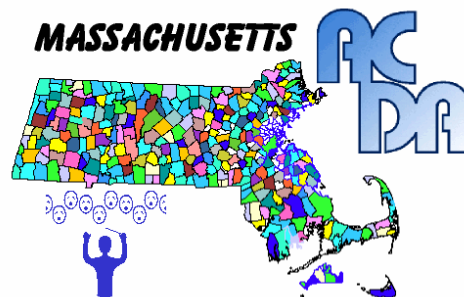


MASS SINGS

A publication of the Massachusetts Chapter
of the American Choral Directors Association

www.massacda.org

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hi, Colleagues,

Mass ACDA is off to a great new season with lots happening for our profession in choral music. I thought in this issue I would share a few ideas that might provoke a few thoughts among you. Research is now proving what we have all known, that the choral art has the most participants of all the arts and that its singers are the most committed to our society, most giving, and most caring.* So why are we so concerned about Rubrics and Assessment?

For many years my signature line has been a quote attributed to Thoreau, "The woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sing the best." As I have aged and mellowed I have become more and more committed to that concept. My concern is, will assessment scare or drive away some of those "birds" that don't sing very well? Would that then deprive those individuals of an experience and a resource that would allow them to have a richer and fuller life and to contribute to society in a more meaningful and caring way?

I have many times encountered former students who introduce themselves many years after graduation and tell me how much their choral experience meant to them and in many cases still does. Very often I look at them and frantically try to remember who they are often realizing that I am not experiencing a senior moment but rather that this was one of those quiet students who faithfully came to chorus but whom one was never sure they ever made a sound. They came, did their thing, participated and left without

anyone knowing, until now, how meaningful that opportunity was. I wonder, if I had instituted an assessment system of auditions, musical evaluations, etc., would that student have stayed in chorus?

I know there are teachers in other disciplines who don't understand, and most certainly there are administrators who would simply accuse the student of taking an 'easy' course for an easy grade. (I won't deliver my long sermon on the skills acquired, multicultural, multi-lingual, etc). In reality I believe that we greatly enrich the lives of these students and ultimately enrich our society and culture by creating a non-threatening environment for participation in choral music. Yes, I conduct my 'select' choirs, but I always have a place in a choir for anyone who wants to sing.

So before you climb on the assessment bandwagon, I urge you to think about our goals as musician/teachers, about providing opportunity for all, and about the incalculable value singing has to all 'birds' regardless of ability.

Peace, and keep singing.

Bob Eaton

"The woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sing the best."

*(If you are unfamiliar with the work of Chorus America go online to chorusamerica.org and look at some of the research they have done.)

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We invite you to explore our website for conference and workshop information, calendar, job listings, Executive Board contacts, our online newsletter, and much more.

Email your suggestions for features you'd like to see on our site to web@massacda.org.



Massachusetts ACDA's First High School Honor Choir Festival Is a Success!

Joseph Stillitano, Massachusetts ACDA High School R & S Chair, stillitj@mec.edu

On Saturday, November 8th, 160 students from across the state participated in the first Massachusetts ACDA High School Honor Choir Festival, which was held at UMASS Amherst. The students were selected based on director recommendation and then formed an all male choir and all female choir. The Men's Honor Choir was conducted by Brad Wells from Williams College and the Women's Honor Choir was conducted by Dr. Maredia Warren from New Jersey City University.

The singing rehearsals throughout the day allowed the students an opportunity to study and perform literature specific to their gender—something most of our students do not have the good fortune to do every day. The directors were then able to focus on gender specific vocal issues. In addition to this, we had two voice professors from UMASS Amherst, Bill Hite and Paulina Stark, volunteer their time to come and discuss further with the students the importance of healthy singing.

Both ensembles performed their sets of music as part of the UMASS Amherst annual Choral Spectrum concert in the Fine Arts Center Concert Hall. The eve-

ning culminated with all the students from every performing ensemble from the concert joining together for "Dona nobis pacem" from Johann Sebastian Bach's B Minor Mass.

I am very pleased with the way the entire day developed and I would like to thank the wonderful conductors for the day, Brad Wells and Dr. Maredia Warren; our amazing accompanists, Kathleen Bartkowski and Clifton J. Noble, Jr.; our state chapter president, Dr. Robert Eaton; the honor choir festival committee members Tom Berryman, Jeff Kempksie, William Pappazisis, and Kayla Werlin; the entire UMASS Amherst Music Department; and the UMASS Amherst Director of Choral Music, Dr. E. Wayne Abercrombie.

We are looking forward to next year's festival, which we hope will be an even bigger success than this year! If you are interested in helping with next year's festival, or if you have any comments about this year's festival, please contact me. Congratulations to everyone who helped unite over 290 students and assisted them in making beautiful together!



REPERTOIRE SUGGESTIONS FOR CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

Submitted by K.C. Conlan, R&S Chair for Children's Choirs

The Piper, by Cynthia Gray. Two-part, Heritage 15/1702H. Based on a charming text by William Blake, this lovely piece features easy antiphonal and canonic part-writing and an obbligato line for recorder (or C-Instrument).

Two Samoan Folk Songs, arranged by Christopher Marshall, Two-part, www.vaiaata.com. Children really enjoy these fun, traditional songs in the Samoan language, arranged by New Zealand composer Marshall. **Pusi Nofu** is about a cat, and **Minoi Minoi** is a dancing song.

To Olga, by Marjan Helms, Unison, Kjos. Suitable for older children, this hauntingly beautiful piece is from *Terezinlieder*, a setting of three poems written by children in a concentration camp. An excellent choice for working on tone and expressive singing.

Vocal Health & Technique Workshop - Jim Hejduk, Music and Worship R&S Chair

Almost 70 conductors and singers arrived bright-eyed and bushy-tailed at First Church in Marlboro the morning of October 25 for an invigorating day packed with information and hands-on practice on maintaining the health of the mature voice. Thanks to the superb organizational efforts of Bob Eaton and Michelle Graveline and the gustatory talent of the Assabet Valley Mastersingers, everyone was richly rewarded to a lively and fast-paced day that cost less than the price of a private voice lesson.

With the workshopers divided into three groups meeting simultaneously on a rotation with the distinguished guest clinicians, everyone was assured of absorbing a great deal in each hour-long session. Hazel O'Donnell, Mary Klimek, and Maria Weiss all provided helpful handouts and the unanimity, comprehensiveness, and complementarity of their individual messages were astounding - something that was remarked upon in the final Q&A session.

No one went home without a new catch phrase or bon mot to help them remember the highlights of the day. Hazel O'Donnell admonished us to "get out of the way" of our voices and reminded us that "The voice was made to work; we are not made to work the voice." Her handout included "10 Good Ways to Abuse Your Voice" (as we looked at each other guiltily) and, of course, the general rule about hydration is "SWPP" - sing wet and pee pale! We need to take as good care of our instrument as, say, a violinist or oboist would theirs. With references from Robert Neff Williams, D. K. Wilson and Blair McClosky, Ms. O'Donnell led us through a multitude of exercises for warming up, placement, and relaxation. "Don't be afraid to breathe!" she reminded us. How many of us have been told our singers to "smile"? Wrong! Rather, "Smile behind your eyes." All of this was tempered by Ms. O'Donnell's enthusiasm, wonderful sense of humor, and warm encouragement.

Mary Klimek, a self-professed "science geek" from the Mass. Eye and Ear Infirmary came equipped with

models, films on various phonations, and even a spectrograph. Hers was a triumph of technology in that nothing went wrong in the presentation! Like Hazel O'Donnell, she has a veritable Fort Knox of zingers and one-liners to aid in our understanding. A voice teacher herself, her practicality helped take us well beyond the sometimes stultifying arcana of vocal pedagogy. Likening our voice mechanism to a stereo system, she made technical jargon immediately understandable. Her description of

**This was a day's workshop
worthy of a national convention.**

the larynx, the vocal folds, and the like was marvelous in its common sense approach. Letting us know that vocal aging results in a loss of neurons, a loss of "goo" and the lowering of the larynx and how to counteract that as singers was reassuring in and of itself. Ms. Klimek made several good references to choral situations, trumpeted the advantages of "hums and yums" and reminded us that singing is good for our mental health as well.

"Forward" and "Up" were two terms that Maria Weiss used almost as a mantra in her sessions on Alexander Technique. We literally saw people gain in stature, assume stately postures, and combat some orthopedic pain with her help and encouragement. Eager volunteers served as her models and, while reminding that an Alexander regimen is best handled one-on-one over an extended period of time, Ms. Weiss's short-term results were tantalizingly exciting. She was adept at separating fact from mythology and we discovered what a broad range of people come to Alexander Technique lessons (It's not just singers, you know). Often it's people suffering from back pain, repetitive strain injuries, headaches, and muscle spasms. The technique's application to a variety of performing artists bespeaks its universality. Weiss, like O'Donnell and Klimek, is an active singer herself. All three brought us an uplifting and miraculously uniform message from their unique perspectives. This was a day's workshop worthy of a national convention.

MENS CHOIRS REPERTOIRE SUGGESTIONS

Submitted by John Delorey,, R&S Chair for Men's Choirs

Cindy - Arranged by Mack Wilberg. Commissioned by the Turtle Creek Chorale for performance at the 1993 ACDA convention. TTBB with 4 hands one piano, string bass, xylophone, wood block and tambourine. Very singable, with much textural and rhythmic interest. Audiences love it!

Verbum Patris umanatur - 13th century (Cambridge University MS), Oxford University Press. This is a great early music learning piece. Rough, discordant passages resolving to open fifths give it a really nice sound and effect. I have often added percussion and used rhythmic modes for select verses. And for a while, you can get a free download while they feature their new carol book (nice collection!), from <http://www.oup.co.uk/music/xmas/download/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, March 21, 2004 - ACDA Children's Choir Festival

A day of sharing musical experiences and performances for Children's Choirs. Events include a 6:00 PM concert featuring the premiere of a newly-commissioned piece for combined choirs by Clifton J. Noble, Jr., and a pizza party following. Held at Smith College's Sweeney Hall, Northampton, MA.

Contact: K.C. Conlan at 413-253-7346, or kcconlan@comcast.net

Friday, May 7, 2004 - COMMUNITY CHORUS FESTIVAL

On Friday evening, May 7, 2004, Mass ACDA will host a community chorus festival. It will be held at Weston High School, where Therese Provenzano is choral director. There will be a joint rehearsal on Monday, May 3, at Weston High School and a shorter rehearsal Friday evening before the concert. Interested directors should contact Dr. Michelle Graveline, R & S Chair for Community Choruses, at mgraveli@assumption.edu, or call 508-767-7386.

Friday, May 28, 2004 - ACDA Junior High / Middle School Festival

An outstanding choral festival with Choral Professional familiar with the adolescent and changing voice. Held at East Middle School, Braintree. Contact: Chet Laskosky cl3rd@yahoo.com For more information, visit www.massacda.org. To register, download the Registration Form, fill out, and mail to Chet no later than May 1, 2004.

JAZZ / SHOW CHOIR NEWS

Greetings from your new R&S Jazz/Show Choir chair! My name is Cassandra Morgan and I teach at Belmont High School in Belmont, MA. The first news to share with you from the national headquarters is that the R&S Jazz/Show Choir R&S position is going to be split into two different positions. There are many show choirs throughout our state and we certainly hope this will encourage membership and support for those choirs.

Over the past few years many New England states have developed all-state jazz choirs. Massachusetts has been discussing this for some time, but with no definite answer that it will ever become part of our all-state program. The Massachusetts ACDA Board would like to know if there would be interest in an all-state jazz choir camp during our summer session. Clinicians would be brought in to work with the students, and a concert would be presented at the conclusion. Auditions would be required, and it could be a great All-State jazz Choir with inclusive rhythm section. Scat singing, improvisation style, microphone technique, and rhythm section advice could be areas of discussion and work with our students. If you and your students would be interested in this experience, please e-mail me at cmorgan02@aol.com. We will the pursue audition procedures and dates.

At the National ACDA Convention in New York City this year, several new titles were listed in the reading session. Publishers include Warner Bros., Sound Music Publications, Hal Leonard, and UNC Jazz Press. A few beginning selections for this year follow.

The National R&S Chair for Jazz and Show Choirs is Vijay Singh.

I hope this information helps you with your year, and wish you the best with your jazz and show choirs.

1. Come Fly with Me	SATB	Kirby	Warner Bros
2. I've Got You under My Skin	SATB	Teena Chinn	Belwin Pub.
3. Stormy Weather	SATB	Jay Althouse	Alfred Music
4. I've Got My Love to Keep Me	Warm (seasonal)	Ed Lojeski	Hal Leonard
5. New York State of Mind	SATB	Berlin/Fox	Hal Leonard
6. Sing, Sing, Sing	SATB	Prima/Meader	Shawnee Press

MASS ACDA

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