

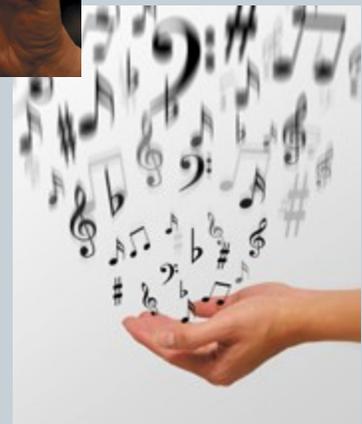
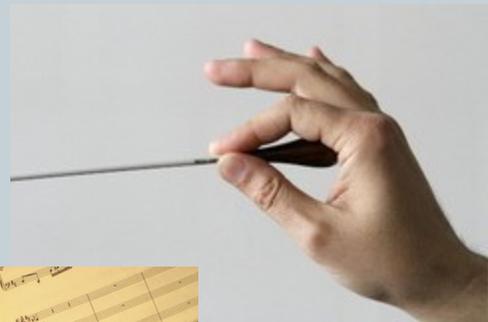
The Choral Advocate

The Newsletter of the Mississippi Chapter of the
American Choral Directors Association

SPRING 2012 ISSUE



MISSISSIPPI
ACDA



PROMOTING THE ART OF
CHORAL MUSIC

MS ACDA President



John Flanery
University of Southern Mississippi

Our March conference in Jackson for our state MMEA/ACDA chapters now feels like a distant memory. Despite that it was only a few short weeks ago, I feel like I am looking in my rear-view mirror and "objects in mirror are closer than they appear."

In reflection, it was a wonderful time for us to be together. Thank you to outgoing MMEA president, Andrea Coleman, for her outstanding efforts. I look forward to continuing the work for next year's conference with Andrea, incoming MMEA president, Regina Weeks, and ACDA president-elect, Reese Norris. Serving is the greatest way we can give back to our field, and these folks have given time, energy, and creative spirit to our state.

As I look forward, there is still much to do. Our economy affects our state and local funding, and the prognosis is not strong. Mississippi needs to support the arts more, we all agree on this point. But we also need to demand more from ourselves. If our programs are truly successful, how can they cut what we do? We must ensure our success by lifting up not only our own programs, but those around us. It is the only way to survive.

I am thrilled and nervous about moving our conference to Hattiesburg and the campus of the University of Southern Mississippi. Thrilled because I do believe we have outstanding facilities and a first rate campus to host. Nervous because I know how we all feel about change and this alteration of the conference from Jackson to Hattiesburg will bring certain expectations and demands from each of you. I am optimistic that we will hit the mark on many of these requests and continually work to improve our conference at every turn. Here is a short list of things that you can expect upon planning for your conference in Hattiesburg:

The Thad Cochran Center, the R.C. Cook Student Union, Bennett Auditorium, Mannoni Performing Arts Center, and Trent Lott Center facilities will host us and are ready to impress you with the ample space, convenience, and invitingness that each has to offer.

On campus parking options will be much greater and free to you all as conference attendees. Our restaurant options are numerous on campus and in the surrounding area. In fact, you could eat at a different location for each meal on campus and not have to eat in the same location twice during your time here.

The hotels will require a short distance to travel, however I think the benefits will exceed this impediment. The hotels will have free parking, many will have complimentary breakfast options, and all will be \$30-50 cheaper per room, per night from what we have been paying. The savings should far exceed any inconvenience of being off site.

Please note the earlier deadlines as you prepare for next year too. The ACDA Concert Performance Audition materials as well as the MMEA Interest Session Proposals are both due by June 1, 2012. This is intended to promote quality and foresight in our conference. All of us will be better served by an enhanced preparedness in our presenters and performance choirs. The April 4-6, 2013 conference in Hattiesburg will indeed be full of great changes and familiar successes.

I wish you each a fabulous end of your 2011-2012 academic year and a refreshing summer.

John Flanery

Ethnic and Multi-Cultural



Jabarie Glass
Southaven High School

Developing Healthy Singing Tone and Vocal Technique in the High School and Middle Choral Setting

by Jabarie Elgin Glass

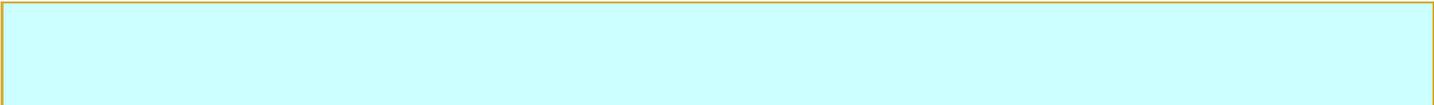
"...the choral director is a *voice teacher* in every rehearsal. The choral director must see effective voice teaching as the *first* priority."

Donald Nuen, *Choral Concepts*

High school and middle school choral conductors are imposed with the important task of developing young, impressionable singing voices. In some cases, these singers are able to pursue one-on-one instruction with a quality voice teacher in their community; however, the common scenario with middle and high school conductors is that their choral rehearsals are the student's sole venue for instruction in vocal technique.

One goal of the secondary choral director should be to develop healthy singing that is rooted in solid vocal technique. In order for this to occur, we must rethink the role of the choral warm-up used in our rehearsals. Too often we notice through observing other conductors or through reflecting on our own approach, the use of vocal exercises that serve little function other than to "warm-up" the voice, just as an athlete does stretches to "warm-up" their muscles. We must ask ourselves if this type of warm-up is actually functioning the way we intend. We want a more sophisticated sound from our ensembles. We want our singers to sing with better intonation and a more beautiful tone. Furthermore, we want our ensembles to be able to perform the most advanced music. How can we make these desires a reality? There are only two ways to make these things happen: 1) recruit or pay for the most gifted singers or 2) develop the personnel we already have into stronger singers. The earlier option is typically not available to the secondary director unless teaching at a magnet or private school; therefore, most public school music teachers must to rely on the latter. In this situation, there is no room in the choral rehearsal for performing meaningless and often mindless exercises that likely do nothing more than reinforce poor technique. The warm-up period is the most useful time in delivering voice instruction to developing singers; therefore, it must be carefully planned; must be consistently used; and must be infused with vocal exercises that are proactive in establishing, reestablishing, and reinforcing the basic elements of good, healthy singing.

Like any other learned behavior, singing can improve through proper instruction that is consistently reinforced. In a group setting, the instructor must clearly define learning objectives that are appropriate for the level at which the singer(s) are currently performing; teach these learning objectives through consistent, meaningful terminology and a wide variety of exercises that appeal to all types of learners and that promote understanding; and continuously loop the process of "reinforce, review, reinforce, review, etc." until the ideal singing behaviors become habit. The latter



part of this process is where many directors fall short of developing stronger singers. What I have noticed through discussion with colleagues about their approach to voice building is that we know what good singing sounds like; we can clearly define what is necessary to achieve good singing; we generally have many techniques to approach developing strong singers; however, we fail in that we do not fully commit to reinforcing and re-teaching, when necessary, the singing behaviors we want students to exhibit.

Research has not proven one approach to developing singing technique as being better than another. There are, however, general concepts for healthy vocal production (i.e. body alignment; low, diaphragmatic breathing; places of resonance to amplify the voice; easy onset of sound; placement; etc.) on which one should base all approaches to singing technique. The techniques we see being presented at conferences and printed in highly distributed textbooks and instructional videos is a myriad of instructional approaches that have worked for one individual in isolated environments. What I see as being more important than the approach itself is that the instructor understands the learner; find ways to motivate the learner to want improve their singing abilities; and provide them with the subject matter necessary for them to improve, understanding fully that the techniques that work for one singer or group of singers might not work for another. Effective secondary choral conductors must find material that is appropriate for their singers. We must explore, through observing fine teachers and conductors and through reading literature, what techniques are available and be discriminate users of the information we gather. This is how each individual should develop their approach to building voices in the choral setting.

The following are a few suggested resources directors should examine to help build their arsenal of techniques to promote healthy and beautiful singing with their ensembles:

Vocal Transformation for Secondary School Choirs: Christine Bass (Instructional DVD)

Daily Workout for a Beautiful Voice: Charlotte Adams (Instructional DVD)

The Choral Ensemble Warm-Up: Frauke Haasemann & James Jordan (Instructional DVD)

Foundations of Choral Tone—A Proactive and Healthy Approach to Vocal Technique and Choral Blend: Alan Zabriskie (Text)

Building Beautiful Voices: Paul Neshaim & Weston Noble (Text)

Evoking Sound—The Choral Warm-Up: James Jordan (Text)

Jabarie Glass

ACDA Advocacy Resolution

Whereas, the Human spirit is elevated to a broader understanding of itself through the study and performance in the aesthetic arts, and

Whereas, serious cutbacks in funding and support have steadily eroded state institutions and their programs throughout our country,

Be it resolved that all citizens of the United States actively voice their affirmative and collective support for necessary funding at the local, state, and national levels of education and government, to ensure the survival of arts programs for this and future generations.

The Advocate is the official newsletter of the Mississippi Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association. It is published in October and February. The deadline for articles is the first day of the month preceding publication. Items received after the deadline may not be published.

Letters to the editor and advertisements are encouraged and should be sent to: Brad Johnson, PO Box 644, Wesson, MS 39191 or email brad.johnson@colin.edu. Mississippi ACDA reserves the right to select and edit any and all materials submitted for publication. For membership information or address changes contact Carol Joy Sparkman, 410 Winding Hills Drive, Clinton, MS 39056, or email sparkman@mc.edu. Additional information and resources are available on the Mississippi ACDA website www.msacda.org.

Advertising Rates for *The Advocate*

Full Page: \$150.00 (7.5" x 10")

Half Page: \$100.00 (7.5" x 4.5")

Quarter Page: \$50.00 (3.75" x 4.5")

Honor Choirs Shine at State Conference



Standing ovations by an audience of more than 900 at Galloway United Methodist Church acknowledged outstanding performances by the Women's Honor Choir directed by Anthony Maglione and accompanied by Dr. Kumiko Shimizu, High School All-State Honor Choir directed by Dr. Suzanne Pence and accompanied by Tommy Creel, All-State Show Choir directed by Katie DiCicco and accompanied by Michelle Howells.

Appreciation is extended to all directors who made sure their students were musically prepared for the first rehearsal. All three directors commented upon the exceptionally well-prepared singers with whom they were working.

Appreciation is also extended to the directors and parents who volunteered to serve as official chaperones and the directors who came to visit the rehearsals and stayed to help where needed.

Special thanks to Donna McCommon, All-State Honor Choir Chairman, Tommy Creel, Pearl High School, Angie Rawls, Pearl High School, Robert Sims, Terry High School, Joel Dunlap, Women's All-State Honor Choir Chairman, Long Beach High School, and Shane Cockrell, All-State Show Choir Chairman, West Jones High School for serving as chairman for the weekend.



Robert Sims, High School R&S Chairman
Rsims1358@yahoo.com

MS ACDA Ernestine Ferrell Award



Ruth Randle

Ruth Randle, choral director at Raymond High School, Raymond Freshman Academy and Carver Middle School in Raymond was awarded the 2012 Ernestine Ferrell Award. As a thirty-year veteran of the teaching profession in Mississippi, Mrs. Randle is known for her superior work as a choral director by building her program from the ground up, as a mentor to up and coming directors in her district, and a as role model for her students and colleagues. The Ernestine Ferrell Award for Excellence in Choral Music in Mississippi is a prestigious award

established in 1992 and honors the memory of Mississippi's longtime State Supervisor of Music, Ernestine Ferrell. To be selected as a recipient of this award, one must have been active in Choral Music in Mississippi for at least twenty years, should have made significant contributions to the choral art, and should have the respect and admiration of colleagues and students alike. Previous honorees include Peggy Felder, James Leslie Reeves, Leonard Metts, Jack Donovan, Geneva Reeves, Joanne Edwards, Martha Murray, Roland Shaw, Donna McCommon, Rose Longwitz, Lillian Lee, Richard Joiner, James Hawkins, J Bruce Lesley, Robert Sims, Martha Neilson, Mark Malone, Gail McInnis, Nancy Moore, Brad Johnson, and Milfred Valentine. There are many other distinguished choral musicians who deserve to be nominated for this award. A committee of past presidents will select the recipient of this year's award. Postmark your letter of nomination no later than February 28, 2013. Send a detailed letter describing the career and contributions of the nominee including their current contact information, places and years of service and personal achievements. Send nominations to Tammy Carney.

Interest Sessions



Auditioned Choirs



All-State Honor Choirs



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W-228.863.5893
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