endowment for the Arts, is the editor of Boosey & Hawkes' Opera Workshop series, and maintains an active schedule as guest clinician/conductor at workshops and festivals throughout the U.S., Ireland, and South America.

Additional Planning Team Members:

Emily DePaul Gil, OCDA Multicultural R & S

Jan Swanson, OCDA Elementary R & S

Deborah O'Reilley, OCDA Middle School R & S

Amy Chivington, OCDA Children's Choir R & S

Robert Ward, OCDA Boy Choir R & S

OCDA HIGH SCHOOL – HIGH STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

by James Vaughn, High School R&S Chair
jvaughn@vbschools.net

Solo and ensemble contests; large group adjudicated events; honors choirs; musicals; show choir competitions; local concerts; spring trips and tours; and on and on – it must be spring in the high school choral music program!

For those of you that don't know me, I'm in my sixth year of teaching at Van Buren Local Schools, a small school district in the north part of Hancock County and close to Findlay. Despite a job that handles multiple ages (from third grade on up!) I do not find any greater reward than directing my High School Concert Choir. My job is taxing at times with teaching so many different grade levels, but there is great appreciation in seeing those elementary students grow up and working with them at the high school level. (In other words, all the *ta-ta-ti-ti-ta* and *do-re-mi* that I toil through at the elementary level comes to fruition at the high school age – finally!)

What are the challenges and rewards you're experiencing in your high school programs? There are many that face tough issues and are extremely varied due to factors such as school size, involvement, and community support. Because of this, I knew that taking on the High School Repertoire and Standards Chair position would be difficult – finding new music that can be useful to all and promoting high standards in choral music in all of the high schools in Ohio.

One issue we are all facing is meeting the Ohio Department of Education's Academic Content Standards (yes, that pink and maroon tome that I'm sure we all have sitting around) and yet keeping our high school programs advancing and growing. It is long overdue to have standards that the state recognizes and requires in our music programs, and yet I see diffidence in many of us using these standards in our performance-based classrooms - myself included! However, by selecting high-quality music and using that as our foundation for the standards, I do not see them as a hindrance, but as a way to make our choral programs more than just

great performing groups. When used, the standards will make our students into well-rounded, educated musicians – musicians that will continue to embrace and remember their musical experiences long after they leave our rehearsal rooms. I'm sure that you've looked over the standards and have found that *many of you are teaching to them already*. If you don't feel that you are, or wish you could teach to them more effectively, help is on the way.

My instrumental colleague at Van Buren, Richard Eakin, is busy with ODE and the model curricula writing team to complete the final drafts of the model lesson plans that will help teach to the Academic Content Standards. While he has been more on the instrumental end of writing these lesson plans, I have asked Richard on many occasions how they are going. It has been slow, but when the last set of lessons is completed and approved by ODE, the model lesson plans will give all of us a basis to teach the standards in our classroom and yet keep our performing groups going in the direction in which we want them to go. I encourage you to keep checking the Ohio Department of Education's website (www.ode.state.oh.us) to see their progress and to use all of them when they are ready and approved. I know I will! If you've been involved in this process in any way and have some opinions and/or suggestions on teaching the model lesson plans and the standards, please contact me – I value your experiences and insight.

Please don't hesitate to email me with your suggestions and ideas about anything related to high school choral music. All of the repertoire chairs have been charged with promoting an event that will advance choral music in Ohio, and your input on what should be done in the future will help.

Carry on that great choral tradition in your high school! I look forward to hearing from you!

OCDA Board Notes

The Board of the Ohio Choral Directors Association Met on January 7, 2006, at 10:00 a.m. at Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio. Jackie Nielsen, OCDA Treasurer, reported \$33,872.32 in total assets. All members are encouraged to submit articles to the OCDA Newsletter at anytime. It was also decided that both the newsletter and website will include listings of concerts and other events by members of OCDA. Members can submit this information to either the editor or webmaster at anytime.

Our 2006 summer conference is already planned and will be great. The conference committee is chaired by Dan Monek and includes Ann Usher, Hugh Floyd, and Amy Lenzmeier. Please see the article on page 3 for particulars on the headliners. This year's Roundtable Discussions will center on those old gems of choral repertoire that may have been forgotten through the years. Each R&S area will be represented, led by Middle School R&S Chair, Deborah O'Rielley. A call for the old repertoire books is being made to the membership. If any of you have these or know where one or more of them may be, please contact the corresponding R&S Chair with that information. A session on the fostering and development of a community choir is being planned by Community Choir R&S Donna Tozer-Wipfli for the conference.

By Ben Ayling, Secretary

The board voted to keep the location of the OCDA summer conference at Otterbein College through 2011. The date for the 2007 conference is June 18-20.

Led by Children's R&S Chair, Amy Chivington, the OCDA will be developing a database of choral ensembles from around our state in each of the R&S areas. If you have a specific group that you would like to have added to the database, please send your contact information to: AChivington@otterbein.edu. Amy Chivington is also planning an Ohio Community Children's Choral Festival to tentatively take place on Saturday October 14, 2006.

The positions of Treasurer, Northwest Region Chair, and East Central Region Chair will be open this summer. Any interested members or nominations from the membership should be directed to Immediate Past President, Tom Merrill at merrillt@xavier.edu.

As a point of information, many of you may not know that the old CPDL.org has been moved to: http://www.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page. Please make a note of it.

S.R.O.

(STANDING....On the RISERS...exploring approaches to ORGANIZATION)

by Lora L Moore, O.C.D.A. R&S Chair for Women's Choirs

The bell rings. Each women's chorus member finds her assigned place standing on the risers in front of you. She is organized and ready for rehearsal. Your procedure to take attendance for the class is underway. Your warm-up exercises are ready to commence. STOP. Have you ever considered the impact the decision to organize your singers in a certain formation on the risers has on your overall blend, balance, and tonal quality?

Most choral directors have a working knowledge of where to place the various sections of a women's choir on the risers to achieve the desired choral tone. Think for a moment. How did you arrive at the decision of a standing position on the risers for each section? What factors influenced your placement of the individual singer within each section of the choir?

Choir formations are often a matter of personal preference. Directors arrive at a set formation by what has worked through a trial-and-error period in their teaching career. We often recall standing formations in which we have previously performed as a singer, or have witnessed in concert settings. As directors, we get so involved with the note, rhythm, and diction discrepancies that occur that we forget to think about where everyone is standing in front of us every day. At the beginning of the school year, we gesture to the general area on the risers where each section is assigned. The individual singer quickly makes the decision herself where she is to stand. Most of the time, this decision is never addressed again unless there is a concern with height.

What does your choral tone quality sound like? Are you satisfied with it? If not, perhaps it would be helpful to consider where you have placed each section of your choir and the individual singer's placement within each section. The sectional placement of your choir is a critical factor in overall tone quality.¹ I have noticed that if I, as the director, place the choir from my left to my right – Soprano, Mezzo, Alto, and Contralto – I experience some discrepancies in blend, tonal quality, and intonation. I find that the first sopranos often sing sharp, while the mezzos and first altos blast their harmony parts. I spend large amounts of time listening to the recordings of rehearsals. I think of ways to diagnose. I think of placing an emphasis on the 'lift' in the face, or consider a modification of a vowel to fix what I hear. I had not always considered that where the singers are standing could be the problem.

The blend and balance components of choral tone often suffer because the sopranos are unable to hear the contralto sound of the choir. I have found that a most desirable formation for the women's choir from the left to the right is - Soprano, Contralto, Alto, and Mezzo. By utilizing this set-up, the contralto voices can be easily balanced with the soprano parts. By placing the highest and lowest voices beside each other, the chords come together because they can hear. The chord progressions seem to settle in tune more easily, and the cadences are more distinguished.

All directors strive to produce a beautiful and expressive tone qual-

ty from their choirs. Directors have two choices regarding how to achieve the desired blend within each section. The 'soloistic approach' is one that many of my colleagues utilize. In this first approach, all voices in the group are developed and utilized as soloists in the choir. Donald Neuen, director of choral activities at UCLA, conductor and artistic director of the Los Angeles Chorale, and conductor of the Crystal Cathedral Choir, is a strong proponent of this approach. He advocates that the choir members sing with the same beauty of tone as Placido Domingo, Renee Fleming, Seth McCoy, and Kathleen Battle. By knowing how great singers sing, he opens up the potential of his choirs to emulate the same tone.²

In working on the blend, balance, and intonation of the choir, many directors have another choice but are often hesitant to implement it. In the "acoustic matching" approach, voices of desirable and similar "colors" are placed together in the center of the each section to model the desirable sound to the rest of the singers. Voices that have problems that still need to be addressed (breathiness, vibrato, and intonation) are placed in the back and to the side. Weston Noble, director emeritus of the Luther College *Nordic Choir*, was a strong proponent of this approach. He would often spend two weeks of his fall term to achieve just the right vocal placement within his choir. To give up two full weeks of rehearsal might seem extreme, but the wonderful balance and blend achieved by the Luther College *Nordic Choir* is known worldwide.³

After listening to recordings of the Neuen and Noble choirs, I am convinced that both approaches work. I had to analyze my current women's chorus to decide what choice was right for them. With the exception of four girls, the majority of my women's chorale members are 14 or 15 years old. Teaching such young, inexperienced voices to be full-fledged soloists would not be feasible in such a short amount of time. In my estimation, the "soloistic approach" works better with singers who have had many years of vocal training. I decided that the more appropriate choice for my current women's chorus would be that of "acoustic matching" as proposed by Weston Noble. I decided to give this idea priority in my rehearsal planning.

When considering the number of rehearsals before the fall performance, I was initially hesitant to try this approach. After spending three days placing 51 singers in my women's chorale, I think this approach will become a permanent strategy in my teaching. I am a believer! As a director who spends so much time planning sequential rehearsals, I do not like to waste time. However, I have found that this one idea – strategic placement of singers within a section – has greatly improved the sound of my women's choir. I would highly recommend this technique for all choirs.

It is always wise to allow some time outside of the rehearsal setting to listen to the sound of your choir. If the technical aspects of music are in place, but the sound is still not quite desirable, try experimenting with choir formations with regard to sections as

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INTRODUCING MC³ –THE MALE CHORUS COMMISSIONING CONSORTIUM

by Ethan Sperry, Male Chorus R&S Chair

A new consortium of male choruses will present their first commission this March! The Male Chorus Commissioning Consortium is an association of male voice choirs, conductors and institutions dedicated to the creation of substantial new works for male choir by the foremost composers of the world. The consortium's overall goal is to enable all male voice choirs the chance to commission and perform works of the highest order by the world's most influential composers with minimum financial commitment.

The consortium was formed in 2004 to link male choirs across the globe through the common goal of the creation of new works and to promote male choir singing in three ways: First, the consortium seeks to increase audience interest in male choir repertoire by the creation of new, engaging and influential works. Secondly, the association hopes to increase fellowship between singers by providing a shared repertoire experience for male voice choirs everywhere. Thirdly, the consortium strives to increase the legitimacy of male voice choir singing in the musical world through the creation of critically important artistic works.

Specific goals of this consortium include stipulations that commissioned works must be in English and should be both singable by and appealing to most high school level male choirs.

Since 2004, ten member choruses have been recruited and several private individuals and organizations have joined the consor-

tium. This has led to the commission of a new work by Lee Hoiby to be premiered this March at the Intercollegiate Male Choruses National Seminar in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The work is entitled *Private First Class Jesse Givens*.

Army PFC Jesse Givens, 34, of Springfield, Missouri, was killed May 1, 2005, when his tank fell into the Euphrates River after the bank on which it was parked gave way. The text of Hoiby's piece is a letter written to be delivered to his family if he died. With the permission of Jesse's widow, Melissa Givens, the letter was printed in *Life Magazine* in their series "Last Letters Home." Hoiby was very moved the letter and received permission from Ms. Givens to set the text to music. Ms. Givens will be present at the IMC conference as the work is premiered by four of the ten MC³ member choruses: the professional male ensemble Cantus, the UW Eau Claire Singing Statesman, the Miami University Men's Glee Club, and the United States Army Chorus. Other member choruses will give alternate premiere performances in their home venues throughout March and April.

As the consortium grows, it hopes to be able to commission works from composers who have not contributed to the male choir genre as of yet, including Philip Glass, Steve Reich, and Esa-Pekka Salonen. More information on MC³ is available by contacting Erick Lichte, the artistic director of Cantus at lichte@cantusonline.org

S.R.O.

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whole entities. Give consideration to where the individual is placed within each section. In my experience this year, the improved tonal quality of the women's chorus is a direct result of intentional organization. Each girl is able to sing more freely and therefore the choral tone has more freedom to be expressive. The improvement in the overall choral tone makes the "acoustic matching" approach worthy of the time spent away from the actual music learning process to achieve it.

3. "Achieving Choral Blend through Standing Position." Weston Noble with a foreword by James Jordan. GIA Publishing, Chicago, IL. 2005. (Weston Noble has lectured on his principles of choral blend that can be achieved through a process of matching voices to create beautiful, almost seamless choral sound. On this DVD, Weston Noble presents through lecture and demonstration the principles he has used with the Luther College Nordic Choir. Contact Information: GIA Publications, Inc.)

(I would be interested in sharing thoughts, ideas, and experiences with others on this subject.) Please email:
lora_moore@fclass.hilliard.k12.oh.us

1. "Achieving Beautiful Tone and Choral Blend." Kenneth H. Phillips, **Choral Director**. June/July 2005. p.31.
2. "Celebrating 50 years of Choral Artistry: An Interview with Donald Neuen." Alan Raines. **Choral Journal**. May 2005. p. 34.

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