

# OCD A NEWS

Volume X, Number 4  
May 1991

BULLETIN OF THE OHIO CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

## FROM THE OCDA PRESIDENT

Choral directors speak:

"Surely other choral directors have problems similar to those I have to deal with. If only I could talk with some of them and exchange solutions, or at least learn how they cope with today's students, schools, churches, budgets . . ."

"Some new, exciting repertoire would really rekindle my interest, and I would be more excited about the coming choral year. I can't face another year of repeating the same tired pieces I've done so many times already . . ."

"To sing with a group of good singers again as I remember having done in school would be such a blessing to me right now. What a lift it would be for me to work as part of a choir of good voices, good musicians, all under the leadership of a name conductor—it could make my year! . . ."

"My rehearsal procedures and techniques will be the same as they have been for years, and my group will probably be able, again, to predict what I will do, how I will say it, and even the order in which it will all occur. Unless—perhaps I could somehow gain some new, even clever or challenging techniques of working with my singers, some new ideas on how we might perform together in more effective and meaningful ways . . ."

"There are choral director friends I have known in the past but have not seen for what seems to be ages. How wonderful it would be if we could talk again, encourage each

other, share a joke, compare gripes . . ."

"Voices of different age groups still baffle me. I'd be a better vocal-choral professional if I understood more of the vocal differences which are present in singers of diverse ages, no matter what my particular specialty is. A discussion-illustration session would make my work better because of my increased knowledge of voices and how they grow and function . . ."

Six statements of needs expressed as another choral/school year draws to its final days. If we are honest, at least one (and possibly several) of them express a feeling or thought we each have about our own work or life as a choral director. OCDA attempts to address these and other areas of concern, particularly in its main activity of the year, the annual Summer Conference.

C. M. Shearer, our host for the OCDA Summer Conference of 1991, has created what promises to be an uplifting, informative, "battery-

charging" three days at Kent State University. But, typically, only one in six of our membership bother to attend the annual conference. Let's improve that record this July 17-20.

Give yourself a gift! See you at Kent State in July.

Wade Raridon

## OCDA/ACDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Wednesday-Saturday, July 17-20, 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

## HERE AND THERE: A MISCELLANY

**Elmer Thomas** announces the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music 1991 Summer Choral Conducting Workshop to be held June 19-23 with Elmer as Director and Dale Warland as Guest Conductor.

The Workshop will offer an opportunity to work with internationally renowned conductors focusing on conducting and rehearsal techniques, repertoire, and musical



analysis and styles. Special features will include rehearsals and a final concert in Corbett Auditorium with the Workshop Festival Chorus, made up of all participants and selected guest choirs from the Cincinnati area, conducted by Dale Warland, and another concert given by the Professional Chamber Choir, also conducted by Mr. Warland. Conducting lessons with Warland, Thomas and John Leman will be offered as well.

For further information contact Elmer Thomas/College-Conservatory of Music/University of Cincinnati/Cincinnati, OH 45221-0003/ (513) 556-2696 or (513) 556-9422.

**Thomas Havelka** announces the Thirteenth Annual Coshocton Show Choir Invitation on March 7, 1992. This competition for high school jazz/swing/show choirs is sponsored by Essence, the Coshocton High School show choir, as well as the Coshocton Music Boosters, Inc. Fifteen groups will be selected to compete. November 15, 1991 is the deadline for entries. For further information, write Thomas E. Havelka, Contest Chairman/Coshocton High School/1205 Cambridge Road/Coshocton, OH 43812. The Grand Champion of the 1991 invitational was the Encore Entertainment Company from Medina High School. The runners-up were Melodymen and Melodettes from Cuyahoga Falls High School, Music in Motion from Solon High School and Singers Unlimited from Marysville High School.

**Frank Jacobs** announces the 1991-92 season of the Central Summit County Choral Society's Masterworks Chorale: October 26, the **Mozart Requiem**; December 14, Britten's **St. Nicholas**; April 17, the **St. Matthew Passion** of Bach; and June 20, the **Glagolitic Mass** of Janacek. In addition, there will be a children's choir concert on May 22.

## THE DENISON SINGERS AT AGE 30

The Denison Singers was organized in 1961 to study and perform the Italian and Elizabethan madrigal literature. However, during the intervening years the scope of the group's interests has expanded to include music of all periods and styles appropriate for a 16-voice chamber chorus. The Singers have toured regularly since 1963, having appeared in 24 states and the District of Columbia. Tours abroad include Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland and France in 1972 and again in 1983, Romania in 1975, Spain in 1981, and Poland and The Soviet Union in 1990. The Singers have also made radio and television programs both in the United States and Europe. Unusual events include presentations of Gian Carlo Menotti's **The Unicorn, Gorgon and Manticore** with Dancentral and

the Columbus Symphony Orchestra.

A considerable number of the 202 individuals who have been Denison Singers over the last three decades will gather in Granville June 19-23 to sing and socialize. Three days of rehearsals will culminate in a concert on Sunday afternoon at 3:00 PM in Swasey Chapel which will include three works written by Singers for the event, as well as an anthem written in 1986 for the Silver Anniversary gathering by a graduate of 1969 who died suddenly last September. The concert will also include the **Sancta Maria**, K. 273 and **Missa Brevis** in F, K. 192 by Mozart, in which The Singers will be assisted by a string ensemble made up of members of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. The afternoon will conclude with a grab bag of pieces from the group's past which have been nominated by returning members. The concert will be conducted by William Osborne, founder of the group.

## CHORAL PERFORMANCES ACROSS THE BUCKEYE STATE

### June

- 22 A Celebration of Freedom, Liberty and Patriotism; The Central Summit County Choral Society Masterworks Chorale with brass and percussion, conducted by Frank Jacobs; Cuyahoga Falls High School Auditorium, 8:00 PM
  - 23 The Denison Singers 1961-91, conducted by William Osborne; Swasey Chapel, Granville, 3:00 PM
- Jester Hairston and His Music; The Chancel Choir and Friends of the Worthington United Methodist Church, Jester Hairston, guest conductor; 7:30 PM

### July

- 21 Music by English composers, including Purcell, Byrd and Howells, as well as the first performance of a commissioned work by Jeffrey Van for guitar and choir; The Lancaster Chorale, conducted by Robert Trocchia
- 25 A Mozart program, including the **Ave Verum** and **Solemn Vespers**; The Lancaster Chorale and Lancaster Festival Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Gary Sheldon



## SUMMER CONFERENCE PROSPECTS

Plans are almost complete for this year's OCDA Summer Conference, which will be held in the Student Center on the Kent State University campus July 17-20.

The conference will begin on Wednesday at 6:00 PM with a dinner for all directors who conduct or have an interest in children's choirs. Following the meal there will be an interest session on techniques for developing and improving a children's chorus and a reading session on music appropriate for younger voices. Even though you may not work with young voices, you will find the literature to be read of high quality and valuable for almost any age group.

There will be total of nine interest sessions, seven reading sessions, and seven rehearsals of the directors' chorus. You will leave with about 140 complimentary scores of high quality representing all major historical periods, apt for choruses of different ages, some "oldies-but-goodies," and some pieces on the "cutting edge" of new choral techniques.

The diverse interest sessions will concentrate on increasing our students' interest, involvement, understanding and appreciation of distinctive choral literature. The three sessions presented by Dr. Ruth Whitlock, Professor of Music Edu-

cation at Texas Christian University, will help the conductor/teacher develop the skills to teach the various elements which allow music to be called an art, or, in the words of that dean of American choral music, Howard Swan, "those things in music that cause it to be great."

James Mismas, Professor of Voice at Kent State, Music Director of the United Church of Christ in Kent, and former conductor of the Akron Symphony Chorus, will offer two sessions on teaching vocal production in the choral rehearsal. Jim is an outstanding voice teacher who knows how the voice works in the choral context. He will offer many ideas on how to improve the vocal skills of your choir.

Benjamin Locke, choral director at Kenyon College and conductor of the Knox County Symphony Orchestra, will present a session on a fascinating topic: "Accessible avant-garde music - How to be progressive without losing your choir, your mind, or your job." This literature is one of Ben's specialties. While on tour this year, the KSU Chorale sang an informal joint concert with his choir and we were mesmerized by their performance of this fresh and stimulating music.

Have you always wanted to perform some of the beautiful Russian music in the original language? Vladimir Morosan of The Russian Choral Society will present an interest/reading session on Russian diction and choral literature. You will leave with a packet of Russian cho-

ral music, the knowledge of where to obtain multiple copies, and the ability to teach your choir how to pronounce Russian texts properly. You will also have a chance to meet and work with Garath Morrell, the new director of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus, who will present a session on choral techniques.

All directors will have the opportunity of observing, learning and singing with Rodney Eichenberger, one of the country's most prominent choral conductors. Eichenberger, who holds the senior position in choral music at Florida State University, will work for about eight hours preparing us for a concert of diverse literature which will be performed at noon on Saturday.

*Gemütlichkeit haben wir natürlich auch!* Thursday evening we will sing-along to the um-pa-pa of the Red Garter Dixieland Band. Friday evening will offer a more sedate wine and cheese reception with some rather outrageous entertainment.

All OCDA members will receive a pre-conference mailing at the end of May containing full information about housing, meals, academic credit, and a detailed program.

Visit the exhibits, renew friendships and make new friends, talk shop, and come away refreshed and excited about the possibilities for a new year. Circle July 17-20 on your calendars. We'll see you then.

C. M. Shearer  
Conference Director

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**A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR**

I assume that the News will be a topic of the discussion when the OCDA Board meets in July. Pending any possible changes in policy, frequency, or focus, let me announce September 23 as a deadline for submission of material for inclusion in the first issue of Volume XI. I will hope to have something on its way to you by the middle of October.

I had envisioned a kind of communal report on the vast panorama offered by the ACDA conclave in Phoenix, gathering an array of viewpoints and memories from those members of the Board who were in attendance. But, alas, at this frantic time in the program year there was no response to my request for contributions. In lieu of a team report, Wade suggested that I attempt an overview from a personal perspective.

It should have been virtually impossible to come away from the feast disgruntled, excepting weather which was frequently on the chilly, damp side. There were, of course, the predictable highs:

the effortless grace of Chanticleer followed immediately by the gripping intensity of The Westminster Choir; the overwhelming facility of Helmuth Rilling's Oregon Bach Festival forces in the B minor Mass (although I was troubled by tempi which often seemed artificially slow or fast, verging on an affected display of virtuosity); the magnificent luxuriance of Paul Salamunovich's St. Charles Borromeo Choir with pianist Robert Hunter, whose exquisite sensitivity and ability to evoke orchestral textures at the keyboard might have shamed some of the other "accompanists" who limped lamely through their assignments.

Other organizations offered special delight, simply because their sterling performances were so unexpected: the California Choral Company, a group of 45 professionals from the Central Valley area around Stockton which meets only seven weekends a year, but dazzled us with double choir works by Schütz, Frank Martin and Bach; The Sebastian Singers, one of the three constituent groups sponsored by the Bach Society of Minnesota, who sang wonderfully well, coming no closer in their pro-

gram to old JSB than son Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach; the vivid multi-cultural program sung in no fewer than seven languages by the University Choir of the University of Colorado; and, although he apparently jetted in and out for his cameo appearance, patriarch Robert Shaw's resounding eloquence which brought his congregation to its feet in a ringing tribute to the importance of the man to our profession.

The richness of the Phoenix diet was perhaps manifested in the feeling of at least some that the Toronto Children's Chorus which, under founder Jean Ashworth Bartle has become a kind of benchmark of such organizations, seemed a bit lackluster juxtaposed with the spellbinding versatility of the kids in the colorfully attired Tapiola Choir, all of whom seemed to be able not only to sing with utterly charming eloquence, but also to play the violin and/or piano and to dance with sure-footed precision. In fact, the authority of Bartle's charges was also challenged by John Tuttle's Canadian Children's Opera Chorus, who beguiled us with a presentation of Britten's *The Golden Vanity*.

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There were, naturally, some disappointments. The several midwestern college choirs seemed stiff and uncommunicative. The National Honors Choir appeared hampered in its presentation of the Beethoven C Major Mass by conductor Douglas McEwen's unimaginative head-in-the-score relationship to them. A brilliantly conceived session on The Choral Heritage of William Dawson was hampered by uneven performance standards and the constant posturing of organizer Eugene Simpson, who billed himself as Headliner/Clinician, although he functioned in neither capacity.

I was annoyed by the enormous attention paid to the late evening appearance by Take 6, with hordes of conventioners and performers indulging in almost unseemly behavior in their quest for seating, only then to desert the hall in hordes as tedium set in.

Some concluding odds and ends: Several of us were struck by the Dallas phenomenon. No fewer than three high school and one middle school groups from the Dallas metropolitan area sang in

Phoenix. My memory of how they sounded is a bit fuzzy, but all appeared with lavish, embossed programs, fancy costuming, and music staves which included director, assistant director, and two or three in-house voice instructors. That sense of unbridled riches was only reinforced by the fine Chamber Chorale of the Highland Park Presbyterian Church in Dallas, representing an organization staffed by five full-time and another five part-time people which fields eight vocal groups, five handbell choirs, an instructional program, two concert series and a summer Broadway musical production.

I was captivated by Daniel Pinkham's gentle humor, but even first-class performances by Maurice Skones' University of Arizona Chamber Choir could not convince me of the viability of some of his formula-ridden scores. Richard Bloesch's plodding, pedantic introductions to his "Little-Known Gems of Nineteenth-Century Choral Music" detracted a bit from some lovely Teutonic delights offered by The Adelphian Concert

Choir from the University of Puget Sound.

And, finally, despite some fine singing by the various groups involved, the visually and acoustically stimulating space offered by Saint Mary's Basilica, and Elaine Brown's challenging homily, the Music and Worship presentation of "A Language For Our Time" attempted too much and left at least me a bit nervous because of its busyness and frantic pace.

It's probably just the aging process, but I look forward to our OCDA gathering in July in part because such meetings are manageable. The bigger is better thing so obvious in Phoenix bothered me more than a little. The schedule of events and the range of exhibitors was slightly overwhelming. I heard only after the fact of friends who were in attendance whom I never even saw. Ah, well. I must admit to having the same problem of picking and choosing judiciously at restaurant buffet tables. Hope to see you all in Kent.

William Osborne

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