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FIRST IN A SERIES:
"Voices from the Division"
An Interview with Dale Warland
by George Berglund

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David Puderbaugh, editor, at david-puderbaugh@uiowa.edu

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David Puderbaugh, The University of Iowa, 2767 UCC, Iowa City, IA 52242.

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Melisma, the official newsletter of the North Central Division of the American Choral Directors Association, is published three times a year: fall, winter and spring.

The North Central Division comprises over 2,700 members in its six-state area, including Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

NC-ACDA reserves the right to edit and approve all materials.

Editorial Board

David Puderbaugh,
editor

david-puderbaugh@uiowa.edu

Sheri Fraley,
advertising editor
sheri.fraley@yahoo.com

Judy Periolat (Eckenrod)
designer/publisher
judy.graphicsink@gmail.com

Erin Kaufman
erin.kaufman.13@gmail.com

Todd O'Connor
oconnor@crossroadspres.org

Clark Roush
croush@york.edu

Lynn Seidl
lseidl@luxcasco.k12.wi.us

David Puderbaugh

Melisma Editor
Iowa City, IA
david-puderbaugh@uiowa.edu



David Puderbaugh

Melisma is the connecting fiber that binds us together, the primary avenue of communication for NC-ACDA...As the year progresses, I encourage you to look for new features in Melisma, as we strive to make the newsletter easier to access, easier to use, and ever more relevant in your job as a choral conductor.

Autumn has arrived across our division. The trees are beginning to display some of the most vivid coloration in recent memory. While the autumn foliage is dazzling, its appearance belies a state of decline, as the growing season comes to an end.

For choral conductors, however, everything is new. The new concert season/church year/academic year has recently commenced, and we busy ourselves with score study and rehearsal, in preparation for fall performances. As our individual workload increases, it is sometimes easy to forget that we are not alone, that we are indeed part of a vibrant membership of musicians dedicated not only to the choral art in our own institutions, but a support for each other across the division.

Melisma is the connecting fiber that binds us together, the primary avenue of communication for NC-ACDA. It has been a full year since *Melisma* went fully online, a format that affords great flexibility in adapting to the needs of the membership. As the year progresses, I encourage you to look for new features in *Melisma*, as we strive to make the newsletter easier to access, easier to use, and ever more relevant in your job as a choral conductor.

In this fall issue, we welcome the words of new NC-ACDA president James Kinchen. His message of service to one another is essential to the health of our division. For those looking for new repertory to program, Lee Nelson and Eduardo Garcia-Novelli have provided High Five lists for colleges and universities, and for those seeking multicultural music.

The issue also contains two fascinating articles that are reprints from two of the division's state newsletters. Joy Paffenroth's account of her choral adventure in Cuba as the division representative for ACDA's International Conductor Exchange Program originally ran in WCDA's *Soundings*; it provides a clear view of the extraordinarily high level of choral music-making in that island nation. ACDA of Minnesota's *Star of the North* is the original source of George Berglund's illuminating interview of the legendary Dale Warland. The latter article is the first in a series in which *Melisma* will highlight an important choral musician from each state in the division, not only affording all of us the opportunity to know more about our membership, but providing valuable insight into the important ingredients of a successful career in choral music.

If you produced a commercial recording of your ensemble(s) over the past year or two, and would like to have it reviewed in *Melisma*, see the announcement in this issue. Let *Melisma* help you get the word out regarding your fine work.

Finally, if you have any suggestions on how to improve *Melisma*, I am eager to receive your ideas. Feel free to e-mail me; I look forward to hearing from you. Until then, have a productive fall! ■

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James Kinchen

NC-ACDA President
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James B. Kinchen, Jr.

*This job is not
about glitz
and glamour.
It is about
service!*

It was in the hour or so after the close of the North Central conference in Madison, back in February, that the reality of being president-elect of the North Central division really sank in. I already had an intellectual handle on the job; I had been president of Wisconsin Choral Directors Association (WCDA), so I had understood the division presidency from that vantage point. Then, before I agreed to stand for election, I was given a thorough preview of the duties of this office. Now my name, office, and contact information were printed on the conference program. But things became really concrete for me in those post-conference moments in a way that was truly “Beyond the Notes.”

My friend and colleague, WCDA Past-President Rodger Trader, had asked a group of us for help in striking equipment at the Concourse Hotel. So here I was this Saturday evening, an hour into helping Rodger and another friend and colleague, John Choi, move equipment and carry stuff that had been used for interest sessions down from the various rooms of the Concourse, trying with the two of them to recreate the miracle that Rodger had wrought back on Wednesday before coming to Madison: fitting this diverse and sundry assortment of risers, music stands, audio equipment, and miscellaneous stuff into Rodger’s minivan for the trip back to East Troy. “Now, let’s see,” Rodger said, as we removed a bunch of stuff once more from the minivan, after having packed it on, “I know we got it all in here before... It’s gotta fit...”

It hit home. Here I am, North Central division’s next president, hot and sweaty, helping to load equipment! This is what this position is really about. Not presiding at conference, not rubbing shoulders with some of the luminaries of our art, not having a preferred seat in the concert hall, not sitting on the National Board, not getting my name in the Choral Journal, nor any other such thing. This job is not about glitz and glamour. It is about service! “I am president-elect,” I thought, “because my colleagues had faith in my ability to serve them and the division.” It is true that every day of my term will not be spent trying to shove risers into a minivan in such a way that we can still get all the stands in and, by the way, close the door. But there are other tasks that, even if a little less grimy, will still require diligent, arduous, and committed effort on my part, on behalf of my North Central colleagues.

Someone needs to preside over this six-state division and help coordinate and support the efforts of affiliate and chapter state organizations. As ACDA’s President’s Handbook reminds us, we need presidents at every level who will not only help plan activities and use perennially inadequate resources to best effect, but who will be “executives, presidors, and managers.” The division is itself an organization that sits between those state organizations and the national organization. As such, it has a structure that must be maintained and kept functioning. I was reminded of this need as we chose a new

Continued

treasurer, an indispensable position, and then engaged in the very time-consuming task of filling fourteen Repertoire and Standards (R&S) chairs.

Someone needs to help the North Central division connect what we do as choral educators, artists, and students with the national organization and, in turn, help the national organization connect with the regional and local needs of our membership. This person needs to fill this important liaison role as division leader and member of the National Board, and in another important capacity as well: the president of North Central division is also the *de facto* chair of the NC-ACDA R&S committee. An important role of the division president is to help keep R&S vital and focused, connected to the grassroots activities and needs of the state, and responsible to the national R&S as well.

Someone needs to plan and oversee our division's conferences. Conferences are in many ways the highlights of the division's existence. In even-numbered years, we look forward to the opportunity to gather in each of our constituent states over a twelve-year cycle and enjoy each others' fellowship as we find inspiration, enlightenment, and enrichment in a veritable plethora of activities related to all things choral, invariably focused around a theme. I have found it really difficult to adequately describe our conferences to my campus colleagues in other disciplines whose only frame of reference is their own professional meetings. I find myself saying that we do a whole lot more than just rent a hotel ballroom and reserve a few meeting rooms for "breakouts." And I find myself describing what we do as a multi-ring circus where there is something going on under all of the tents just about all of the time. Another analogy that I have started to use lately is that our conferences are a lot like a galaxy with several very active and highly populated solar systems within it.

Someone needs to care about communication. Much in North Central division happens, or does not happen, in direct relationship with our ability to talk with each other in ways that are effective and timely. Information and its exchange are vital. And beyond interpersonal communication among, for example, board members and R&S chairs are the kinds of informational connections that we make through our website and our digital newsletter, *Melisma*, that are so salutary, and even vital, to our health as a division.

Someone needs to care lots about our process and product, and our people. We are part of the American Choral Directors Association. We serve the needs of the many conductors, artists, educators, composers, students, and choral allies who are the heart and soul of the choral art, in every incarnation, at every level, in every kind of setting, in every state in our division. And, even if we do not always think about it, more than any single organization on the face of the earth, ACDA serves the

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Continued

President's Voice, continued

How many audiences have been enriched through the singing of the choir that has been prepared and is being led by the ACDA-member conductor? What we do affects people! And are we not more than a performance, no matter how much magic we have made on the risers or how close to heaven our anthem has transported our worshippers? Didn't Madison show us how terribly important process is in everything that we do?

needs and represents the interests of every person who populates every choir that is taught and led by an ACDA member! Whether members take ideas, inspiration, and innovations from conferences and other ACDA activities back to their choirs, or whether members of those choirs take part in ACDA-sponsored festivals, all-state choruses, and honor choirs, what we do has an indelible impact that goes beyond the member director. How many audiences have been enriched through the singing of the choir that has been prepared and is being led by the ACDA-member conductor? What we do affects people! And are we not more than a performance, no matter how much magic we have made on the risers or how close to heaven our anthem has transported our worshippers? Didn't Madison show us how terribly important process is in everything that we do?

Most of all, someone needs to lead. Leaders should certainly have inspiring and even innovative ideas from time to time. But I believe that it is greatly more important to inspire others to have ideas and to help create the atmosphere in which other bright minds can catch a glimpse of a vision and, through their own creativity, take it some place that they could scarcely have imagined, to a place that is higher and better than they ever thought possible. While there is nothing wrong with an extroverted, energetic, charismatic leader who is visibly in charge, sometimes the model set forth by philosopher Lao Tzu is perhaps more appealing and better facilitates participation and ownership: "...when his [the leader's] work is done, his aim fulfilled, they [those who follow] will say: we did it ourselves." Leaders should always be concerned with the development of new leaders through their mentoring, identifying and cultivating of promising talent, and giving others opportunities to grow and shine. And leaders should have vision and be able to help point others toward the future while always being rooted in all that is good about the past.

Out of over 2,500 choral colleagues in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and Wisconsin, I was given the indescribably high honor of being that someone. Theoretically, at least, 2,500 other persons could have been asked to lead this division. But my colleagues esteemed me as one who could provide this service to North Central and to our cause of advancing choral music for this season. I simply cannot put into words how honored I am, and I get it. Just like I did that Saturday evening in Madison. It is about service!

And it is not as if I am without excellent precedents and role models in all of the presidents who have gone before me. Most especially, I thank Aimee Beckmann-Collier, my immediate predecessor, for all that she has done to lead our division these past two years. If you do not know Aimee, there are at least a handful of things you ought to know, besides the superb choral teaching and artistry that we hear when her singers from Drake take the stage, as they did to our delight in Madison. Aimee is one of the most caring people that you will know, and North Central has benefited from the fact that she has cared deeply about everything that was in her charge. Aimee is a bright, creative thinker whose wheels are constantly turning and who seldom misses a

Continued

detail. And she is simply one of the most gracious people you or I are ever likely to meet. To paraphrase the lyrics from the Bernstein song: "Thank you, Aimee, for taking care of this house!"

Colleagues of NC-ACDA, I am here to serve you. Thank you for the privilege. Tell me how I can best serve you! ■

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Dale Warland

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This interview originally appeared in ACDA-MN's Star of the North, Winter 2012, "Legacy" Article Series. Reprinted with permission.

Dale Warland talks to George Berglund about his life and current activities since the renowned professional choir bearing his name disbanded.

The Dale Warland Singers (DWS) can still be heard on its twenty-seven highly acclaimed recordings, many of which have won awards. I was fortunate enough to have sung under Dale's direction for eight years. There are many fine choral conductors in America but, in my opinion, the thing that sets Dale apart is his genial persistence. A stickler for detail, and yet always keeping the big picture in mind, he is persistent almost to the point of tenacity, but always in service of the music. He never "settled." I began our interview by asking him a very obvious question:

GB: When did you first decide to become a choral conductor, Dale?

DW: Marching bands probably provided my first inspiration to become a conductor. In the area surrounding Fort Dodge, Iowa, where I grew up, marching bands were big. By the time I reached college the excitement of making *choral* music was firmly implanted by my church and high school conductors. The decision was cinched for good when my parents drove me thirty miles from our family farm to Rockwell City, Iowa (the farthest from home that I had ever been at that point in my life), where I heard the St. Olaf Choir under the direction of Olaf Christiansen. There was no doubt what I wanted to be or do after that experience!

GB: Tell us about your early conducting experiences.

DW: My first conducting opportunity came when I was a junior in high school. I was invited to conduct a small group of some six or eight voices performing a Palestrina motet offstage. We were to represent "a choir of angels." I don't think conducting in Carnegie Hall would have been any more invigorating for me at that time. Being asked to perform this little musical task was a key moment at this very formative and impressionable stage of my life.

GB: What was your background after graduating from Fort Dodge High School?

DW: I attended St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, then spent two years in the U.S. Air Force, obtained my master's degree at the University of Minnesota in theory/composition with Paul Fetler and Dominick Argento, and studied voice with Roy Schuessler. I received my Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree from the University of Southern California (USC), where I studied with Charles Hirt, Ingolf Dahl, William Vennard, and Halsey Stevens. I have never held a high school conducting position. As I recall, my first annual salary as a college choral professor was \$8,500. That was considered quite an attractive wage for a college choral conductor in 1965!

Continued

GB: Who were the choirs and conductors that inspired you in those early years?

DW: The three men whose inspiration was the most long lasting conducted professional choirs—Norman Luboff, Robert Shaw, and Roger Wagner. Fred Waring was also an early influence, especially the radio broadcasts of the Fred Waring Choir and the arrangements he produced. The college choir conductors who were major inspirations to me were Olaf Christiansen (St. Olaf College) and Arnold Running (Augustana-Sioux Falls). Around 1960, while studying for my Master's Degree at the University of Minnesota, I heard the Oberlin College Choir conducted by Robert Fountain. I thought it had to be the best college choir in the country. My eyes were opened like never before as to what quality of repertoire and level of artistic performance a college choir could achieve. Later, England's David Willcocks and Sweden's Eric Ericson were major influences. I spent a considerable amount of time with them both in 1971.

GB: What criteria did you consider when selecting repertoire for your college choirs?

DW: As a guiding principle, I strived to provide my college students with a strong choral education. Over the period of up to two years, the goal of my programming was two-pronged: (1) providing a stimulating result and (2) providing the students with exposure to all styles in the history of music, from Gregorian chant to the latest new works from around the world. I feel strongly that every college choral singer should have sung a sixteenth-century motet, chant, something from the Middle Ages, and madrigals from all periods to be a well-rounded singer. Two twentieth-century French classics, the *Trois Chansons* settings by Debussy and Ravel, come to mind, as well as classic twentieth-century American pieces such as Barber's *Reincarnations*, Schuman's *Carols of Death*, and Fine's *The Hour-Glass Suite*.

GB: What criteria did you consider when selecting repertoire for the DWS?

DW: The answers to this question could fill an entire chapter of a book. I will mention a few key points:

The overriding element of all criteria is *quality*. The quality of the musical craftsmanship and the text must be high. Along with that fundamental element, one must sense a *spirituality*, and I don't mean "religious spirituality," or something that borders on the magical that comes through the notes and text...or rises above the notes.

Then, *appropriateness to the occasion*, *rehearsal time available*, *acoustics of the performance space*, and *overall appeal* to the singers as well as the audience. All these play an important role in the decision-making.

For each concert program presented by the DWS, an effort was always made to further

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Continued

Interview, continued

There are three obvious areas of focus in auditioning musicians for a choir. Each is significant:

- (1) *musicianship* (innate and acquired skills),
- (2) *the voice* (all aspects), and
- (3) *personality*.

the mission when selecting repertoire for the choir. A large part of the choir's mission was programming the best of 20th- and 21st-century published repertoire. We balanced that with newly commissioned works, with a special emphasis on American composers, especially Minnesota composers. We also attempted to balance those commissions by including both established and emerging composers, keeping in mind differing ethnic backgrounds.

Other criteria included: Striving to program semi-extended works (10–15 minutes) as opposed to only short, three-minute pieces; Programming choral works accompanied by a single or a few instruments, in addition to *a cappella* music, our mainstay.

GB: What have you been doing since your professional ensemble disbanded?

DW: Basically, what I've always done, only much more of the activities that require travel— guest conducting, leading master classes, and composing. Guest conducting and composition commissions are usually tied in with some sort of residency. My life now involves an extensive amount of travel. The only guest conducting invitations I accepted during my thirty years with the DWS were the Swedish and Danish Radio Choirs, the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, and the *Cameran Singers*, Israel's only professional choir.

GB: What are some of the highlights you've experienced since leaving the DWS?

DW: There have been many. Among them are my work with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) Chorale, a professional ensemble, conducting such works as Arvo Pärt's *Te Deum* and preparing incredible masterpieces for visiting conductors — works by such composers as Berlioz, Haydn, MacMillan, etc. Organizing and conducting the Festival Chorale for the Minnesota Beethoven Festival has been another great project. Projects like these allow me to work in or very near my hometown and with professional ensembles and organizations. Conducting residencies at several major universities have also been very rewarding: Yale University, University of Southern California (USC), Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, Indiana University, University of Utah, and UC-Fullerton with the John Alexander Singers in residence. This November I will be coaching Chanticleer in preparation for their annual "Christmas With Chanticleer" repertoire.

GB: You had a unique way of auditioning singers for the DWS. Please elaborate on how you auditioned people, and how you developed it.

DW: The more knowledge that a music director can attain and the more care that he or she can give to the process, the better. Knowing what really matters in the essential makeup of a choir is extremely important, even if one cannot be selective in putting together a choral ensemble.

There are three obvious areas of focus in auditioning musicians for a choir. Each is significant: (1) *musicianship* (innate and acquired skills), (2) *the voice* (all aspects), and (3) *personality*.

Continued

PRELIMINARY AUDITION

If an interested singer has the essential background (as outlined in the candidate's resume), our organization schedules a preliminary audition of 20 minutes. This audition entails evaluations of performance, skills (musical and vocal), and a perception of the candidate's personality. The music director needs to constantly remind himself/herself that his/her responsibility is to bring out the best from each and every would-be member. There is no place for intimidation.

The candidate is asked to perform two short solo works of contrasting style (one in a foreign language, no show tunes). From that performance I am interested in learning several things: (1) Is the candidate singing correctly with a free and convincing vocal production? (2) Does the singer communicate in a sincere, convincing manner? (3) Is the tone consistently beautiful in all registers and at all dynamic levels? Accurate intonation, sustaining ability, phrasing, and interpretation of the music are also important factors.

The second portion of the preliminary audition includes an evaluation of tonal memory (from very simple to increasingly complex melodies and rhythms), sight-reading (both tonal and atonal), range, vibrato and vibrato control, sustaining ability, pitch accuracy, and a general concern whether or not the singer consistently performs in a musical manner, no matter what the material. Each candidate is given a rating number from 1–5.

RECALL AUDITION

This audition includes only those singers who fall into the 3+ to 5 range. Only singers that are totally qualified, as determined from the initial audition, and can commit to the season schedule are invited to be a part of the recall process. The fundamental purpose of the recall audition is to “construct” the best combination of voices in order to create a true ensemble in each section of the choir as well as an ideal mix with the full choir. Not that every section will initially be a perfect blend, but it should be quite obvious that the potential is there and, with time and effort, there is the makings for such.

I invite five or six more singers than needed to the recall to fill out each section. Each one is given a number, assigned and only known by my assistant. Not until I have made my final choices do I learn the identity of the singers assigned to those numbers.

I sit, with my back turned to the candidates for each section, and call out numbers individually and in various combinations as we sing through selected passages of music chosen for this purpose. My assistant conducts. I listen and make notes.

These recall auditions usually take 90 minutes for each section. Every effort is made to make them as relaxed and as pleasant as possible.

The music director needs to constantly remind himself/herself that his/her responsibility is to bring out the best from each and every would-be member.

There is no place for intimidation.

Continued

ONE AMAZING WEEKEND... THREE INSPIRING CONCERTS!

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Interview, continued

GB: Which choirs and conductors continue to inspire you today?

DW: Two professional English choirs and conductors are at the top of my list: The Monteverdi Choir, conducted by John Eliot Gardiner, and Polyphony, conducted by Stephen Layton.

GB: Reflecting on your own legacy to choral music in Minnesota, what are some of contributions you feel you have made to the profession?

DW: I am especially pleased to have played a role in:

establishing professional choral music throughout Minnesota and the United States;
having helped develop the appreciation for and enjoyment of the choral music of our time;

encouraging the creation of a large number of new works by gifted American composers and other composers around the world, through some 270 commissions; and

conducting the DWS in twenty-five recordings, including the Grammy-nominated *Walden Pond*, with choral music by Minnesota composer Dominick Argento.

GB: What advice or words of wisdom would you give to the emerging choral conductor of today?

DW: There are many. Here are several that I believe to be most important:

Strive to become the very best musician possible. Develop such skills as sight-reading, keyboard facility, and related listening skills.

Develop an ear for pitch accuracy, balance sensitivity, texture, and beautiful tone (e.g., “what *makes* beautiful tone?”). Add to this list as your awareness grows.

Make repertoire research one of the ongoing active pursuits in your life. Plan repertoire research purposefully.

Collect programs and attend performances of the very finest choirs and conductors.

Take notes. Correspond with other conductors around the world. Listen to and purchase recordings.

Read poetry. Study poetry. Collect poetry.

Sitting in on rehearsals is more important than attending the performances. Travel to observe the rehearsals of the best choirs and conductors in the world.

Develop the most effective conducting technique you possibly can, before it is too late to change bad habits that might have become ingrained. Experiment.

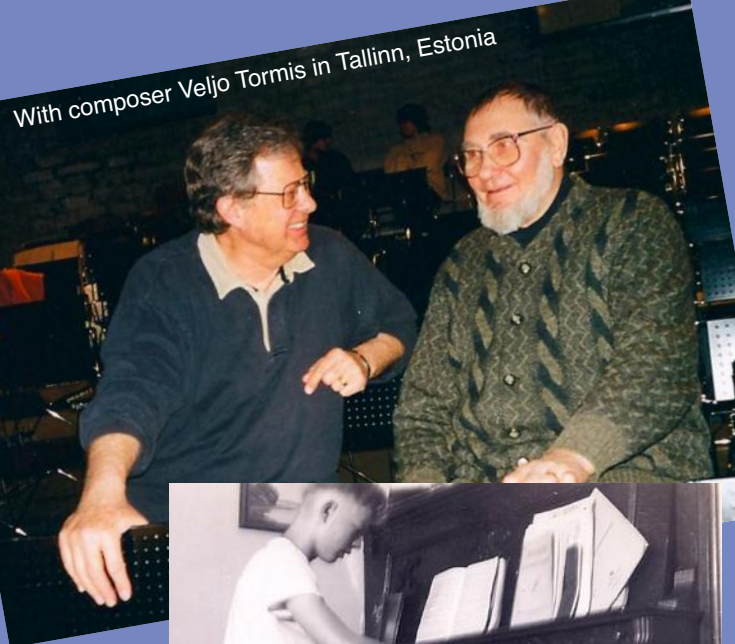
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Learn to *enjoy* attention to detail of every score you conduct or plan to conduct. Learn to set priorities in the process of rehearsing (e.g., balance issues, pronunciation unification, texture, phrasing, tempi, etc.)

Develop the most effective conducting technique you possibly can, before it is too late to change bad habits that might have become ingrained.

Experiment.

Continued



With composer Veljo Tormis in Tallinn, Estonia



Teenage Dale practicing piano in the farmhouse where he was born near Badger, Iowa in 1932



First official performance of the Dale Warland Singers at the Walker Art Center in 1972

Dale Warland Scrapbook

"He is as close to being a pure musician as anyone I have ever known." —Dominic Argento, DWS 10th anniversary in 1982



With Eric Ericson, conductor of the Swedish Radio Choir, 1977



DWS performing in St. Jakob's Church in Stockholm, Sweden, 1977



"I was amazed at how many composers' works he had premiered..."
—Stephen Paulus.
Dale commissioned between 40-50 works from Paulus alone.



Student Dale conducting the Viking Male Chorus at St. Olaf College in 1954



With composer Tonu Kaljuste of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir



With composer Krystof Penderecki in the American premiere of the "St. Luke Passion," 1967



Dale's personal favorite photo with Maestro Robert Shaw, taken backstage at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis, 1996



The final DWS posing for their iconic final season in 2003-04

I believe that we have only scratched the surface in the potential of a cappella choral music in America, both in the creation of effective, imaginative new choral repertoire as well as in the achievement of high artistic performances. To me, the future of a cappella choral music is very bright and extremely exciting to anticipate.

Interview, continued

Develop a deep understanding and sensitivity to the singing voice. Sit in on voice lessons or coaching sessions given by instructors you know to be the very best.

Be aware of the importance of good health!

Early on in your career, get as many experiences related to choral music as you can. Examples of these include working with a score librarian, a choir manager, a program designer, offering to write program notes, learning how to order music, working in a music store, or offering to do production work rehearsals and concerts. Offer to assist a local church choral musician, or seek actual conducting experiences with church choirs (all sizes, denominations, and ages).

Early on, learn the correct pronunciation of Latin according to Roman usage.

GB: Is there anything you haven't done/accomplished that you wish you had?

DW: I do wish that I had somehow raised sufficient funds in order to record many choral works—significant works that have not been recorded but that deserve to be promoted and sustained in the repertoire of choirs and listening audiences of the U.S. and throughout the world.

GB: Looking back over your entire career in choral music, of what are you most proud?

DW: Probably the three most gratifying efforts of my years with the DWS include (1) the discovery of talented composers, especially American composers, (2) the commissioning of high-quality, new choral repertoire, and (3) the satisfaction of helping to promote and establish professional choral music in our country.

GB: What do you see as the future of a cappella choral music in 10, 20, or even 30 years?

DW: I believe that we have only scratched the surface in the potential of a cappella choral music in America, both in the creation of effective, imaginative new choral repertoire as well as in the achievement of high artistic performances. To me, the future of a cappella choral music is very bright and extremely exciting to anticipate. ■

Editor's note: On October 10, Dale Warland was named a 2012 inductee into the American Classical Hall of Fame in recognition of his achievements. *Melisma* joins in the chorus of congratulations!

Dale Warland, a choral gift for the ages...



A MUSIC OF THE *Americas*

NDSU CHORAL SYMPOSIUM

CALL FOR PAPERS

The North Dakota State University School of Music, in partnership with the American Choral Directors Association, invites papers and presentations for the NDSU spring symposium: *Choral Music of the Americas*, May 3-5, 2013, in Fargo, N.D.

In addition to showcase choral performances, the academic portion of the symposium will examine choral music styles and traditions of the Americas, including those of Canada, the USA, Mexico and other Latin American countries.

Presentations may address a variety of related topics, including cultural and social influences that have guided development of choral music in the Americas.

Proposal submission deadline is Jan. 15, 2013. See www.ndsu.edu/finearts/music for details.

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Eduardo Garcia-Novelli

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and women's
choirs.*



1. Canto de Pilón

Traditional Venezuelan (arr. Cristian Grases)

Pavane Publishing P1403

SA, unaccompanied

This is a working song (*Grind and grind, María, grind the corn...*) from the rich Venezuelan tradition, combining European, African, and Caribbean influences. This simple and clever arrangement offers the possibility to explore contrasts of rhythmic and metric structures. In addition, the arranger offers what he terms optional “eurhythmics,” with a clear explanation of suggested body motions. There is an opportunity to be creative here with different staging ideas. The beauty of this is that you are dealing with only 2 parts: SA, hence it could be simple, it could be complex, or anything in between. You choose. In any case, it will be engaging and rewarding.

2. Fata de pastor [The Shepherd's Daughter]

Teodor Teodorescu

Musica Romanica, Inc. XRCM-008

SATB, unaccompanied

This is a delicate, beautiful, and unpretentious folk song from Romania, a delightful “dialogue” between a young shepherdess and a cuckoo. It would be perfect for a subtle encore. It is also an excellent edition, with extensive notes on the composer, text considerations, poetic and word-by-word translation, and a pronunciation guide. Performance time: ca. 2:10. Moderate vocal ranges (with G5 for tenors and G2 for basses).

3. Hawai'i Aloha [Beloved Hawaii]

Lorenzo Lyons (arr. Robert Engle)

Twin Elm Publishing TE02-01

SATB with very minimal *divisi*, optional piano

This delicate, heartfelt, traditional Hawaiian piece is about love for the land and its people. It is a great selection for a concert theme of homeland or national pride. A pronunciation guide and translation are provided in the score. It is also quite short, about fifty seconds, and sports central to low ranges. Perfect for developing choirs.

Continued

4. *Libertango*

Astor Piazzolla (arr. Oscar Escalada)

Kjos 6353

SSA, piano

Astor Piazzolla is regarded as the greatest avant-garde tango composer from Argentina; his unique style mixes tango traditions with jazz harmonies and classical form and thinking. *Libertango* is originally an instrumental piece, and in Escalada's excellent arrangement, the choir sings nonsense syllables. The arrangement works very well and does justice to the composer, who was known for creating many versions of his own music for a variety of instruments available to him. It is a good example of Piazzolla's style: a wonderful combination of relentless rhythmic drive and inspiring melodic lyricism. There are challenging intervals (lots of melodic tritones), but don't let that discourage you because the reward is high. Feel free to add one or more percussion instruments. An SATB version is also available.

5. *Mamayog Akun* [My dear Mamayog]

Muslim folksong (arr. Fabian Obispo)

earthsongs S-347

SATB *divisi*, unaccompanied

Based on a traditional courting song from the island of Mindanao, the second largest and easternmost island in the Philippines, *Mamayog Akun* is a rhythmic and energetic piece from the Muslim traditions of the Maranao people who inhabited the lands around Lake Lanao, a predominantly Muslim region. The arranger encourages performers to experiment with the use of body percussion. The score provides suggestions for interpretation and style, cultural context, and translation. The text is syllabic, short, and easy to pronounce. It would serve very well as an opener or closer. Duration: less than 2 minutes. ■

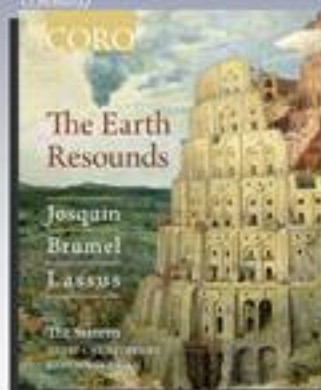
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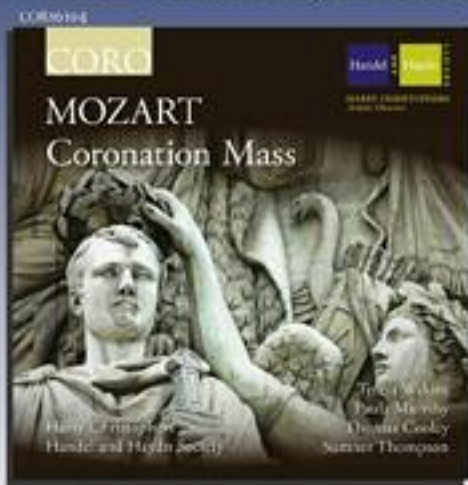


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(Application deadline 2 weeks prior)



A Small-town Wisconsin girl's adventure in Cuba!

—Joy Paffenroth

Chilton Middle School and High School, Chilton, WI



Joy Paffenroth
NC-ACDA Repertoire &
Standards Committee
Chair for Junior High/
Middle School.
paffenrothj@chilton.
k12.wi.us

As many of you in Wisconsin know from my last Editor's Letter in the spring 2012 issue of *Soundings*, I was chosen as the North Central representative to ACDA's International Conductors Exchange Program (ICEP). You can read about how that selection happened in that Editor's Letter (<http://www.wischoral.org/Newsletter/Soundings-Newsletters/Spring/Summer-2012/menu-id-52>). The gist of it is that after some amazing developments, I was headed to Havana, Cuba in May 2012 as part of the ICEP and would take part in the U.S./Cuba Choral Summit. Unbelievable!

I have been trying to figure out how best to share my experiences with you. I took 300 pictures, 25 videos, and wrote in my journal every single day of my experience. There is so much to share, and it is so overwhelming – even to me, and I experienced it! I will share with you some of my journal entries in this article. You NEED to hear these choirs from Cuba – they are amazing! (P.S.: One of them may be in Dallas at the ACDA national convention. You do not want to miss that!)

Here are some journal entries from my trip. I think they will really give you a flavor of what I experienced during my trip. It's only a snapshot, however. If you are interested in hearing more, let me know; I would love to chat or even find a way to do some sort of presentation sometime when many of us are gathered together.



Friday, May 25, 2012 – I had to get up at the crack of dawn to begin my journey. I haven't flown in ten years, and I haven't been on an international trip in fifteen. This is new territory for me, and I must admit I am nervous. Made it to Miami with no problems...phew! We had a late night informational meeting regarding our Saturday journey to Havana and what to expect during the trip. I may very well be out of my league here, but everyone seems nice, so I'll just go with it!

Saturday, May 26– Up at 4:30 a.m. to meet at 5:30 a.m. to check in for our charter flight to Havana. This is craziness! Other people traveling to Cuba are taking all sorts of things—toys, flat-screen TVs, and tires...yes, someone checked a set of four tires. I am so nervous and so excited; still can't believe I am doing this. It's all very surreal. I hope someday my daughters Molly and Gabi will be proud of me for this! Border check was nerve wracking, but all went smoothly. As we took the bus from the airport to the hotel, I already can see Cuba has a very interesting landscape – run-down and yet so very beautiful. We arrive at Hotel Florida and are met with "Welcome Mojitos!" Very tasty!

We have a brief meeting with the Cuban contingency regarding how things will go during the time we are here. It turns out that each of the ICEP conductors will not only conduct the American piece we sent to Cuba ahead of time, but we will also be conducting a Cuban piece. Music is handed out to the American conductors, except for me. My Cuban counterpart is in France with a juvenile division of her choral program, competing in an international competition. I won't receive my music until Monday. I am more than a bit nervous now...

Several of us from the American contingency decided to go explore Old Havana together. What a beautiful city. We ate delicious Cuban sandwiches at an open-air café in a huge, beautiful square with a Cathedral, a museum, and just a beautiful feeling. We walked more, wandered into some churches and just overall soaked in the city. As I end Day One of this adventure, I just want to say how much I miss my family. Not being able to communicate with them is much harder than I thought.

Sunday, May 27– This morning we did a walking tour as a whole group. Marlo, our guide, is fantastic. After the walking tour, we got on the bus to look at other areas of Havana. We stopped at Revolution Square. It was amazing to think about all that's happened here. Following that, we went back to Old Havana and had a bite to eat at the hotel where Hemingway lived. I even saw his room...this is mind-boggling! We ate on the rooftop with amazing food and amazing views!

This evening, we went to the opening concert where the National Choir of Cuba performed with the Cardinal Singers from University of Louisville. Unbelievable...Stunning! You can view a video of the opening performance at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRtC0ilwr6A>. Following the concert, we took the bus to an open air reception that had me pinching myself regularly throughout the night. The food was phenomenal! The atmosphere electric and the music by the jazz ensemble absolutely breath-taking! If you would close your eyes and imagine what it would be like to visit Cuba – this is it!

Continued

After the walking tour, we got on the bus to look at other areas of Havana.

We stopped at Revolution Square.

It was amazing to think about all that's happened here.

Following that, we went back to Old Havana and had a bite to eat at the hotel where Hemingway lived.

Cuba, continued

*For a moment,
I forgot where
I was.*

*Singing is
singing is
singing,
no matter where
you are, where
you live, or your
station in life.*

*I am tearing up
as I write this.*

*I hope my
students over the
years understand
the amazing gift
they possess.*

*The power of this
is overwhelming.*

Monday, May 28— This morning we attended the opening of the U.S./Cuba Choral Summit. This included speeches by Tim Sharp, Jerry McCoy, Digna Guerra, and the deputy Minister of Culture for Cuba. This is truly a historic event! The Minister spoke to us about setting aside our differences and truly letting music bring us together. He also stressed that the arts are very important in Cuba and that they believe that we should not “wipe the floor with them;” they must be of highest quality. There are twenty-seven professional choirs in Cuba, funded by councils in territories. He again stressed that music can truly be a universal language.

Because my Cuban counterpart has not yet returned from Europe, I decided to follow Monte Garrett from Texas as he worked with his Cuban choir. We walked through Old Havana to a cathedral for rehearsal. The back of this cathedral is a children’s theater, and that is where rehearsal was. We started with coffee and tea and chatting. This choir is young – most are straight out of school. They rehearse three hours a day, Monday through Friday. This is a full-time job plus schooling. Carmen, the director, chooses singers for listening ability and aptitude, not just natural voice. She can educate the voice!

For a moment, I forgot where I was. Singing is singing is singing, no matter where you are, where you live, or your station in life. I am tearing up as I write this. I hope my students over the years understand the amazing gift they possess. The power of this is overwhelming.

Tuesday, May 29 – After a long and winding journey with many bad directions, I arrived at a beautiful art museum for my first day of rehearsal. I was so honored to meet Alina Orraca, the conductor of Schola Cantorum Coralina.* She was tired from her journey home from Europe, but so gracious to me! As I listened to the warm-ups, it surprised me how “American” their sound is. You would think you had just stepped into an American university choir rehearsal. The sound is so round! They sang a Poulenc piece for us and then moved me to speechless tears with their performance of Lauridsen’s “O Magnum Mysterium.” I truly felt the Holy Spirit surrounding us in that space today, awesome in the truest sense of that word.

Alina handed me “Manisero” as my Cuban piece to conduct. This is a folk song about a peanut seller. This version is an arrangement of the folk song that uses 5/4...yikes! Alina is adamant that I will be conducting this piece at the final concert of the summit. I asked her daughter, who was translating for us, if she was serious, and she said absolutely! Okay, let’s go for it! After some rehearsal on that, we worked through “Praise His Holy Name!” by Keith Hampton. That is the American piece I chose to use with them. What a trip! They are amazing!

Tonight we heard four professional Cuban choirs in concert—unbelievable. All of them were fantastic, but if I had a favorite, it would have to be Sine Nomine. This is a group of nine young men that blew me away...such musicality, flexibility, style, and sensitivity. Following that, we had dinner at the National Hotel. What a beautiful property!

Wednesday, May 30 – Today is our true last day of the summit. The American conductors will be conducting their Cuban choirs in a workshop performance this morning, and then Monte Garrett and I will each be conducting our Cuban choirs in the final concert this evening. I must admit – I am nervous.

It was quite a trip to conduct the choir this morning. We did “Manicero” and “Praise His Holy Name!” The conductor of Exaudi (a Cuban choir) told me, “You were great. You really have

Continued

the Cuban hips down!” Ha! I guess I got into it a bit... Following the workshop performances, we were guests at a reception at the House of Protocol for the Cuban Institute of Music. Amazing food and great conversation! The best comment of the day came from Digna Guerra, director of the National Choir of Cuba: “Many hard feelings between the U.S. and Cuba were repaired because of how humbly the seven conductors worked with the Cuban choirs!” I am so proud and humbled to be one of those seven conductors she talked about. What an honor for me to represent the U.S. in such an endeavor. How could I not be humble in front of those amazing singers who give so much of themselves to their country and their music? That was the only option in the midst of such greatness!

The evening concert was stunning. Both Cuban choirs were on their A-game! Alina’s



interpretation of the Lauridsen piece was breathtaking – everyone around me was actually holding their breath. It was beyond words! It was an honor to conduct the group again in front of a full cathedral. These are the experiences I will hold near and dear to my heart for the rest of my life.

Following the concert, we had a farewell dinner at a very swanky jazz club! The food and drink was phenomenal, and after dinner a couple of us shared a true Cuban cigar! When in Cuba...

These snippets of my journal entries only scratch the surface of my trip to Cuba. It was such a rich, rewarding experience. So many times during my trip I thought to myself: “How am I going to explain this to people when I get home?” It was beyond words and beyond belief. Thank you to ACDA and the ICEP Steering Committee (especially Jerry McCoy and James Feiszli) for making this program a reality! I encourage all of you to keep abreast of developments with the ICEP. Who knows? You may be the next North Central representative and have a life-changing experience, too! ■

* Videos of Schola Cantorum at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sPuL7OLuQk> (High School contingent, May 19, 2012) and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gN2wzgyAAWw> (Professional contingent, May 27, 2012).

*How could I not be
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*That was the only
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of such greatness!*



from Joy's Cuban Scrapbook
See pp. 24-27







Lee Nelson

SATB divisi
and double-choir
music from
*Europe and the
New World*



1. Luminosity

James Whitbourn

Chester Music CH73502

SATB divisi, viola, tanpura, tam-tam and dance theatre

James Whitbourn has garnered an international reputation as a significant choral, film/television, and orchestral composer. Commissioned by James Jordan (Westminster Choir College) for the *Williamson Voices*, the women of Westminster *Schola Cantorum*, the *Blair Academy Singers* and the black-light dance company *Archedream*, *Luminosity* focuses on the “transcendent beauty of creation expressed by luminaries down the ages.” The text is a compilation of writings of St. John, St. Teresa of Avila, Ryonen, St. Augustine, Julian of Norwich and St. Isaac of Nineveh. Although the work is divided into seven sections, it is possible to excerpt movements effectively. Conductors will have to consider the space in which this extended multi-media work will be performed, as the composer calls for the use of dance, art, lighting and spatial placement of the performers. The choral writing is not difficult and is accessible to choirs of varying abilities. Whitbourn’s creative writing will reward singers and audiences alike, and would serve beautifully as the centerpiece of a concert.

2. Gaudete (from Two Medieval Lyrics)

Steven Sametz

Oxford University Press #0-19-386309-X

SSATB divisi, unaccompanied

Steven Sametz’s setting of *Gaudete* was commissioned for Chanticleer in 1995. The piece opens with a repeated refrain set in a 5/4-meter with a *furioso* tempo marking. It then moves into a more traditional four-part setting of the Advent text and tune that continues to incorporate mixed meters. However, Sametz’s setting provides some unexpected modal shifts in the traditional harmony, providing a modernized feel to the ancient tune. In the middle of the work, Sametz recalls the popular 16th-century Spanish villancico tune, *Riu Riu Chiu*, adding another layer of creativity to this wonderful setting. The piece concludes with a variation on the opening refrain, set even faster at *piú presto*. This erupts into a six-part, repeated declamation of the word *Gaudete*, culminating in a *fortissimo*, A-minor diad spanning three octaves! Sametz’s *Gaudete* promises to provide fun and energetic contrast in your holiday program.

3. *Kyrie* (from *Mass in E-Flat*)

Josef Gabriel Rheinberger

CPDL

Double Choir, unaccompanied

Josef Rheinberger was a 19th-century German composer who was, unfortunately, overshadowed by contemporaries such as Brahms and Wagner due to his rather conservative tonal writing. Reviewer James Manheim describes the *Mass in E-Flat* as “an intimate work that seems to express the text of the Mass almost conversationally, with a straightforward quality that seems not reverential, but confidently radiant.”

[<http://www.allmusic.com/album/rheinberger-sacred-choral-works-mw0001857716>]

The beauty of the Mass lies in its simplicity. This is exemplified in the “Kyrie,” in which each choir responds antiphonally with short motivic phrases that perfectly color the penitential Latin text. The harmonic language is straightforward and fully tonal, making it accessible to any choir capable of double-choir compositions. If you are looking for an outstanding recording of the Rheinberger *Mass*, I highly recommend the Grammy®-nominated recording by the Kansas City Chorale and the Phoenix Bach Choir (now known as the Phoenix Chorale), both conducted by Charles Bruffy.

4. *From Light to Light*

J. Aaron McDermid

Morningstar Publishers 70-030

SATB divisi, unaccompanied

From Light to Light, commissioned by the National Lutheran Choir (David Cherwien, conductor), is a four-movement unaccompanied work based on original texts by Susan Cherwien. The title for each movement is based on natural elements (Earth, Fire, Water, and Wind). McDermid captures the essence of the texts through his warm, lush, harmonic language and lyrical melodies that flow throughout each voice. This deeply spiritual piece requires mastery of legato singing in all voice parts due to the heavy use of expansive eight-part writing throughout the work. Individual movements can easily and effectively be excerpted as stand-alone works (the publisher has published each movement as separate octavos). Advanced choirs will definitely enjoy preparing and performing this masterwork of the modern choral repertory.

If you are looking for an outstanding recording of the Rheinberger ‘Mass,’ I highly recommend the Grammy®-nominated recording by the Kansas City Chorale and the Phoenix Bach Choir (now known as the Phoenix Chorale), both conducted by Charles Bruffy.

Continued

College/University, continued

‘O Magnum
Mysterium’
will serve as a
beautiful
centerpiece for
your holiday
concert.

5. O Magnum Mysterium

Kevin A. Memley

Pavane Publishing P1395

SSAATTBB, unaccompanied

Kevin Memley is a relatively new composer to the choral world, and his music is quickly bringing him notoreity. In the same style as his setting of *Ave Maria*, *O Magnum Mysterium* is filled with rich, lush harmonies and graceful motives that perfectly color the reverent Latin text. The *divisi* writing pervades the piece and requires great nuance and sensitivity from the performers, but is well worth the effort. Memley’s blend of modern harmonies and intricate rhythms provide a fulfilling experience for performers and audience members alike. *O Magnum Mysterium* will serve as a beautiful centerpiece for your holiday concert. ■




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South Dakota President

David Holdhusen

The University of South Dakota
Department of Music
414 East Clark Street
Vermillion, SD 57069-2390
david.holdhusen@usd.edu

Wisconsin President

Susan McAllister

2453 Morning Star Trail
Green Bay, WI 54302
suemcmus@att.net