

## From Your President

HAPPY NEW YEAR, OCDA MEMBERS! I know what you are thinking: not again, not another New Year greeting. Although we may tire of hearing this annual greeting, it is significant in the connotation of new beginnings.

I love the opportunity for new beginnings. New beginnings are exciting—they let you start over, but with more wisdom and intelligence.

You get a chance to spread your life out on a table and take a good look at what is working and what to discard. New beginnings can be a new year, a birthday, a new semester, a new day, new administration, new concert music, new OCDA board, new OCDA Summer Conference, anything.

Make your new beginnings meaningful. Here are some quotes that are meaningful to me.

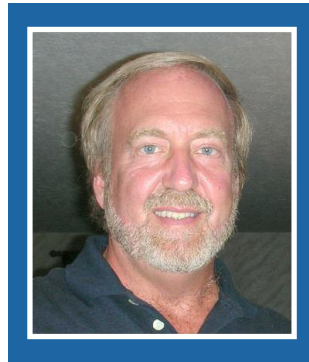
*Every man should be born again on the first day of January.  
Start with a fresh page.* —HENRY WARD BEECHER

*Life is not a dress rehearsal. Stop practicing  
what you're going to do and just go do it.*

*In one bold stroke you can transform today.* —MARILYN GREY

In my new beginning OCDA president's column last fall, I was remiss in not acknowledging and thanking the past board, under Ben Ayling's leadership, for their incredible dedication and exemplary service to our fine organization. Thank you for a job well done. To both the old and new board, you make me proud to be in this organization.

The upcoming OMEA Professional Conference, on February 16–18, is an excellent opportunity for our members to share their enthusiasm for our organization. We sponsor three popular OCDA Reading Sessions for high school/university, junior high/middle school, and elementary teachers with packets loaded with nearly \$30 of complimentary music (taking the high school/university packet as an example). Plan to attend these sessions, pick up an OCDA sticker for your name tag, and invite someone to attend the OCDA Summer Conference this June 18–20. I will have stickers and so will Dara Gillis, Ben Ayling, Loren Veigel, and Doug Jones. Studies have shown that no matter how much publicity is given an organization, the most effective method of gaining new members is a personal welcome (or putting a sticker on their name tag ☺).



OCDA President Bill Zurkey

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In the second year of our OMEA/OCDA Agreement, OCDA now sponsors choral clinicians for the OMEA Conference. Please support these clinicians and look for our large poster and additional flyers at each session. OCDA sponsored clinics are: Frank Bianchi, *The Keys to Creating Successful and Artistic Choral Performances are E.P.I.C.*; Chris Venesile, *Vocal Jazz and Other Contemporary Styles Pedagogy: New Perspectives Through Research and Technology*; and Matthew Garrett, *Vocal Pedagogy for Adolescent Singers: The ABCs of Healthy Choral Singing*.

Please support our performing groups at the OMEA conference. We have three board members whose choirs will be performing: Avon Lake Chorale, yours truly; The Ohio State University Men's Glee Club, Bob Ward; and Wittenberg University Choir, Adam Con. I'm sure that you will get an OCDA promotion at these concerts. Also performing will be longtime member Hank Dahlman's Wright State University Collegiate Chorale and Sally Schnieder's Firestone HS Vocal Jazz Ensemble. Also, Dan Monek, former OCDA conference chair, will present a session entitled *Making a Move: Gestures and Movements for Better Choral Singing*. Other OCDA members presenting clinics but not necessarily sponsored by OCDA are: Mike Lisi, Hae-Jong Lee, Scott MacPherson, and Eva Floyd. You can support our members with your attendance at these events.

Another perk to the OMEA/OCDA Agreement is a registration



*Ben Ayling, Bill Zurkey, and Dara Gillis at the OCDA Winter Meeting.*

form that allows our OCDA members to attend the OMEA Professional Conference without joining OMEA. Your only cost is conference registration. This is perfect for community choir members, children's choir members, high school community choirs, and certainly church choir directors who may want to attend the conference without joining OMEA.

All OCDA members are also welcome to attend the ACDA Central Division Conference in Fort Wayne, IN. The dates for this outstanding conference are March 7–10, 2012. Choirs from Ohio performing at this conference include Michael Martin's Hilliard Darby HS Symphonic Choir and Amy Johnston Blosser's Bexley HS Vocal Ensemble. Ann Usher and Earl Rivers will be conducting sessions, and Hilary Apfelstadt, forever an Ohioan, will guest conduct the

Women's Honor Choir.

Looking ahead to summer, we have a tremendous slate of clinicians. The next President's column will have more information on Summer Conference. However, the following amazingly talented choral musicians will be headliners: Grammy-Award-winning Charles Bruffy of the Phoenix Bach Chorale and Kansas City Chorale; Paul Oakley, featuring sacred music with a comedic touch; Rebecca Reames, representing young choirs from middle school to freshmen in high school; and our own Frank Bianchi, well respected among choral directors in Ohio. Rollo Dilworth will be the guest conductor of the children's chorus. Sound good? You bet!

Make a new beginning and plan to attend one of these great conferences. See you in Columbus and Fort Wayne. ♦

## In This Issue

*Tim Cloeter, Newsletter Editor*



I OFFER THANKS to my fellow board members for heeding the call to create a newsletter that builds connection, makes our leaders accessible, and facilitates the flow of ideas. We aim to inform, inspire, and involve you, and this edition of the News works on all of those levels!

Articles by Eric Kauffman and Corey Fowler deal with teaching strategies and introduce two useful books; Rich Schnipke offers ideas for building identity in your women's chorus with an emphasis on repertoire selection; Robert Ward reminds us that teachers of

music at every educational level are all members of the same team; and Bill Zurkey urges us to attend upcoming conferences and support the many valuable initiatives of OCDA at those conferences. (Unfortunately, the Elementary Choir Festival organized by Suzanne Walters had to be postponed due to inclement weather, so look for her reflections on the rescheduled event in the next issue.)

This is another outstanding issue to share with your colleagues—forwarding the News by e-mail takes only a moment, but will go a

long way toward attracting new members.

And don't forget to forward the News to your high school or college students who are interested in our profession.

Lastly, I remind you that I welcome contributions to the News from all OCDA members. If you have an idea for an article you'd like to write (or you'd like someone else to write), send it my way. Similarly, I would be happy to include your concert and event announcements in the News. ♦



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## Building Identity in Your Women's Chorus

*Richard Schnipke, Women's Chorus R&S Chair*

IN MANY CHORAL PROGRAMS, at both the high school and collegiate levels, women's choruses can struggle to find a sense of identity. This may be caused by a variety of factors: the premiere ensemble of the organization is the select mixed choir, the men's chorus has a stronger tradition and following, the women's chorus is made up of the overflow of female singers who were not selected for the mixed ensembles, etc. With this in mind, it is incredibly important that we work to help our women's choirs build and establish positive identities. Following are several ideas that may help, starting with one of the most important: repertoire selection.

### Choose Great Women's Chorus Repertoire

Often we spend a great deal of time selecting repertoire for our premiere mixed ensemble, while devoting less of our thought and energy to selecting our women's chorus (or other secondary choir) repertoire. We must remember that all of our choirs (and singers) deserve to sing the best quality, most engaging and rewarding literature possible. Consider these especially important ideas when selecting music for women's choir:

**Select music originally written for women's chorus.** While it may be tempting to choose SSA or SSAA arrangements of standard, popular,

or favorite mixed choir pieces, better options for women's chorus usually exist. "Re-voicings," even when prepared by the composer, are generally lacking in comparison to the original and often times come full of problems with range, tessitura, and voice-crossing which can lead to choral issues including intonation, balance, and vocal fatigue. Original music for treble voices is available from all musical style periods and countless contemporary composers are producing pieces written specifically with the female voice and chorus in mind.

**Select music with great texts.** In previous eras, many texts set for women's choruses were less than challenging or thought provoking (themes of flowers, butterflies, lost love, etc.). In recent years, more and more wonderful texts including great poetry, contemporary settings of traditional sacred Latin texts, and multicultural folk texts are being set for female voices. Find texts that expose your students/singers to poets and cultures, give them historical perspective, and challenge them to think in new ways.

**Select music of a variety of styles.** While we (and our singers) all have preferences for certain styles of music, it is important to program a variety of musical styles within each academic year or concert season. As mentioned above, we

would do well to program pieces written for women's chorus from the various musical style periods along with great contemporary selections, world music, folk songs, and spirituals. Challenge yourself and your singers to move outside of your comfort zone and explore all the wonderful styles of music available to present-day women's choruses.

### **Select music by female composers.**

Numerous contemporary female composers, including Gwyneth Walker, Ruth Watson Henderson, and Jennifer Higdon, write masterfully for the female choir. While earlier female composers may be more difficult to find, they do exist. Francesca Caccini, Fanny Mendelssohn, and others have written beautiful music representative of the earlier style periods of the western art music tradition that can be performed successfully by women's choirs of varying skill levels. Women's choirs performing and promoting music by women composers is a wonderful pairing that can help build group identity and provide tangible examples for the budding composers in your ensemble and audiences.

Selecting high-quality, engaging, challenging, and varied repertoire for your women's chorus will enable your ensemble to be confident, successful, and rewarded in performance, and will thereby lay a foundation for its musical identity.



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### Provide the Group with Goals, Projects, and Special Performances

While we all have regularly scheduled concerts to work toward, providing your women's chorus with events or projects that are geared specifically toward them can really help them form an identity. Even relatively simple things, like holding a retreat, participating in an OMEA adjudicated event, or attending a women's-chorus festival, can give the group a common goal to work toward; and larger projects, like recording a CD or planning a short trip or concert tour, can be defining experiences.

Electing an officer team that establishes and promotes annual goals within the group is also empowering. Goals can be musical, and may include concepts like improving group tone quality, diction, intonation, and memorization; or they can be non-musical, pertaining to recruitment, retention, group camaraderie, increased concert attendance, etc. Accomplishing these goals can provide a group with a sense of empowerment and community, which in turn can also help to establish an identity for the ensemble.

### Establish Group Traditions

It is important for each ensemble in your choral organization to establish traditions they can call their own. Whether it be a special annual concert, a traditional opening or closing musical selection, a specific process for welcoming new members to the group, or an annual event or fundraiser produced by the group, people enjoy tradition. Establishing and maintaining some tradition is not only important for the current membership of the group, but also for encouraging alumni contact and involvement. In most cases, a strong sense of tradition goes hand in hand with a strong identity.

With all of the wonderful women's chorus repertoire and resources available to us, we have all the necessary tools to make our women's choirs vibrant components of our public-school, university, and community choral programs. I hope that you find some of these ideas useful and that they challenge you to think about working to build the identity of your women's chorus! ♦



## Announcing the Appointment of Jeremy D. Jones to the Music Faculty



Dr. Jeremy Jones joins Dr. William Bausano on the choral and music education faculty at Miami University. Dr. Jones is the conductor of the 100-voice Men's Glee Club and the Collegiate Chorale and teaches courses in music education. He is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music (D.M.A.), with additional degrees from East Carolina University and Middle Tennessee State University.

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# Review and Application of Rhythmic Literacy in the Choral Rehearsal: Using Takadimi with the *Sound Connections* Approach

Corey Fowler, NE Region Chair

WHEN A STUDENT STARTS studying piano, one of the first concepts taught is rhythmic notation: notes, rests, bar lines. A quarter note is shown and demonstrated by the teacher and students start to read from musical notation during the first few weeks. Similarly, beginning instrumental students purchase a required method book and after a sound can be produced, learn to play through musical notation. This was my experience growing up as I was introduced to notation first during my piano and trumpet lessons, a symbol-before-sound approach. As I started my teaching career, I frustratingly tried to teach my students to read rhythm from symbols first, even though I was taught the history, techniques, and benefits of sound-before-symbol philosophies during college. I quickly realized that it was not working and that I needed to find a solution. During my search, I found the relatively new “Takadimi” system of rhythm reading and an even more recent book, *Sound Connections: A Comprehensive Approach to Teaching Music Literacy*, by Don P. Ester, which exclusively uses the Takadimi system. As I read more from *Sound Connections*, I appreciated Dr. Ester’s thoughtful research and how much of a difference its implications could make in my choral classroom. I decided to re-

search the Takadimi system further and find the best way to incorporate it in my classroom. To thoroughly understand the Takadimi system and the *Sound Connections* approach, an awareness of the current state of rhythmic literacy and a review of current literacy strategies is necessary.

## The State of Music Literacy

According to Hoffman, Pelto, and White in their 1996 article, “Takadimi: A Beat-Oriented System of Rhythm Pedagogy,” students entering college are not prepared in many of the fundamentals of music, including rhythm. This can be attributed to “reductions in public school music education, a shift away from music making as a leisure activity, and changing musical values.”<sup>1</sup> This lack of skills makes it especially hard for students who wish to study music in college. The authors contend that “teachers need pedagogic techniques that address elementary skills and complex rhythmic concepts in order to provide a strong foundation for musicians who will practice their art well into the twenty-first century.”<sup>2</sup> Providing elementary, middle, and high school students with a foundation in music literacy—particularly in reading rhythm—through a standardized approach can lead to an

improvement in the music literacy issues we encounter today, especially in the choral classroom.

## Current Rhythm-Pedagogical Techniques

There are many different rhythm-literacy systems that general, instrumental and choral music educators use today. The variety of rhythm instruction methods and the inconsistency of their instruction often confuse and frustrate students. An elementary teacher might use Kodály (ta--ti-ti) or Orff-Schulwerk (“watermelon,” “apple”) while the high school ensemble director in the same district uses counting (1-e-&-a). This leads to students having to learn multiple systems, oftentimes with no relation between them. Many systems have distinct advantages, while others procure more problems than solutions to effective music-literacy instruction.<sup>3</sup>

Many rhythm systems fall into two categories. The first category contains systems that emphasize counting within a measure or meter, such as counting (1-e-&-a) or the McHose and Tibbs (1-ta-te-ta, 2-ta-te-ta); the second contains systems that emphasize beat or pattern, such as Kodály or Orff-Schulwerk.<sup>4</sup> Kodály’s system utilizes syllables that are assigned to certain notes and rhythmic pat-

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terns. The system is taught through repetitive syllable patterns and is supposed to be introduced with a sound-before-symbol approach, but it is paradoxically notation-based because certain note values are assigned certain syllables (“ta” for ♩, “ti-ti” for ♪♪, and “toe” for ♫).<sup>5</sup> The Kodály system is also limited to the most common meters and simple rhythm patterns, a reason it has been used extensively in the elementary curriculum. This simplicity prevents it from being used as a tool in secondary ensembles and collegiate classrooms, where more complex meters and rhythms exist.<sup>6</sup> The quarter note is always “ta” regardless of its length in different meters (one beat in 2/4 and two-thirds of a beat in 6/8). Also, “Ta,” “ti,” “tam,” and “too,” are all

syllables that can be chanted on the beat depending on the *notated* meter. In order to make the system more beat-based, many educators have changed the syllable for a half note to “ta-a” instead of “too.” This results in students chanting two sounds (the initial “ta” and then the “-a”) for a note that only has one sound, which can confuse students when a half note is presented in performance literature or tonal sight-reading.<sup>7</sup> The Kodály system’s connection to notation seems logical, but very young students who cannot read text do not understand music notation.<sup>8</sup>

Counting systems (which are usually the only systems used in instrumental ensembles) are highly notation-based, so students must be taught meter and must know

how measures are formed to understand the theory of a counting system.<sup>9</sup> In order to correctly perform the rhythms, students must always be looking at notation because the meter and bar lines must be used to determine the numbers for each beat.<sup>10</sup> Also, the syllables do not transition to compound meter well. The syllables (1 & 2 & a) remain the same for ♪♪ ♪♪ in simple meter and ♪♪ ♪♪ in compound meter, confusing students who consistently have to switch between the meters. My own personal experience with trying to teach counting to my middle school choirs includes long theoretical lectures about bar lines and meter. This resulted in wasted rehearsal time and frustration among students. Of course, students who



already have a strong education in notation can benefit from a counting system because of its focus on location of rhythms and the beat within a measure.

### Takadimi

The rhythm-solfège system called “Takadimi” was invented in the mid 1990s by three music theorists: Richard Hoffman, William Pelto, and John W. White. Their system was a result of much research into the advantages and disadvantages of previous systems, including Kodály’s, counting, and other lesser-known systems.<sup>11</sup> (See [www.takadimi.net](http://www.takadimi.net) for more information and examples.) They agreed that the system had to be “simple enough for the pre-notational stages of first-year courses but comprehensive enough to address the complexities of recent musical styles including polyrhythm, polymeter, and asymmetric divisions.”<sup>12</sup> The resulting system is child-friendly and can also efficiently be used in the secondary or college

classroom/rehearsal. The Takadimi syllables are assigned to subdivisions within a beat, regardless of meter or notational value, and every attack on the beat is *always* “ta.” Halfway through the beat is always pronounced “di,” and further subdivisions are called “ka” and “mi,” resulting in “ta-ka-di-mi.” Further subdivisions are “va,” “di,” and “ma,” resulting in the sextuplet “ta-va-ki-di-da-ma” seen in compound meters. (Notice that “di” is still the midpoint of the beat.)<sup>13</sup> Figure 1 shows how the syllables are distributed in many different meters. Notice that the subdivisions always have the same syllables regardless of notes or meter, and that each subdivision has its own syllable. Takadimi emphasizes patterns and beat much like Kodály’s syllables attempt to do. In fact, many Kodály experts today have stated that “Takadimi” is a favorable replacement for the current syllables because of Kodály’s theory of sound-before-symbol, thus reducing the stress on notation.<sup>14</sup>

The system encourages specific understanding of metric position—exactly where in the beat a note is—without having to know anything about notation. For example, during syncopation, the stress moves to the upbeat. In Takadimi, this would be chanted as “di.” Since students would know (after some non-syncopated experience with Takadimi) that “ta” is always on the beat and “di” is always half way through (or the upbeat), they could listen to syncopated rhythm and determine that “di” is being used instead of “ta” because of its relation to the beat.

After students learn several patterns of Takadimi syllables, they can immediately start dictation exercises. Using the sound-before-symbol approach, students learn and verbalize a rhythm with syllables before knowing the meter. After instruction in notation (explained later), students can now notate the rhythm in any meter, much like melodic examples can be notated in different keys using

Figure 1: Rhythm patterns with Takadimi

The figure displays three musical staves, each with a time signature and a corresponding Takadimi syllable pattern. The first staff is in 2/4 time, the second in 2/2 time, and the third in 6/8 time. Each staff shows a sequence of notes and rests, with syllables written below them. The syllables are: 'ta ta ta di ta ta ka di mi ta ta di ta di mi ta di ta di di ta ki da ta ta' for 2/4; 'ta ta ta di ta ta ka di mi ta ta di ta di mi ta di ta di di ta ki da ta ta' for 2/2; and 'ta ta ta ki da ta da ta va ki di da ma ta ta da ta da ta va ki da ma ta ta ki ta ki ta di ta di ta' for 6/8. The 6/8 staff includes a sextuplet of eighth notes marked with a '3' and a '2' above it.

pitch solfège.<sup>15</sup> When instruction in notation leads to meters, measures, and bar lines, Takadimi can actually be combined with other systems that help with reinforcing meter, such as counting. For example, since “ta” is always on the beat, it can be replaced with a number (1-ka-di-mi, 2 - di -, 3-ka-di-mi, 4, etc.) to show location in the measure. The goal of Takadimi is to teach and/or improve music literacy through syllable patterns that create rhythmically accurate performances of instrumental and choral music. This system can start or complement any rhythm-literacy work in your choral rehearsal.

### Takadimi in the Choral Rehearsal

Using Takadimi in the choral rehearsal promotes the music literacy goals noted in the National Content Standard Number 5 (reading and notating music) of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME, formerly MENC) by relating easily learned patterns to notation and allowing for numerous opportunities to write notation based on dictation or composition exercises. Ball State University professor Don P. Ester’s book, *Sound Connections: A Comprehensive Approach to Teaching Music Literacy* (available as a PDF book at <http://www.educational-exclusives.com/collections/don-ester>) provides a heavily researched-based method of introducing and reinforcing tonal and rhythmic concepts through a strict sound-before-symbol approach, distinctively using Takadimi as the rhythmic component.

### Aural Knowledge

When introducing Takadimi to a choral ensemble, there is no need to announce it to the students. First, start with what Dr. Ester calls “neutral echoing.” This involves producing simple rhythmic patterns on the syllable “pa” and asking the students to echo on “pa.”<sup>16</sup> Doing this helps establish the structure of further echoing exercises and reinforces the steady beat. If students are having difficulty with a steady beat (as some younger students may exhibit), kinesthetic activities incorporating the steady beat may be used (e.g. Dalcroze activities). It is important to note that accurate modeling must be used. For example, four quarter notes must be verbalized for the duration of each note and not as four separated eighth notes (since quarter notes encountered in repertoire are usually not sung separated.) Also, even though it is suitable for warm-up and focusing exercises, body percussion (including clapping) should not be over-used: The sounds produced are very short in duration and would not match any notation you would be verbalizing for echoing.<sup>17</sup> Dr.

Ester recommends the following procedure to establish the beat and meter: The teacher says (in simple meter), “beat, beat, e-cho me” and then presents the rhythm to be echoed.<sup>18</sup> Compound meter is presented as, “beat, beat, e-cho me now.” Simple two-hand gestures communicate whose turn it is to speak. The teacher’s two hands are pointed to him/herself when vocalizing the rhythm, and the two hands move out to a welcoming gesture when the students are to echo.<sup>19</sup> Basic patterns should be used first, such as short combinations of quarter-and-two-eighth-note groupings in simple meter and dotted-quarter-notes and three-eighth-note groupings in compound meter. Further examples are available in Ester’s *Sound Connections*.

After students master the neutral echoing (which, excluding very young students, should not take long) the teacher can move to “syllable echoing” by presenting the same rhythmic patterns introduced with “pa” with Takadimi syllables and the students echoing.<sup>20</sup> Figure 2 shows an example that is appropriate to begin echoing with a neu-

**Figure 2**

	TEACHER						STUDENTS					
Neutral Echoing												
Syllable Echoing												
Echo-Translation												

tral syllable and then the Takadimi syllables. It is important to remember that everything the teacher is presenting is only *aural*. Students are only hearing and repeating the rhythm that is being verbalized to them; no notation has been presented. The teacher should change the tempo and meter (simple and compound) frequently so students do not become adapted to one tempo or meter.<sup>21</sup> The last stage Dr. Ester prescribes is “echo translation,” in which the students listen to a rhythm verbalized by the teacher on “pa” and then translate the rhythm into Takadimi syllables.<sup>22</sup> Instead of counting off with “e-cho me,” the teacher says, “e-cho trans-late.”<sup>23</sup> In my own experience, this step is the most difficult for students, but it is important for improving their audiation and dictation skills, especially when notating is introduced. Each new rhythm pattern should be introduced through all stages. For example, after students have mastered quarter notes and eighth notes in simple time, it is appropriate to teach a sixteenth-note pattern (ta-ka-di-mi). The teacher should begin by verbalizing the pattern and students echoing on “pa” (neutral echoing), then on syllables (syllable echoing), and then by working echo translation.

Even though notation has not been encountered yet, Takadimi can be used while rehearsing performance literature. The teacher can chant the words from a song that includes the learned rhythm patterns and ask the students to decide which syllables would match the chanted rhythm. Other

activities such as call-and-response games and opportunities for improvisation allow different ways for students to master the *aural* concepts of Takadimi.<sup>24</sup>

### Visual Knowledge

When students master neutral and syllable echoing then echo-translation, it is appropriate to introduce notation, but only after the preceding stages have been mastered. Dr. Ester promotes the flash card as the best way to introduce the rhythm patterns visually.<sup>25</sup> The students should only see one rhythm pattern at a time to ensure they see patterns rather than individual notes.<sup>26</sup> I can project the patterns (made in Sibelius) with PowerPoint slides and this seems to work best because slides can be changed quickly (especially with a remote, which allows the teacher to walk around the room) and the rhythm is in large print. If a teacher does not have a projector, the flash cards are still the best option. Time should not be taken to write rhythms on the board because erasing and re-writing is extremely time consuming.<sup>27</sup> As patterns are verbalized by the teacher and echoed by the students, a flash card with the rhythm pattern (and meter signature, 2/4 or 6/8) is shown. Then, just the flash card is shown and the students are prompted with “beat, beat, rea-dy read” using the same rhythm as “beat, beat, e-cho me” (“beat, beat, rea-dy and read” for compound meters). It is important to note that the words “quarter note,” “half note,” “simple meter,” etc., should *not* be used because students are

only associating the picture of the pattern with the aural pattern they have already learned. If a question arises about the meter signature, the teacher should tell the student that it will be covered at a later time.<sup>28</sup> The teacher should mix up new and learned rhythms as students progress, but only show them one pattern at a time (only two or three beats of rhythm) in both simple and compound meters.<sup>29</sup>

Having read the patterns successfully on their own, students can be taught the duration note names (quarter note, sixteenth note, etc.) and read patterns put together. This can be accomplished by lining flashcards horizontally across a whiteboard tray and allowing the students to read the completed rhythm. At this point students can also be introduced to bar lines, which invariably leads to a discussion about the meter (or time) signature. Rests can be taught by showing the relationship between the two symbols ( $\downarrow = \uparrow$ ) and instructing students that the rest receives “ta” but is silent; “ta” should be *audiated*.<sup>30</sup> Ties should be taught by using a simple pattern, drawing the tie in, and then having students echo and then read it. A short discussion about ties is all the students will need. Tuplets (in compound meter) and triplets (in simple meter) can easily be taught because students have been familiar with both meters. Students are informed that they are “borrowing” other rhythm patterns from a different meter.<sup>31</sup> All of these concepts can be introduced and/or reinforced through listening, dictat-

ing, reading, notating, improvising, and composing activities, ensuring that students have a thorough experience with rhythmic patterns and notation.

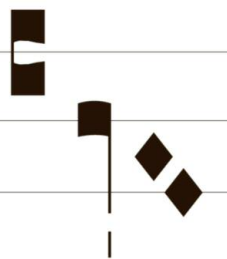
Here is where the *Sound Connections* approach reveals its intelligence. Students have already mastered the patterns and can echo, translate, improvise, compose, and read them (covering many national and state music standards). This makes teaching about bar lines, meter signatures, and other notationally strong concepts much easier than if they were introduced at the beginning of music literacy instruction. Teaching with this approach has led many of my students to find answers to their notation questions on their own. Knowing how the different

Takadimi syllables are distributed within the beat allows them to deduce how measures are formed and why certain numbers are used in time signatures without having to listen to drawn-out teacher-led theory lectures.

Many choral directors work with high school, collegiate, church, or community/professional choirs. Progression through the introductory phases of Takadimi in these ensembles can move very fast (sometimes within one rehearsal) and will allow the *aural* knowledge of Takadimi to develop easily into a *visual*, or notational knowledge. Students who are already familiar with notation can benefit from Takadimi as well to accelerate and improve rhythm precision and accuracy. The most common ways to

use Takadimi during the rehearsal include during warm-up and focus activities, designated music literacy instruction, and perhaps the most important, amid preparation of performance literature. Don P. Ester, John W. Scheib, and Kimberly J. Inks state the following in their 2006 *Music Educators Journal* article: "In the choral setting, singers often come to their first ensemble experience with limited music-reading skills and multiple rhythm-syllable vocabularies. The director intent on providing a rewarding performance experience must choose between two poor options: spending inordinate amounts of time teaching difficult literature by rote or preparing less-challenging repertoire while dedicating significant time to rudimentary

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music-literacy instruction. The pedagogical continuity that effective elementary instruction using the Takadimi syllables provides can significantly improve this situation. Even given no baseline abilities, secondary students can achieve rapid growth in both rhythm and rhythm-reading and -notating skills when a sound-first pedagogy is applied.” (Ester, Scheib, and Inks 2006, 64.)

With the demands of upcoming performances, directors can be overcome with repertoire preparation and lose sight of the importance of music literacy instruction. However, accomplishing both goals is quite simple with Takadimi. When music is being introduced, Takadimi can be used to work difficult rhythmic passages and allow students to keep their eyes on the notation and not the text. After mastering the rhythm, students can move to pitch sight reading and then finally the text. When an ensemble is having trouble with the rhythm in a certain section or passage, students can always refer back to the Takadimi syllables to help them. Takadimi can also be used as an assessment tool. Students can be informally assessed using call-and-response and improvisation activities where the teacher can acquire a better understanding of his/her students’ knowledge. Also, formal performance assessments can be administered in which students are asked to individually perform notated rhythms using Takadimi syllables and then are graded using a rubric. Performance assessments such as these provide students with pro-

gressive feedback to improve their literacy skills.

The implementation of a rhythmic-literacy program in a choral ensemble promotes improvement not only in music reading but also in performance. Rhythm is the foundation of good performance, as Robert Shaw said. Takadimi provides an excellent tool to polish rhythm (much like Shaw’s count-singing) and fills a need to improve our students’ life-long music literacy. Dr. Ester’s *Sound Connections* approach uses research-based techniques that have worked wonderfully in my classroom and will surely help countless directors searching for a solution to rhythm-literacy problems. I strongly recommend obtaining his book to read further on his approach. My hope is that all my students, regardless of their career or life goals, can firmly say, “I read music.” Isn’t that what all music educators strive for?

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- Hoffman, Richard, and William Pelto, John W. White, “Takadimi: A Beat-Oriented System of Rhythm Pedagogy,” *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, 10 (1996): 7–30.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Richard Hoffman, William Pelto, John W. White, “Takadimi: A Beat-Oriented System of Rhythm Ped-

gogy,” *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, vol 10 (1996): 7.

- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Even though Kodály and Counting seem to be the most popular, music educators still cannot agree on a common rhythm system. In a survey administered by the author, 57 percent of elementary and secondary teachers prefer the counting system, but 58 percent use Kodály and counting. Middle and high school only teachers prefer counting (71 percent). See Don P. Ester, John W. Scheib, and Kimberly J. Inks, “Takadimi: A Rhythm System for All Ages,” *Music Educators Journal* November vol 93, issue 2 (2006): 60.
- <sup>4</sup> Hoffman, Pelto, and White: 8–9.
- <sup>5</sup> Don P. Ester, *Sound Connections: A Comprehensive Approach to Teaching Music Literacy* (Don P. Ester, 2010), 55.
- <sup>6</sup> Hoffman, Pelto, and White: 9
- <sup>7</sup> Ester, *Sound Connections*, 55.
- <sup>8</sup> Ester, Scheib and Inks: 61
- <sup>9</sup> Hoffman, Pelto, and White: 11
- <sup>10</sup> Ester, *Sound Connections*, 56–57.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid. 59.
- <sup>12</sup> Hoffman, Pelto, and White: 14.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Ester, Scheib and Inks: 62
- <sup>15</sup> Hoffman, Pelto, and White: 19.
- <sup>16</sup> Ester, *Sound Connections*, 98.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 98–99.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., 101.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., 102.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., 98.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., 101, 149.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 98.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 101.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 116.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 148.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 149.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 148.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 156.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid. ♦

## Whence I Came

*Robert J. Ward, Men's Chorus R&S Chair*

RECENTLY I HAD an opportunity to visit with a teacher I had in high school. After a few minutes of conversation she reminded me of what she told me on graduation day. That was, "never forget where you came from." Shortly after, I had a chance encounter with a friend whom I had not seen since we graduated from college in 1979. She mentioned how impressed she was that I hold a faculty position at Ohio State University. When I inquired about her teaching she remarked, "My career has not been glamorous like yours. I am still teaching kindergarten at the school where I began 33 years ago." I instantly replied that my career was no more impressive than hers. "We are both career teachers," I said, "and we are both public school teachers. The only thing that separates us is the building in which we teach."

As a teacher at OSU I depend on quality instruction at the high school level. Those teachers depend on the junior high teachers, who depend on the middle school teachers, who depend on the elementary school teachers, who depend on the kindergarten teachers,

who depend on the preschool teachers. One level is not more valuable than the other, each presents unique challenges, and each has its own rewards and liabilities. I believe it was Zoltán Kodály who said "the best teachers belong with the youngest students." If we accept that as true then it is my friend who teaches kindergarten who has the more impressive career. But to argue the point is a waste of time. The truth is we all play a role on the same team.

In May 2011 I had the privilege to speak at the memorial service for Dr. Linda Busarow. For over two decades Linda taught in the Fairborn, Ohio, school system. She ended her teaching career at Xavier University in Cincinnati. I first came to know Linda in 2004 when she enrolled as a doctoral student at Ohio State University. While a doctoral student, Linda served as a role model to many master's candidates and undergraduates. They quickly came to know that she possessed wisdom by virtue of time served. Linda let younger students know that she too was a student and that the only thing that sepa-

rated her from them was chronology and degree plan. She would get frustrated at OSU students if they acted in a manner incongruent with their station. One of my favorite memories is when she went after a new master's candidate for not helping set the stage for a rehearsal. The student looked bewildered and asked, "why do I have to set chairs?" Linda quickly responded, "when you see somebody who already has a doctoral degree stacking chairs you should probably be stacking chairs too. Get with the program and think like a teacher!" Linda Busarow never forgot whence she came, she knew as well as anyone that we are all on the same team, and that a "united we stand" attitude is the best way to ensure success in the teaching profession and in life.

We hold faculty positions because of our study and the teachers who chose to share their knowledge and experiences. Now we are the teachers and we are all needed to make the system work. We can best serve our students, our profession, and ourselves by never forgetting where we came from. ♦

## Less Talk, More Do

*Eric Kauffman, High School R&S Chair*

LESS TALK, MORE DO is the title of an upcoming choral handbook written by Professor Emeritus Richard Mathey of Bowling Green State

University. Those of us who spent any time with Professor Mathey will remember many, if not all, of his axioms. But how many of us are

truly incorporating them into our daily rehearsals? Remember, RD always said "Having a standard of excellence is a responsibility." It's

striving for excellence in each rehearsal that begets great results in a performance. Will you accept that responsibility?

Lately, as Professor Mathey travels around giving choral clinics and directing honor choirs, or as director of the Women's Chorus at Ohio Northern University, he has become accustomed to saying "it's in the book." Let's analyze and evaluate exactly what is contained within this choral handbook, the magic designed to enhance your daily rehearsal techniques. The outline of the book corresponds to the normal sequence of a rehearsal. We start with an explanation of *bel canto* singing in the choral setting. Remember the little "critter" RD would draw on the board to better illustrate where and how a sound was being produced? Remember him holding up his hand with his long narrow fingers shaping the back of the throat with his index finger representing the uvula while his thumb represented the tongue? These illustrations were pedagogically sound and simultaneously entertaining, and thus memorable (although nothing was as clear, or memorable, as hearing RD's golden tones model the sound he was describing)... "It's in the book!"

Remember when RD would freeze a chord and then "operate" on it? He would always say, when you go to see the doctor, before he can evaluate the severity of your ailment and administer any medicine, he must first isolate the problem. He would jokingly remark of having a little black bag as he makes his house calls. His elixirs were never intended to be a cure-all. He

would go through the process of modifying the vowel, a *staccatti oo*, the shake technique, and often as a last resort he would pull out the "ming" technique. All of these techniques were aimed at fixing a tuning issue through a better vocal technique. How many of us are diligently using these techniques still today? Do you need a refresher course?... "It's in the book!"

Do the letters CIP mean anything to you? If I told you they were an acronym would you remember what they stood for? Are they posted in your classroom or office somewhere? Do you approach each rehearsal with Consistency, Insistency, and Persistency? Do you need to hear the motivational speech from RD one more time about the importance of a great work ethic?... "It's in the book!"

Quickly list the items found on the right and left side of the board. Surely you remember the technical and musical sides of the board. The great Chef Boy RD certainly has his recipe for making great choral music and it all starts with knowing which ingredients to use, how much of said ingredients, and why. A little *anacrusis* here, a pinch of *rubato* there, a dash of *bubble*, followed by a sprinkle of *couplet*. Warning: "bubble" is a secret and special ingredient that can't be found in just any old music dictionary! If you have found yourself using way too much "leave it alone" lately, then you guessed it... "it's in the book!"

Body motion! The chest and ribcage in a firm, confident position. Physical presence through rhythmic precision. Remember the fa-

mous "it looks like this from behind" as RD would turn around and demonstrate a particular musical phrase while the only thing that moved on his body was the little tuft of hair just below his cowlick, the only patch of hair not matted down with sweat. Or who could forget his annual tribute to physical freedom the Native Americans showed in their tribal dances? Or my personal favorite, the story of King Richard, which was an entertaining depiction of how finesse can trump force every time. If you find yourself forgetting too many of the details to explain these concepts to your kids... "it's in the book!"

If you're like me, then you always marveled at RD's ability to not just read well but read the spots off of anything. He often commented after a first read through that "the score just dominated you and you must work to humble the score." Was that his way of suggesting we take a look at the score before rehearsal again tomorrow or just a motivational tool to inspire us to become better sight readers? Either way, his recommended process for melodic and rhythmic reading techniques as well as his suggestions for how to incorporate them into your daily rehearsal are "in the book!"

"Make it instant and make it dramatic" he would always say to the prospective music educators in the room. His rehearsal served as a music education laboratory for all who wanted to ascribe to his demanding yet simple system. Remember he always said "I only know five things!" From the importance of the literature selection to

the pace of a rehearsal, to the conducting style and gestures appropriate for you as a conductor or the piece you were conducting, if you were working to become a choral music education graduate from Bowling Green State University, you learned it from RD Mathey. If,

after reading this, you would like to take a brisk walk down memory lane...it's in the book! If you are reading this and have no idea what I'm talking about...it's in the book! If you would simply like to learn from one of the choral giants of ACDA/OCDA right here in your

own backyard, then fortunately, "it's in the book!"

*Less Talk, More Do: A Handbook of Choral Rehearsal Techniques* by Richard Mathey will be available this June at the OCDA Summer Conference. ♦

## Upcoming Events

### February 2012

#### Elementary Choir Festival

Sunday, February 12, 2:00–5:15 PM

Jackson Center for the Performing Arts  
7600 Fulton Drive NW, Massillon, OH

Call Suzanne Walters for more information:  
(330)830-8056, ext. 2223.

#### OMEA Professional Development Conference

February 16–18, Columbus, OH

### March 2012

#### Central Division ACDA Conference

March 7–10, Fort Wayne, IN

#### BGSU Men's Chorus tour performances in Ohio

Saturday, March 3, 7:30 PM

Macedonia United Methodist Church  
1280 E. Aurora Road, Macedonia, OH; 330-467-3169

Saturday, March 10, 7:00 PM

Elyria H.S., 601 Middle Avenue, Elyria, OH  
[jessiemark@elyriaschools.org](mailto:jessiemark@elyriaschools.org)

Sunday, March 11, 4:00 PM

Clyde H.S., 1015 Race Street, Clyde, OH

Adults \$10; students \$5. [www.communitiesforthearts.clyde.org](http://www.communitiesforthearts.clyde.org).

Sunday, March 18, 4:00 PM

St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
315 S. College Drive, Bowling Green, OH; 419-372-8288

#### BGSU Collegiate Chorale

Saturday, March 31, 7:30 PM

Firelands Presbyterian Church  
2626 E. Harbor Road, Port Clinton, OH

Adults \$15; students free. [www.firelandschurch.org/Link%20Pages/musical%20arts.htm](http://www.firelandschurch.org/Link%20Pages/musical%20arts.htm). Program features Bach's Easter cantata "Christ lag in Todesbanden," BWV 4.

### April 2012

#### BGSU Collegiate Chorale

Saturday, April 7, 8:00 PM

Kobacker Hall in the Moore Musical Arts Center  
Ridge Street and Willard Street, Bowling Green, OH  
419-372-8288

Program features Bach's Easter cantata "Christ lag in Todesbanden," BWV 4.

#### Intercollegiate Men's Choruses National Seminar 2012

April 12–14

Morehouse College  
830 Westview Drive SW, Atlanta, GA  
404-614-3783

### May 2012

#### The West Shore Chorale and Orchestra, conducted by John Drotleff, present Bach's: *B Minor Mass*

Sunday, May 6, 7:30 PM

Magnificat Center for the Performing Arts  
Hilliard and Wagar, Rocky River, OH

Soloists include Mitzi Westra, Phoebe Jevtovic, Tyler Skidmore, and Thomas Scurich. Adults \$15; students free.

### June 2012

#### OCDA Conference

June 18–20, Columbus, OH

#### National Symposium on American Choral Music (co-sponsored by ACDA and the Library of Congress)

June 29–30, Washington, D.C.

### July 2012

#### World Choir Games

July 4–14, Cincinnati, OH



# 2012 Summer Conference

## June 18-20, 2012

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**Charles Bruffy** is Artistic Director of the Kansas City Chorale, Phoenix Chorale, and the Kansas City Symphony Chorus. Mr. Bruffy's choirs record exclusively for Chandos Records. His recording of Grechaninov's *Passion Week* with the Kansas City and Phoenix Chorales was nominated for five 2007 Grammy® awards, including best classical album, and won the Grammy for Best Engineered Classical Album. His recording *Songs to the Blessed Virgin* won the 2008 Grammy award for Best Performance by a Small Ensemble.



**Paul E. Oakley** is the Director of Choral and Sacred Music Studies and a Professor of Music at Kentucky Wesleyan College in Owensboro, Kentucky, following a highly successful tenure as Artist-in-Residence in Choral Music and College Organist at Catawba College in Salisbury, North Carolina. Maestro Oakley is currently the Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Ethos Consortium, a fully professional chamber orchestra and chorus in Charlotte, North Carolina and is a frequent guest conductor for the New York City Chamber Orchestra. He is also the editor for a series of new choral compositions and historic choral editions for Colla Voce Music, Inc.



**Rebecca R. Reames** is an Associate Professor of Music in The Crane School of Music at the State University of New York at Potsdam where she teaches courses in music education and conducting, plus conducts two choirs. Under Dr. Reames' leadership, choirs have performed at the Beijing International Choral Festival, the Eastern American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Conference in New York City, and for the Eastern Music Educators National Conference in Baltimore. Dr. Reames is a Past President for New York ACDA.



**Frank Bianchi** is in his seventh season as director of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus and is an adjunct professor of music education at the Baldwin-Wallace College Conservatory of Music. He currently conducts and is the founding Director of the Baldwin-Wallace Men's Chorus. Mr. Bianchi retired from public school teaching after a very successful career. High School choral groups under his direction have sung at numerous district, regional, state, and national conventions of OMEA, MENC, and ACDA.



**Rollo Dilworth** is an active conductor, educator, and clinician who has taught choral music at the elementary, secondary, and university levels. He is a contributing author for the Essential Elements for Choir textbook series, published by the Hal Leonard Corporation/Glencoe Publications, and for "Music Express!" teachers magazine. His research interests are in the areas of African-American music and music education curriculum and instruction. Dr. Dilworth is an award-winning composer, his choral compositions being part of the Henry Leck Choral Series published with Hal Leonard Corporation and Colla Voce Music Company.

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## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The registration fee for members is \$149. Included in this fee are parking, the Tuesday business luncheon, the Tuesday evening social event, and reading session music (guaranteed only for workshop participants registering by June 2, 2012).

Fill out the registration form and return as indicated below. The registration must be postmarked by June 2, 2012, in order for the pre-registration fees to apply. After June 2, 2012, a higher fee structure is in place (see below). Reading session packets cannot be guaranteed for those who do not pre-register by the June 2 deadline.

A refund will be made if a written cancellation is received by June 2, 2012. After that date a deduction of \$80.00 will be made.

The option to earn graduate credit through Otterbein University is available this year **for pre-registrants only**. If you would like to receive a graduate credit registration packet, please indicate this in the appropriate space on the registration form below. A current copy of your teaching license must be mailed in with your registration form or brought with you to the conference.

Mail payment and Registration Form to: Brandon L. Moss, OCDA Summer Conference Coordinator, 7321 Skyline Dr. E., Apt. 308, Columbus OH 43235. Email or call Brandon with questions: ocdaconference@gmail.com, 614-499-8089.

Make checks payable to the **Ohio Choral Directors Association**.

## REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ \$39 student member/1<sup>st</sup> year teacher  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$84 student non-member (includes membership)

### Late Registration (postmarked after June 2, 2012)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$179 ACDA member  
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\_\_\_\_\_ \$144 retired non-member (includes membership)  
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\* New member price reflects \$21 discount, which equals the amount of OCDA dues for one year!

### Other Items of Interest

\_\_\_\_\_ \$8.00 I am interested in purchasing a Jersey Mike's box lunch for the Lunch Roundtable Discussions.

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\_\_\_\_\_ double occupancy \$21.56 per person, per night

\_\_\_\_\_ **linens (optional)- please add one-time fee of \$11.00 to total**

\$\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL CONFERENCE PAYMENT (Make checks payable to OCDA)

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