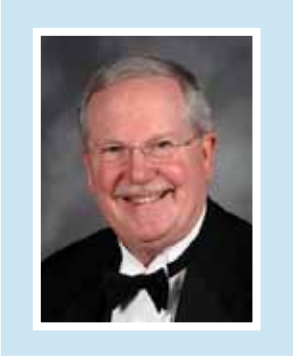




News

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Save Our Choral Programs



Shortly after the holidays, I received an e-mail with a subject line that was a startling reality check not only for our economic times but for the very future of choral music in our schools. The subject line was "Help Save [Sylvania] Northview Choir."

As many of you know, I spent an amazing 20 years at Sylvania Northview High School; consequently, the subject line drew me quickly into the content of the e-mail. Sylvania Schools, just outside of Toledo, is a typical suburban school serving a predominantly white-collar community with families who have high expectations for an excellent, well-rounded education, not unlike the schools in many of our own neighborhoods and where many of us teach. There are two high schools in Sylvania: Northview and Southview. Reading further in the e-mail, I discovered that the Sylvania superintendent recently presented the Board of Education with a list of proposed cuts to both academic and extra-curricular activities for the 2011–2012 school year. Shockingly, I read that the proposal has the choral program at Southview High School eliminated entirely. The program at Northview High School is slated to be decreased to a two-thirds position. Northview will no longer offer Music Theory nor will it have the long-standing vocal jazz performance group, Harmony Road Show.

I share this information with you not just to dismay us all but to shock us into action in each of our own teaching situations as this forebodes dire times ahead.

You might be asking yourself now, "What can I do?" Following are a few suggestions that I am proposing:

- Become a viable, visible part of your community, both you and your performance groups. Share your talents and your students (through speaking or performances) with local service organizations (Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.). Have your students perform the National Anthem at local sporting events. Put your students in front of voting community members, especially senior citizens,

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whenever possible. (Sing at assisted living facilities, nursing homes, senior centers, etc.) Speak at parent organizations (K–12) sharing the successes and challenges of your program.

- Involve principals, central office administrators, and board of education members in all of your program's activities. Have students personally invite these folks to concerts and recognize their attendance from the podium. Share your newsletters with these same people to show the scope of your program's activities. Invite them to parent booster meetings so they can see all that you are doing to make the program successful and to offset district costs of the program.
- Develop active parent booster groups and involve many parents, not just a core group of officers. Have social gatherings, not just work sessions.
- Share research articles, books, and statistics that highlight the importance of the arts to the academic and overall success of students with principals, central office administrators, and board of education members. Did you know, for example, that according to the College Board, "In 2005, SAT takers with coursework/experience in music performance scored 56 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 39 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework or experience in the arts."¹ I encourage each of you to share this type of information not only with administrators but also with each other so that this might be a pervasive message across our state.

These are but a few suggestions of how to put the face of your choral program at the forefront of your community. I hope the situation in choral music at Sylvania's high schools develops a sense of urgency in each of us to act to save programs that truly make a significant difference in the lives of students both now and in their futures.

Ben Ayling, OCDA President

(Endnotes)

¹ The College Board, Profile of College-Bound Seniors National Report for 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2005. Retrieved from: http://www.menc.org/supportmusic_cases.view/1159

OCDA News, the official publication of the Ohio Choral Directors Association, is published three times annually, from Dayton, Ohio, and is distributed without charge to members of the Association as well as to selected members and officers of the American Choral Directors Association.

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

Copy and Ad Deadlines

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

Advertising Rates

Full Page 7.5" x 9.25"	\$135.00
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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers of the OCDA News ...

I hope that all of you are reading our state publication regularly for information about upcoming OCDA events, for interesting articles written by your state colleagues, and for advertisers' offers and contacts. Assistant Editor Robert Jones and I make an effort each quarter to put together a publication that everyone can find both useful and enjoyable and that can serve to attract other choral directors to our organization. The summer conference alone is worth the membership fee, especially given the impressive annual array of clinicians.

In the last few issues, you may have observed a few glitches as we moved from print version of the OCDA News to the on-line edition. The first issue on the web site had some blurry spots as a result of the transition. Everything is much better now, however, with clear text, ads, and photos. Please remember that you do not need to be a member of the OCDA Board to write for the OCDA News. Other authors' writings are encouraged and always welcome.

By the time you see this latest issue of the OCDA News, it will be nearly time for the ACDA National Convention in Chicago (March 9-13). This year's event is particularly exciting because of the many featured session presenters, performance groups, and concerts. It is unfortunate for the membership that the cost of attending a national convention and the time away from teaching positions prevent more people than in the past from being able to take advantage of this excellent professional opportunity. If you are among the lucky ones who will travel to Chicago, I know you will enjoy the convention. If you can't get to this national convention, plan in 2012 to be in Fort Wayne, IN for the Central Division convention. In the meantime, I hope to greet some of you in Chicago and to see many of you at Otterbein in June!

Sharon Davis Gratto
Editor

READY...SET...GO!

Kevin Manley
OCDA Northwest Region Chair

Greetings from Northwest Ohio! I am honored to be the new Northwest Ohio Chair for OCDA and proud to be a part of such a wonderful organization. As I sit down to write this article, the news is full of information on an impending winter storm in the coming week. I hope by the time many of you read this, you will be enjoying a warm spring day and looking back on the accomplishments of your students so far during this school year. I also hope each of you had the chance to grow as a teacher, conductor, and musician.

Upon being elected to the OCDA Board, I realized that one of my duties is to write an article for the OCDA Newsletter. I suddenly had the feeling that I had been given an assignment from a high school English teacher. "Write an essay on a subject that is important to you. The length doesn't matter. Ready, set, go!" When struggling to come up with an idea for this article, one of my colleagues on the OCDA Board suggested that I write about the successes of my students. So, I decided to share an experience with all of you that will hopefully encourage you as you prepare for the next school year or the next concert in which your choirs will perform.

During the fall of 2010, I decided to program a piece that has been in my stack of possible songs for several years, "Cloudburst" by Eric Whitacre. I have thought about doing this piece many times, only to think that we were not ready to take such a risk. I started working on the piece with my Symphonic Choir early in the fall. The first day we started working on it, I shared the challenges of the piece with my students. After rehearsing it for a few days, many of the students became so interested they went home and looked up recordings and videos of performances online. Excitement started to spread among the students about how great this piece of music was and how they couldn't wait to perform it. As all of you know, when the students are excited about a song that you are singing in choir, it makes the job of the conductor so much easier. We continued to work on the piece with growing excitement, and the performance on the fall concert exceeded all of my expectations. The audience response was just incredible. I was a little unsure of what the audience might think because Cloudburst is not a style of music that our choirs have performed on a regular basis. In fact, the students and parents are still talking about how much they enjoyed hearing and performing the piece. The students were so excited about Eric Whitacre that they convinced me to program another one of his pieces for our spring concert.

Continued on page 4

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Ready...Set...Go!

Continued from page 3

By performing a piece with my students that I considered risky, I was able to have one of my most memorable moments as a teacher and conductor. I would like to encourage each of you to take the piece that has been in your single copy file for several years and finally take the risk to perform it with your group. Obviously, it doesn't need to be composed by Eric Whitacre. It just must be a great piece of music that will challenge your students to achieve more than they, or you, thought you could achieve. I can't tell you how thrilling it has been for me to see my student's excitement toward a great contemporary composer and to hear them having conversations about other pieces of his that they have found on their own. The excitement for great choral music has also carried over into the other pieces we are performing. During this time in which music on television can be so influential on our students, it is incredibly refreshing to see students excited about performing great choral music.

So, what are you waiting for? Ready...set...go!

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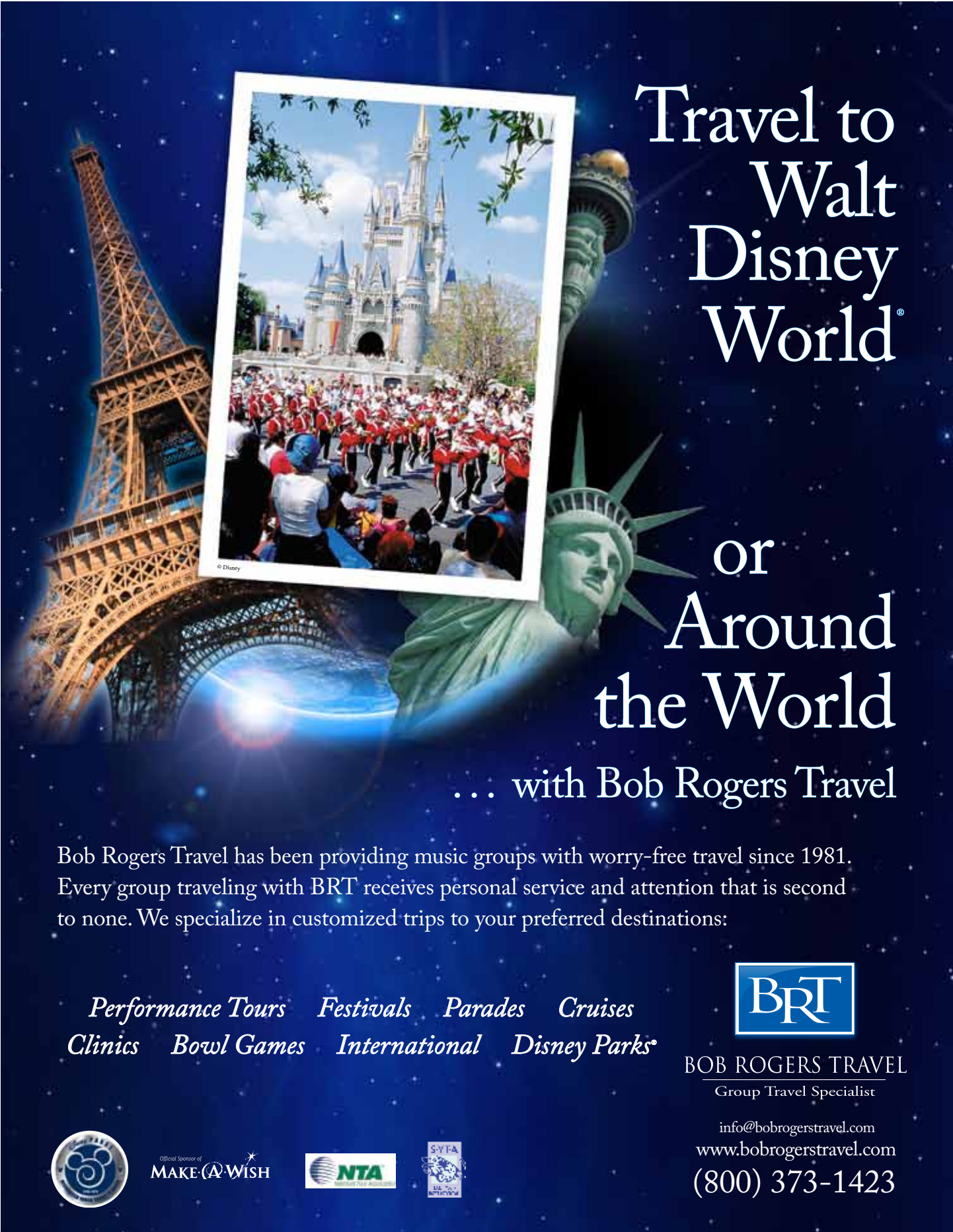
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André J. Thomas, the Owen F. Sellers Professor of Music, is Director of Choral Activities and Professor of Choral Music Education at The Florida State University. A previous faculty member at the University of Texas, Austin, Dr. Thomas received his degrees from Friends University (B.A.), Northwestern University (M. M.), and the University of Illinois (D.M.A). He is in demand as a choral adjudicator, clinician, and director of Honor/All-State Choirs throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, New Zealand, and Australia. Dr. Thomas has conducted choirs at the state, division, and national conventions of MENC and ACDA. He has also distinguished himself as composer/arranger and has work published by multiple music companies.



Jerry McCoy is the President of the American Choral Director's Association and in his eleventh year as Director of Choral Studies and Professor of Music at the University of North Texas. He is also Music Director of Schola Cantorum of Texas, one of the foremost volunteer choruses in Texas. Dr. McCoy is a member of the INTERKULTUR international music advisory board (the administrating entity for the World Choir Games) and a member of the editorial board of the Choral Scholar. For six years he was founder/music director of the Texas Choral Artist, a professional chamber choir based in Dallas, Texas. One of America's most well-respected choral conductors, Dr. McCoy has served as clinician/guest conductor all over the world, and his choirs have toured internationally, making distinguished appearances at many conventions and festivals.



Judy Bowers, Professor of Choral Music Education at Florida State University, teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in choral music and music education, as well as conducting the Women's Glee Club, a performing group that also provides Adopt-A-Choir and Study-Buddy partnerships with area secondary public school choirs. Professor Bowers is an active conductor of all-state and honor choirs across the United States, and frequently presents workshops and clinics for teachers, with topics including developmental choral groups, the adolescent voice change, learning partnerships, and voice use of music teachers and students.



Robyn Reeves Lana, Founder/Managing Artistic Director of the Cincinnati Children's Choir, Ensemble-in-Residence at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, has conducted the program at state, regional, and national conventions, and in hosting national and international children's choir festivals. Level III Orff certified, she teaches music at Montessori Academy of Cincinnati and has presented at regional and national conferences. Regularly serving as a clinician and guest conductor, she has led many state and regional honor choirs. National publications include American Choral Director's Association's Choral Journal, Choristers Guild's The Chorister, and Chamber Music America's CMA Matters.

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Ohio Choral Directors Association

Vocal Jazz Repertoire and Standards, Dr. Christopher J. Venesile, Chair

presents

VOCAL JAZZ DAY

at the **OHIO VOCAL SUMMIT**
Friday, April 1, 2011

The 14th Annual **Ohio Vocal Summit** is an all-day educational festival of performances and workshops in contemporary vocal music presented by Tiffin University, and held at Tiffin's beautiful and historic Ritz Theatre.

This year the Vocal Summit adds new activities in a track especially designed for the choral music educator, and sponsored by the Ohio Choral Directors Association. OCDA member teachers can attend **vocal jazz, contemporary a cappella, and pop choral workshops** – these sessions will include discussions of rehearsal techniques, literature, vocal technique, and more. The day also includes a **directors' luncheon** with clinician **Justin Binek**, Director of Vocal Jazz Studies at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

Directors may choose to attend this professional development workshop on their own, or they may choose to also register their high school, college, professional or amateur vocal ensemble for a non-competitive adjudicated performance in The Ritz Theatre.

Participating directors receive tickets to the **evening performance** by the outstanding professional Chicago group **Down the Line** (www.downtheband.com), joined by Tiffin University's acclaimed a cappella groups **Up In The Air** (www.upintheair.us) and **Higher Ground**.



Vocal Jazz Day workshop registration is \$25 for OCDA members and directors with ensembles performing in the Ohio Vocal Summit, and \$50 for individual non-OCDA members. For individual and ensemble registration information, contact the Tiffin University Music Department at gig@tiffin.edu or 419-448-3366.

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED “RETIREMENT?”

Eric Richardson

Well, for one thing, it is not the same for everyone. Some people actually plan this out – mentally and financially. They go into their “second life” well-equipped. The problem is we choral directors typically balance several spinning plates. Organized, enthused, and cultured — we rarely give the time to planning for the future.

I retired (#1) in 2000, after 28 wonderful years of choral music from Strongsville City Schools. We were given a three-year buyout. I did the math, got a job offer from New Horizons Tour & Travel, and poof – I retired. Also, in my personal life, “the moons lined up” for the buy out. Unfortunately, we had to turn in our letters of resignation just before STRS decided they needed teachers NOT to retire. I missed the 35-year/88.5% offer by 30 days.

A call from North Royalton to fill out a semester-maternity leave got my juices flowing. Then Kent State called for adjunct help for a semester, then Heidelberg. It was time to retire (#2) once again; this time from the student travel industry. I had no time to make a living!

In 2002, Westlake High School asked me to “fill in,” and I started November 13. The program had dwindled to a skeleton of what it was, but everything pointed toward me accepting this position. During my tenure there, I remarried, moved twice and “the moons” were happy. I retired (#3) from Westlake in 2008, leaving a large, vital program to a great former student teacher.

Time for ‘me,’ I thought, and indeed, my golf game ‘got game,’ my carpentry projects got done, and I was still involved in choral singing, judging, etc. But life isn’t always as we plan. My former student teacher had a baby and Westlake called again.

As I type, I am once again un-retired and, in typical choral director fashion, I have added a church job to the mix. Now, however, at the end of a day, I take a nap that would make Rip Van Winkle proud. Also, I have learned the art of saying “no.” In June, I will once again retire (#4), hopefully for good . . . except for the church job, conducting . . .

So why do we retire? And more importantly, when should we retire? If you ask everyone’s favorite sage, Dick Wesp, you shouldn’t!! It’s NOT about the money, as Dick quickly points out. He loves doing what he is doing, and the kids still adore him.

The answers are simple: retire when you are ready, and not before. And retire because you want to, not because you have to. The exception is, don’t stay if you are burnt out. Instead, get out. Also, get those financial ducks in order – living solely off of STRS will abruptly change your life-style.

My suggestions are few:

- The year of your retirement, take one thing home from your office every Friday.
- Stay active (I sing under John Drotleff in the Westshore Chorale).
- Attend this summer’s conference. Share your knowledge. There are so many great new teachers who need to hear your stories, your literature choices, and your experiences. Reach out to them.

If you allow the ‘moss’ to grow underfoot, it will pull you down, right into the grave. Retirement isn’t for everyone, but as soon as I finally do, I’ll let you know!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH

- 3 Denison University
New American Music Project
Chamber Music Connection
Columbus Children's Choir
Premiere of three new compositions for
strings and children's choir
7-9 p.m.
- 4 Ohio University Singers
Pete Jarjisian, conductor
First Methodist Church
2 College St.
Athens, OH
Music of Bruckner, Clausen and
Lennon and McCartney
7:30-9:30 p.m.
- 4 Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus and
Baldwin-Wallace Men's Chorus
Frank Bianchi, conductor
Cathedral of St. John
1007 Superior Avenue
Cleveland, OH
Music of Lauridsen, Gjeilo, Palestrina,
Courtney, Burger, Stroope, Dawson,
Sperry, Thompson, Hassler and
Rachmaninoff
7-9 p.m.
- 7 Anniversary Concert
Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus
Frank Bianchi, conductor
Severance Hall
1101 Euclid Ave.
Cleveland, OH
Tickets available at clevelandorchestra.com
Performing Carl Orff's CARMINA BURANA
7-9 p.m.
- 8 Concert
Ohio University Choral Union and
Women's Chorale
First Methodist Church
2 College St.
Athens, OH
Music of Mozart, Faure, Whitacre,
Alexander, and Hogan
7:30-8:30 p.m.
- 8 **Brahms Requiem**
Ohio State University Chorale and
Symphonic Choir with OSU Symphony
Orchestra
Marshall Haddock, conductor
Mershon Auditorium - Ohio State University

1871 North High St.
Columbus, OH
Tickets available via Ticketmaster
8-9:30 p.m.

- 9-12 American Choral Directors
National Conference
Chicago, IL
Four days of concerts, interest sessions,
exhibits and networking
Opening: Wednesday, March 9th at 8 a.m.

- 11-13 **Verdi Requiem**
Columbus Symphony Orchestra and Chorus
Ohio Theatre
55 E. State St.
Columbus, OH
For tickets, visit columbussymphony.com
Jean-Marie Zeituoni, conductor
Ronald Jenkins, chorusmaster
8-10 p.m.

- 18-19 Bernstein **Chichester Psalms**, Kaplan
Choruses from **The Glorious** and more!
The Lincoln Theatre
E. Long St.
Columbus, OH
Admission via Ticketmaster
Pro Musica Chambers Orchestra,
Columbus Gay Men's Chorus and
Columbus Children's Choir
8-10 p.m.

- 26 2nd Annual Columbus A Cappella Fest
The Lincoln Theatre
E. Long St.
Columbus, OH
Admission via Ticketmaster
Featuring GrooveBarbers, Scioto Women's
Chorus, Grace Notes of Columbus School
for Girls, Bellissima of the Columbus
Children's Choir and Eastmoor Academy
Mixed Choir
2-4 p.m. and 8-10 p.m.

- 27 University of Dayton Chorale, Choral Union
and Orchestra
South Park United Methodist Church
140 Stonemill Rd
Dayton, OH
Dr. Robert Jones, conductor
Performing Lenten motets, Mozart
TE DEUM, k. 141, and TRIPTYCH
by Tarik O'Regan with strings
3-4:30 p.m.

Continued on page 11

CALENDAR OF EVENTS, CONTINUED

APRIL

- 2 University of Dayton Ebony Heritage Singers
Boll Theatre
300 College Park, Dayton, OH
7–8:30 p.m.
- 5 Celebration of the Arts
Benjamin and Marian Schuster
Performing Arts Center
1 W. 2nd St., Dayton, OH
The University of Dayton presents an evening

of student performances in music, theatre, dance and visual arts, including choral performances.
8–9:30 p.m.

- 17 University of Dayton Choral Union, World Music Choir and Hands in Harmony
Boll Theatre
300 College Park
Dayton, OH
7–8:00 p.m.



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Kobacker Hall on the BGSU Campus
Tim Cloeter and Sandra Stegman, conductors
Admission charged
3–4 p.m.
- 20 Beethoven **Mass in C Major**
Kobacker Hall on the Bowling Green St. University campus
University Choral Society and University Philharmonia Orchestra
Emily Freeman Brown, director
Mark Munson, chorusmaster
8–9 p.m.
- 22 **Brahms Requiem**
Ohio St. University Chorale, Symphonic Choir, and choristers from Worthington Methodist Church join with members of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra.
Dr. Robert J. Ward, conductor
7:30–9:30 p.m.
- 27 University of Dayton Opera Workshop
Boll Theatre
300 College Park
Dayton, OH
7:30–8:30 p.m.

MAY

- 1 OPUS 181, "All About Her"
Wood County District Public Library
Bowling Green, OH
Mark Munson, director
This 12-voice ensemble will perform songs about women
3–4 p.m.



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