

OCD A NEWS

Volume X, Number 3
March 1991

BULLETIN OF THE OHIO CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

FROM THE OCDA PRESIDENT

Was the music on your last concert of a quality that enabled your singers to grow musically and personally? Was the program balanced with new material amidst a few numbers repeated from the recent past? Did the musical settings enhance, illuminate, intensify, or deepen the purpose or message of the text?

In preparing your group did you make sure that the meanings of all words in languages other than English were understood by everybody? And did you go over English texts with a thorough understanding of what was being said? Was there vocal/musical preparation which would then enable the group to represent those texts in performance in a way that allowed the audience to share your excitement about each piece? Did your group communicate? Were your listeners touched by both music and text? Were they moved by what took place during your singing? Did your singers' faces reflect emotional changes in the texts, whether that emotion was joy, praise, love, rage, fear, surprise, prayer, disappointment, passion, pride, or humor?

These pointed inquiries are not addressed just to directors of large or advanced choirs—we have

OCDA/ACDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday-Saturday, July 18-20, 1991

The OCDA Summer Conference at Kent State University;
C. M. Shearer, host

Wednesday-Saturday, February 19-22, 1992

The ACDA Central Division Convention in Chicago

July 1992

The OCDA summer conference at the University of Cincinnati;
Earl Rivers, host

seen inspiring results achieved with even the smallest of amateur groups. And many choirs—even some chosen for performance on ACDA convention programs—fail to communicate as they strive for a "perfection" that becomes predictable, mechanical, inhibiting, affected, manipulated, and, in a word, dull.

Within the parameters of correct style for all historical periods there still exists the responsibility and opportunity for expression, for emoting with that most beautiful of all instruments, the human voice. Whether or not our groups grow to encounter these possibilities is entirely up to us, their choral directors.

Wade Raridon

COMMUNITY CHORUS CONCERNS

Greetings to all who are involved in Community Chorus work throughout the state. I hope that your work is going well and that your chorus is prospering.

It occurs to me that OCDA might provide for us a support network by circulating information about what each of us is doing, how we are doing it, and ideas for development and future events. Toward that end I ask that everyone in OCDA involved in community chorus work send me a letter with your name, your group's name, mailing address and telephone number, this year's

(continued on page 2)

CONCERNS, from page 1

description or history of the ensemble. I will then collate this information and send it back to all of you. Perhaps there will be some interesting results, such as concert exchanges, new ideas for literature, of developing new colleagues and friends. Send your responses to:

Dr. Edward Maclary
School of Music
University of Akron
Akron, OH 44325

My telephone number at the University is 216/972-6204.

Also, while at the OMEA conference in Cleveland I ran into Donna Tozer Wipfli, a long-time friend who now conducts the Mastersingers Community Chorus in the Toledo area. She and I thought that it might be a good idea to have some sort of Community Chorus Festival in the near future. The idea would be to bring together in a central location as many directors and chorus members as possible to be taught and conducted by a master teacher experienced in working with adult amateur singers. If you are interested in this or some other sort of event, let me hear about it as part of your response.

Best wishes to all for success on your Spring concerts.

Ed Maclary

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

I am not sure whether I need to offer an explanation and/or apology for something which may or may not have happened to your copy of the last issue of the **NEWS**. Overwhelmed with the crush of work which appears at the beginning of any semester, our Office Services people were able to print the piece in-house, but were then forced to send it to a commercial establishment in Newark for folding. The extra wrinkle of folding in a copy of the new Membership Application and stapling the package was just going to take too much time. The copy which arrived in my mailbox was in fine condition, but the extras which were returned to my after the fact were sloppily done, even a bit mangled. I can only hope that these represented the rejects and that none of you received a copy in less-than-ideal shape.

I have only a couple of experiments to offer this time around, both of them instituted on my own initiative.

I had already contemplated the idea of committing to the page some reflections on the discussion engendered by a

panel which I chaired in Youngstown last July, when Wade's stirring challenge to all of us arrived in the mail, fortifying my resolve to create what I hope will be the first of many **FORUM** articles, offering us a means of sharing ideas about matters of concern.

The other experiment involves re-instituting the publishing of a calendar of choral events around the state. The two pitfalls involved in such a procedure: that the result will be so random as to be misleading, or that I will be deluged with so much material that the result will become unmanageable. What appears in this issue represents only the odds and ends of material which I happen to have in hand at the moment and covers only the spring season. If you like the idea, send me calendar listings for the summer. For what seem like obvious reasons, I plan to include only events under the direction of present OCDA members.

Remember that the deadline for submission of material to be included in the final issue of the year will be April 29.

William Osborne

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**BEGINNING LITERATURE
FOR THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR**

O MUSIC, words and music by Lowell Mason, arranged and edited by Doreen Rao (version I for unison voices and keyboard, version II for a two- or three-voice canon unaccompanied or with keyboard; Boosey & Hawkes B6352). This piece is a favorite program-opener for many choirs, including the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus, which is directed by Editor Rao. It is ideal for beginners because of its stepwise motion, sequential melodic patterns and simple harmonic structure. The canon of version II provides a very natural yet musical way to begin developing part singing, since the children are singing more than just a part that harmonizes the melody.

THE OLD CARRION CROW, a Nova Scotian folksong arranged by Mary Goetze (two-part treble or unison voices with piano; Boosey & Hawkes B6365). This folksong tells an amusing story with interspersed nonsense syllables and varied tempi to help tell the tale. The piano part is quite lively and creates some moments of disso-

nance. The part writing is quite attainable by a choir that has worked on canons and partner melodies.

THE CAT CAME BACK, an American folksong arranged by Mary Goetze (two-part treble voices with Orff [alto and bass glockenspiels and soprano xylophone] and percussion [sandblock, suspended cymbal, slapstick and timpani] instruments; from the collection *The Cat Came Back* by Mary Goetze, Magnamusic-Baton, Inc., 1984. The classic story about Farmer Brown and the cat that always managed to find his way home is told in this piece, which is approachable by any choir which has sung rounds and has had some experience with Orff instruments. Except for verse three, it is performed with a triple swing. A real audience and choir pleaser!

ALL THE PRETTY LITTLE HORSES, an Appalachian folksong adapted and arranged by Ruth Artman (unison voices and

keyboard with optional flute, bells, finger cymbals and hand signs; Columbia Pictures Publications SV8550). A beautiful arrangement that fits children's voices well and is only enhanced by the optional instrumentation and signing of its text. Challenge your young singers by dividing them into two sections from m. 37 to the end, one section singing the voice part, the other the flute

THE WATER IS WIDE, an American folksong adapted by Luigi Zaninelli (two-part voices, either SA or TB, with keyboard; Shawnee Press E-83). Each of the three verses creates a different demand for the young singer. Verse I, for unison voices, offers dynamic changes, legato lines and expressive singing. Verse II offers two-part harmony. Verse III offers a two-part round which ends in three-part harmony at a pianissimo level. This arrangement provides you with a worthwhile transition to more difficult literature.

Lora Moore
Children's Chorus Chair

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**CHORAL PERFORMANCES
ACROSS THE BUCKEYE STATE**

March

- 23 Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe* and the Brahms *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, performed by the Akron Symphony Orchestra Chorus
- 24 The Mozart *Requiem*, performed by the Festival Chancel Choir of the Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian with Chamber Orchestra conducted by Paul McGahie; Forest Hill Church, Cleveland Heights, 7:30 PM
- 29 The Mozart *Requiem*, performed by The Chancel Choir and Orchestra of the Worthington United Methodist Church, conducted by Maurice Casey; 7:30 PM

April

- 12 PDQ Bach's *Oedipus Tex* plus excerpts from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and Bernstein's *Candide*, performed by Cantari Lite of The Cantari Singers of Columbus, conducted by Maurice Casey; The Villa Milano, 8:30 PM
- 14 *Alexander's Feast* by Handel, performed by The Denison Concert Choir and Orchestra, conducted by William Osborne; Swasey Chapel, Denison University, Granville, 7:30 PM
- 19 The Denison Singers in a program of works by George Swope '69, Bartłomiej Pekiel, Hindemith, Mozart, Dudley Buck, Copland and Bernstein, conducted by William Osborne; Burke Recital Hall, Denison University, Granville, 8:00 PM (also in Tiffin on the 20th and Cleveland on the 21st).
- 21 The Heidelberg Chamber Singers, conducted by Jay Mann; Brenneman Music Hall, Heidelberg College, Tiffin, 4:00 PM
- 27 The Heidelberg Concert Choir in a program of music by Heidelberg composers, conducted by Jay Mann; Brenneman Music Hall, 7:00 PM
- 28 The Heidelberg Singing Collegians, conducted by Pamela Wurgler; Brenneman Music Hall, 4:00 PM
- 28 The Bernstein *Chichester Psalms* sung by the Akron Symphony Chorus; the Brahms *Neues Liebeslieder Waltzes* sung by the University of Akron Concert Choir, and the Vivaldi *Gloria* sung by the University of Akron Freshman Chorale

**HERE AND THERE:
A MISCELLANY**

Frank Jacobs announces that for the third of four concerts in this, their inaugural season, the Central Summit County Choral society will feature the Dave Brubeck Quartet in two of that noted jazz performer/composer's own sacred works: the *Variations on the Chant "Pange Lingua"* and the *Voice of the Holy Spirit*. They are scored for chorus (the CSCCS's Masterworks Chorale), brass ensemble (The University of Akron's Paragon Brass Quintet), organ and jazz quartet. The evening will also include an improvised jazz set played by the Quartet alone. The event will take place in the Goodyear Theater, 1144 East Market St., Akron, on March 15 at 8:00 PM. Tickets @ \$20 and \$15.

Ed Maclary sends word of some Summer workshops at the University of Akron: The Alexander Technique, taught June 17-21 by William Conable; Comprehensive Skill-building for Vocal/Choral Teachers, taught June 23-28 by Tana Alexander, Clifford Billions, John Cooksey, Lyle Dye, Edward Maclary, Alice Pryor and Mary Schiller; Healthful Classroom Speaking/Singing, taught July 8-11 by Clifford Billions; the Kodaly Approach: Techniques for Children's Choirs and Music Classes, taught July 15-19 by Nancy Cooper.

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OBERLIN COMMUNITY CHAMBER SINGERS MARK QUARTER CENTURY

The Oberlin Community Chamber Singers will celebrate its silver anniversary with a concert featuring highlights of its 25 years of music-making in Finney Chapel on May 18.

In a small town where Oberlin College has for decades fielded first-rate choirs, how can an additional singing ensemble with no institutional affiliation but with equally high standards maintain itself? The Oberlin Community Chamber Singers is unique. Each

of its concerts has a focus such as "Lauds and Legends of Christmas," in which Respighi's *Laud to the Nativity* was followed by carols and stories which tell the Christmas legends. The OCCS has presented both a program of music by women composers as well as an evening called "In Sweet Jubilation," an original Renaissance music drama. Alice Parker wrote the cantata *Charity and Love* (with strings and harp) for the Chamber Singers' 20th

anniversary in 1986. Zenobia Perry, professor emeritus at Wilberforce University, and Ward Swingle will write new works for the OCCS this year. The May 18 concert will also include music by Bach, Brahms, Mozart and Poulenc, as well as spirituals and folksongs.

Carol Longworth, OCCS' Music Director, is also Director of Music at First Church in Oberlin. A longtime OCDA member, she has given presentations to both OCDA and ACDA on Creative Planning for Community Choirs and choral music by women composers.

W A N T E D !
SCADS OF OCDAERS AT KSU IN JULY
DETAILS SOON FROM C.M.

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FORUM

AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

OCDAs who attended those vivid and demanding days arranged by President Raridon for us last July at Youngstown State may recall an afternoon panel discussion whose announced title had something to do with a vocal cart hitched to a musical horse. As is often true in such circumstances, after introductory statements by myself as chair and panel members Mary Fran McClintock and Ben Locke, the public discussion which followed darted hither and yon and our allotted time expired without our having come to closure.

What I want to do in this first FORUM article is to revive and refocus the idea which gave rise to my suggestion of such a discussion, with the hope that it will in turn

provoke thoughtful response and further public exchange of ideas relevant to our profession during these troubled times.

Perhaps our announced title ought to have been "Choral Conductors: An Endangered Species?" I don't mean to raise the usual questions which have rightfully preoccupied all of us recently, such as "Where have all the choral singers gone?," but rather one reflected in the common division of music-makers into singers and

musicians, a distinction usually made in an offhand manner by instrumentalists and their conductors, but one which probably displays their consignment of us (and solo singers) into second-class citizenship. How many times have we endured the condescending observation that, after all, he or she is only a choral conductor. I recall a friend who used to teach at Indiana University telling me of the contemptuous refusal by the student concertmaster of the orchestra with which he was assigned to work to meet with him

that I was doubly concerned since, as an organist, I was a member of another species under even more distress. Organists have managed almost totally to disengage themselves from the mainstream, mostly playing unimaginative programs in a stodgy fashion designed to alienate all but the most devoted organ buffs. Their response as a profession has been to claim that, if a problem exists, it is not of their making, that outsiders must develop special insights in order to understand the unique challenges of the instrument and

what results therefrom. To which most outsiders properly say hogwash and stay way from organ recitals in countless droves. After all, music ought to communicate with more than the hardy few who are asked

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and discuss matters like bowing since, after all, this was only a choral concert. The not-so-subtle implication was that the choral conductor was probably not well-informed enough and certainly not important enough to warrant use of the concertmaster's time. I suspect that by now that violinist is working somewhere in the professional world with those attitudes still intact.

Do we deserve that sort of treatment? Last summer I said

to leave their common sense at the door. Earlier in this century, admittedly under dramatically different social and cultural conditions, organists played what seem like to this student of the period innumerable recitals before SRO crowds which sometimes totalled as many as 10,000 auditors. Could the same fate befall the choral profession, and for analogous reasons? I recall a conversation over breakfast with Thomas Dunn many years ago during

which he reflected on his decision to abandon a promising career as a church organist in favor of what became a distinguished career as a choral conductor, wondering whether he hadn't jumped from the frying pan into the fire.

Admittedly our circumstances are much different from those of our fellow instrumentalists. Those factors which make ours what I once heard called The Great Democratic Art need not be recounted here. We must be multifaceted teachers, one of whose prime responsibilities is the nurturing of the vocal skills and vocal health of those who actually make the music with and for us, whether we are dealing with young novices or seasoned professionals. At least the local members of our panel last summer were attempting to raise the

question of means and ends. Have we as a profession become so fixed on crucial matters like blend, balance and intonation (about which it is usually easier to find consensus) that we ignore

at our peril matters like musical understanding and communication (which are at least to some degree subjective and thus trickier to evaluate)? Jim Myers' wonderfully eloquent and utterly persuasive statement from the floor insisting on the primacy of teaching good vocal practice in the choral rehearsal room as well as Professor Neuen's labelling of himself primarily as a voice teacher (which seemed to many utterly self-con-

tradictory in light of his work with us) elicited whoops of approval, yet to some of us merely deflected and validated the issue. In fact, the atmosphere to me evoked a sense of a spontaneous desire on the part of many in the community to shoot the messengers, people concerned that if choral concerts do not have the same integrity and communicate with the same intensity of, say, orchestral concerts, they will become increasingly irrelevant to those outside the circle of wagons that at least some who cheered in Youngstown seemed implicitly to be creating in their own minds. Shouldn't we challenge the validity of choral programs put together with little uncoordinated dabs of this and that and then sung, perhaps perfectly from a technician's stand-

process which merges the artistic and social urges in that unique way which can offer the ultimate satisfaction when it all works properly. We will always remain teachers, but should we aspire to be teachers only of craft, or of culture as well? Ours is certainly a daunting task, many of whose challenges are eloquently summarized by that patriarch of our profession, Howard Swan, in that compendium of his writings, *Conscience of a Profession*. Let me close with a collage of several of his stirring challenges:

"Those of us who work in the classroom or in the concert hall will be required to be fine musicians—with all that this term implies—but also educators, planners, listeners, interpreters, communicators and sincere lovers of

everything in this world that is beautiful. The art of communication is one means by which a concerned teacher will make his contribution to the sound of music at the present time. If this sound is to be honest and satisfying and

splendid it will be so because he is willing to teach himself much of the technical, the historical, the appreciative and the aesthetic principles which are embodied in every musical score. [But] our responsibility as choral musicians does not stop with the teaching of music. We must find time and energy for thought and study so that we can help teach people how to live."

William Osborne

"Our responsibility as choral musicians does not stop with the teaching of music."

—Howard Swan

point, but ultimately with little understanding and involvement?

Perhaps those of us whose original training was not as singers unavoidably have a different perspective, but I still can't believe that (for example) my Denison undergraduates or your usual elementary school kid or the average church choir volunteer comes to us primarily to learn how to sing. I suspect that they all want to partake of that almost mystical

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