



Melisma

Official publication of the North Central Division—American Choral Directors Association

FEBRUARY 8–11, 2012...

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editor's
corner

Bill Ross

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contents

While not sunny, it is 60+ degrees, the snow is melting, and robins are returning to southeast Wisconsin. All this is a sure sign of spring and with that the last paper issue of *Melisma*. Our next issue in fall, 2011 will come via www.ncacda.org on our new and greatly improved website. A preview of that website should be up and running as you read this issue. As your aging editor I must admit to mixed feelings about all this. However, to assure younger members of our division as well as those who keep a watchful eye on bottom lines of budgets, I do understand the necessity of making the move.

While attending the biennial national conference in Chicago I managed to be present at a session for state and divisional newsletter editors. Some states are proudly retaining the paper editions; many states and divisions have already moved to the web format, and the new move, in some states, is to adopt an app for iPhone use. I'm not going further down that path in this column. Let me assure you that in the fall you will find a reminder in your surface mailbox when *Melisma* is available online. Those mailed postcards may fade away in favor of email blasts, as gentle reminders that yet another edition and/or other valuable information is ready for your perusal. By that point you will be so interested in the new North Central website that you will have visited often, seeking out all sorts of

information posted there.

On this almost spring-like day, it is sad that *Melisma* has noted the passing of several of our members since the last issue. Sad that they are no longer here to share their wisdom and humor, but thankful that they were part of our community of choral directors and that we had the honor and privilege of walking along with them for a time.

Thanks to many of your dedicated and knowledgeable R&S Chairs, you will find articles spanning a wide range of interest and topics. Again the topics come from miles apart in our division, yet speaking to related issues. I suggest you begin with President Beckmann-Collier's topic on "gentleness," followed by "...Spatial Disorders and Dyslexia..." then followed by "What (after all, editor's note) Are You Teaching?" What about a singer who thinks or believes, "I'm Not Talented?" "Collaboration: Thinking Outside the Box" and "That's Entertainment" round out the articles in this issue. Don't miss the High 5s from College & University, and Music in Worship areas. Thank you, R&S Chairs, for all your work for *Melisma* this year.

Finally, please pay special attention to "The 14 Percent Solution." Save the dates of February 8-11, 2012 and join your North Central friends in Madison, Wisconsin for *Beyond the Notes*, our

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Melisma

Spring/Summer 2011

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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.

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president's
voice

Aimee Beckmann-Collier

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Should we—could we—inspire “gentleness”?

Lately I've been thinking about **gentleness**. Our culture doesn't encourage it and, I suspect, not everybody would appreciate being labeled gentle. Somehow, in our “get ahead” world, in which crassness, inflammatory and derogatory language, and violence are a daily presence, gentleness has come to be equated with weakness.

I've been thinking about gentleness because the Drake Choir and I have been rehearsing *All Works of Love*, the 2010 ACDA Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission. This piece, written by Joan Szymko, uses a simple but profound statement by Mother Teresa: “If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other. All works of love are works of peace.” Szymko's setting of this text is profoundly moving for listeners. And, for my students, its impact has only increased as we've rehearsed and performed it multiple times on tour.

The piece led me to consider how choruses and the communities they

create can become incubators for the development of gentleness; then, in turn, how gentleness might contribute to a changed atmosphere both within and outside our rehearsal rooms.

A few years ago, I was fortunate to be a board member for an organization that included in its mission the development of gentlemen; that is, gentle men. Through its international festivals for singing men and boys, the conductors, chaperones, and activities staff worked to create a culture of gentleness, an understanding of what it meant to be a gentle man. Although the organization no longer exists, its mission continues to influence me and, I hope, the thousands of men and boys who were privileged to participate in the very special atmosphere created at the festivals.

I recalled those festival weeks of gentle speech and gentle behavior toward one another as I become increasingly immersed in Szymko's piece. I've often discussed with my students the unique way in which choral music reminds us of

our human dignity. I see choral music as a counter-cultural antidote to the verbal bludgeoning that so often passes for conversation in our country.

Choral music, with its emphasis on ennobling texts, and its focus on building and maintaining a sense of community, seems to have a special role to play in the gentling of our schools and communities.

The topic of civility has been at the forefront of discussion in the past few months. Perhaps choral conductors are the leaders to whom others could look for inspiration as we try to create a more respectful, peaceful, and gentle community. *“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other. All works of love are works of peace.”* ■

Editor's Corner

Continued from page 3.

divisional conference that promises to be truly unlike any other you might have attended. By now you should all have received (1) the large blue postcard with conference information and (2) the Application for Performance brochure which you tucked away for safe keeping. If they are tucked away safely, which means you can't find them any longer, you now have a great excuse to visit

www.ncacda.org, where you will find that information and more. In this same article, not even in small print, you will find some words that sound kinda, sorta like a money back guarantee. But you have to attend to attempt to take anyone up on that more than generous offer.

All my best wishes and positive thoughts go your way as you finish up another term. Thank you for your support of NC-

ACDA and for making the joy of music a large and important part of your singers' lives. ■

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The 14 Percent Solution

—Aimee Beckmann-Collier
President, North Central ACDA

14%—that's the average number of North Central ACDA members who have attended our divisional conferences in the past fifteen years. Only fourteen percent of our members!

The bi-annual conferences, which are the central focus of divisional activity, attract far less than a quarter of the 2700 members of North Central ACDA. Consider that the North Central Division is one of ACDA's leading divisions in terms of number of members, strength of state chapters, level of activities meaningful to members and the singers with whom they work, and quality of choral singing; yet our participation in divisional conferences is among the lowest in the country.

Let's change that.

Let's look at some of the valid reasons why members may not attend, including the expense, the travel distance, the difficulty of being gone from school, and the challenge of convincing administrators that attending the conference aligns with building goals or that participation in conferences will make a difference in one's teaching and music-making.

2012 NORTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE:
February 8-11, Madison, WI

- Why so early in the year?

Those are the dates that worked in Madison for venues and hotels. These

dates are actually ideal—before basketball tournaments, college tours, and Lent.

- Why are we in Madison?

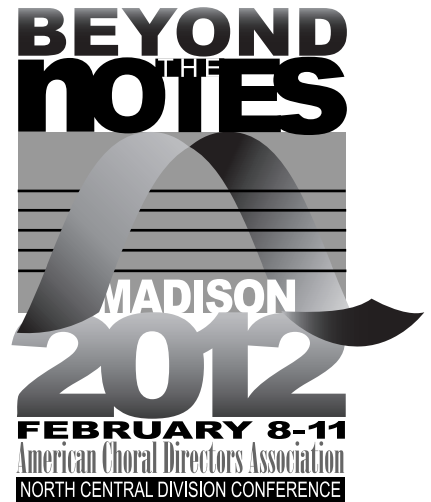
Divisional conferences alternate among the six states; it's Wisconsin's turn. Madison offers a spectacular performance venue in the Overture Center for the Arts, reasonable hotel rates and meals, and the coolest vibe of virtually any city in the upper Midwest.

- Apply NOW for professional development funds.

I promise you that your teaching/music-making will improve if you apply what you'll learn at this conference, *Beyond the Notes*, to your own situation.

Beyond the Notes is all about the process of music-making. If you're eager to help your singers read better, sound better, sing with greater artistry, connect their musical "doing" with their musical thinking and feeling, value the role music plays in their lives and in the lives of their communities and culture, go deeper in their skill, knowledge, and affective experiences, and if you want to interact with clinicians who are eager to share their ideas with you, the 2012 NC-ACDA conference is a "must do."

If you don't find this conference to be the best thing you've done recently to



improve your thinking, planning, teaching, rehearsing, I promise you a refund from my own checkbook.

Beyond the Notes planners are well-aware that we're now in an era in which K-12 administrators have no interest in approving funding for conference attendance simply to mingle with colleagues and hear great performances. They want to know *how the conference sessions can assist you in meeting standards—your own, your school's or church's.*

Their question is, "How will this change what you do for the better?"

Look closely at the conference brochure when you receive it early in the fall. You'll note that it is written so that all sessions and their benefits are clearly explained. From honor choirs



Clerestory



Charles Bruffy and the Kansas City Chorale

that will each learn a complete piece on site, to reading sessions that will include teaching plans, to interest sessions that simply won't allow you to be a bystander, you'll find that this is an unusual conference. It's one that has carefully planned learning goals for our participants and which will be easy for your administrators to understand.

• **Look forward to interacting with engaging headliners**, including:

Paul Caldwell	Sean Ivory
Carol Krueger	Stephen Paulus
David Rayl	Angela Broeker
Brad Holmes	John Armstrong
Margaret Jenks	Randy Swiggum
Kristin Zaryski	Patty Trump
Terees Hibbard	

• **Hear marvelous performances** from these invited choirs:

Clerestory (Chanticleer alumni)
 Kansas City Chorale,
 Charles Bruffy, director
 Czech Boys Choir,
 Jakub Martinec, director
 Czech Young Men's Ensemble,
 Jennifer Beynon Martinec, director
and fourteen auditioned choirs.

To Be Certain of the Dawn, a high-impact oratorio by Stephen Paulus, with libretto by Michael Dennis Browne, featuring performers from throughout North Central ACDA.

• **Encourage your students to audition** for the honor choirs led by outstanding guest conductors:

Elementary: Angela Broeker
 Middle School Boys: Randy Swiggum and Margaret Jenks

Middle School Girls: Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory

High School SATB: Brad Holmes
 as well as a collegiate repertoire choir (not performance based), selected through teacher recommendation

See page 8 for more information.

• **Participate in Immersion Day**,
 Wednesday, February 8

North Central ACDA originated the Immersion Day concept. Our *Beyond the Notes* immersion event will offer an entire day focused on the sequential teaching of music literacy, with special emphasis on the development of tone and expressivity, all in an atmosphere encouraging a high level of engagement on the part of students. Clinicians for the day will be John Armstrong and Kristin Zaryski, with assistance from the Dallas Center-Grimes High School Concert Choir (Dallas Center, IA), Natalie McDonald, conductor.

Visit NC-ACDA's new website often at www.ncacda.org for complete updated conference information and application forms as they become available. ■

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Czech Boys Choir



Czech Young Men's Ensemble

2012 NC-ACDA Honor Choirs

The North Central Division conference, *Beyond the Notes*, will feature four honor choirs, plus a collegiate repertoire choir. Since the focus of the conference is on the process of music-making, each honor choir will rehearse and perform a piece they will not have seen until their arrival in Madison. Watching the honor choir conductors rehearse this piece will enrich conference participants' ideas about the rehearsal process.

HONOR CHOIRS INCLUDE:



- **ELEMENTARY**
(Grades 4-6)
Angela Broecker, conductor. This ensemble will rehearse on February 10 and 11.



- **MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS**
(Grades 7-8)
Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory, conductors. Rehearsals will begin February 9 in the afternoon and continue through February 11.



- **MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS**
(Grades 7-8)
Randy Swiggum and Margaret Jenks, conductors. Rehearsals will begin February 9 in the afternoon and continue through February 11.



- **HIGH SCHOOL SATB**
(Grades 9-12)
Brad Holmes, conductor. Rehearsals will begin February 9 in the afternoon and continue through February 11.



ALL HONOR CHOIRS will perform on **Saturday afternoon, February 11, 2012** in **Overture Hall, Madison, Wisconsin.**

- **COLLEGIATE REPERTOIRE CHOIR** will be conducted by five different teachers.

This ensemble, which will not perform, will be comprised of upperclass undergraduate choral music education majors recommended by their teachers.

The ensemble will rehearse from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 11. This is not merely a reading chorus. Student participants will rehearse fifteen pieces, led by five master teachers, which are appropriate for various levels of middle and high school choirs. Repertoire choir singers will have the opportunity to explore a variety of rehearsal strategies and will receive teaching plans for the pieces used in the sessions.

Information concerning the honor choirs, as well as the application forms, will be mailed to all North Central ACDA members in April.

You can also download this information from the North Central website at www.ncacda.org.

The DEADLINE for applications is October 1 for all choirs.

The APPLICATION FEE for elementary through high school choirs is \$15.

REGISTRATION FEE:

- for middle school and high school students accepted by audition, is \$185 plus housing. Meals and music are included in this fee.
- for the elementary honor choir is \$150 plus housing. Meals and music are included in this fee.
- for participation in the college repertoire choir is \$60 plus housing. Music is included in this fee; meals are not. ■

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Spatial Disorders and Dyslexia in the Choral Classroom

—Jeffrey Kitson, R & S Chair

NCACDA Two Year College Choirs

Meet Mark. Mark desperately wanted to be a music major. Mark was talented and passionate, but he knew he was missing one thing: Mark couldn't read music. Mark would never be able to read music because he suffered from a spatial disorder caused from being dropped on his head too much as a child. As he described it, he saw the world differently: straight lines were often tilted (he asked me once why things weren't falling off my perfectly straight shelves), words would blur together or letters would touch when they shouldn't, and possibly worst of all, things would appear to move forward and backward and in and out of focus on his bad days. There was nothing that could be done. This was a permanent condition.

This made learning extremely difficult for Mark. He wanted a chance at college so he ended up at our institution as a Theatre major. His singing improved, but academically it was just too hard for him, and after three years, he gave up.

Meet (another) Mark. When I first met Mark at a recruiting event, he told me that he didn't read music that well, but he wanted to be a session player. I laughed, a bit, but I was looking for potential. Then he told me that he just wrote in the letter names below the notes in his high school band music. My face fell. He couldn't be serious.

Mark ended up in my large ensemble and class piano. He struggled. He always had lots of insight into the construction of the piece (form, analysis), but really couldn't play. I noticed one day that he was looking down at the keys and never at the actual sheet music. He was trying to sound everything out and quickly memorize. I called him into my office to have a chat about his progress and his reading skills.

I say this with utmost respect: Mark is a nerd, so when he told me that he'd never read an entire book in his life, I knew something was up. Then he told me that sometimes the notes bleed together as well as the staff lines. I quickly grabbed something off my desk for him to read out loud. He did pretty well, but there were some things that were choppy, and he was adding words that weren't there, and removing words that were.

"Mark," I said, "I think you're dyslexic," and I sent him to Student Services to make a referral. In the mean time, I was curious. There are lots of dyslexics in the world. Certainly, some of them are musicians. How does that work? Judy Boussat, a faculty member at Sacramento State University has done extensive research for the American String Teachers Association (ASTA). Here are two suggestions that I found shocking:

1. Thicken the middle line of the staff, and also the middle bar line.
2. Place alternating blue and green lines at the beginning of each staff.

I tried both of these with Mark and they were successful. His reading improved immediately, and he remarked, "Whoa! That's way easier!" Then he added, "I went to Student Services and made my appointment with a doctor. They think you're a quack."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because they think I'm fine, and that you don't know what you're talking about." Student Services thought he had some sort of reading retention problem, rather than a physical problem reading what was in front of him. With all the evidence I'd seen, I disagreed, but internalized it, wanting to be professional.

"Meet with the doctor," I replied, trying to show an assured tone.

Within a week Mark was back in my office. He was diagnosed with a spatial disorder that acted a bit like dyslexia, and got a prescription for special glasses that vastly improved his sight and reading skills. His musical progress has grown exponentially since then.

Just a few days ago, randomly, the first Mark walked into my office, also with special glasses. It turns out he'd had an accident that changed his sight. When he went to the doctor, he explained his situation. The doctor responded, "Well, I can fix that!" and Mark has had nearly perfect vision ever since.

"So, when are you going to teach me to read music, Jeff?" he asked with a broad smile on his face.

It pains me to think that both Marks went through nearly their entire schooling suffering with this condition. This is an active reminder for all educators, especially those in two-year colleges, to watch and listen for signs of learning disabilities. As sad as it is, sometimes our students are just called dumb, or stupid, or a million other names in the book, where a simple glasses prescription can completely level the playing field. Even if you're called a quack by the people who are supposed to be helping, stand strong. Sometimes all it takes is noticing the details, and guiding the way to a new path to open up an entirely new world for a student.

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Melisma 11



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Dr. René Clausen

Concordia College, Moorhead, MN

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children

Karen Bruno

NC-ACDA Repertoire & Standards Committee Chair
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“I’m not talented.”

Over the last few years, several authors have demonstrated, through both research and anecdote, that talent is bred, not born. The so-called “10,000 hours” model asserts that long-term repetition of any task, done purposefully and with intrinsic motivation, produces results. Of course there could be physical limitations depending upon the task—I, at 5’3” tall, will never be a star basketball player—but excelling in music doesn’t require height, strength, or a particular body type.

When I first read about the talent myth, I thought back on my own life.

I was fortunate to have parents who enrolled me in piano lessons at age 5 (I begged to learn, the story goes, as we had an old piano that I would play), but I remember my grandparents—on both sides—being mystified by my accomplishments (“I can’t carry a tune in a suitcase!” “That talent must have skipped our generation.”). The truth of the matter was that music-making, formal or informal, had never been part of their lives. I, however, desperately wanted to learn to play the piano and practiced for fun. I had teachers who challenged me and supported me, even when I did not receive adequate general music instruction in my public school (once per week for 30 minutes by a woman who, it seemed, wanted nothing to do with the rough-and-tumble children in front of her). My first choral experience was as a sophomore in high school because I could finally fit choir into my schedule (yes, there was only one choir of about 40 in my school of 2,000 students). In college, I earned a degree in economics... with a music degree “on the side” to fulfill my heart’s needs. Of course, I later went on to further my

studies in that “non-marketable” music major and have found my life’s work, and continued passion, within the discipline.

I have no idea who or what first lit the fire for me, but I am incredibly grateful that, as a child, I was able to find and articulate my love for music. I had parents who were willing and able to provide musical instruction and dedicated teachers to guide me. I am lucky, indeed, that my “work” as a choral educator has always felt like an extension of my early passion. This is what drives me. Because I love what I do, and because I love my students, I am motivated to continue to improve the twin crafts of music-making and pedagogy. I’m not talented, I’m stubborn. I want to be the best musician-teacher I can be, and I work very hard at it.

Now, I absolutely recognize not every student feels the same way about music.

I know that there are plenty of students who come to me in the same place my grandparents were as adults—they believe that music is for other kids, the talented ones, not for them. For me, understanding the talent myth informs my task as a music educator. I must structure a learning environment that is a safe, respectful, and joyful place to be. I must give students music that challenges them adequately without frustrating them. I must provide constructive feedback to guide them in purposeful repetition of the music. In short, I must believe that every one of my students is capable, and guide each of them to success. Failure is not an option.

To me, the talent myth is an issue of social justice. All children should have the opportunity to excel in music. Children without financial means should not be prevented from experiencing the

joy of singing in community, of being part of something larger than themselves. If there is no talent barrier, then it is our job as music educators to ensure that we are motivating each child to continue making music as we structure our classes and rehearsals.

In “Drive,” Daniel Pink takes on the issue of **motivation**. Since Alfie Kohn’s 1993 “Punished By Rewards,” many of us have focused on intrinsic motivation and eschewed external rewards. Pink, however, claims that there is an appropriate time to use external motivators—when the task at hand is routine or dull. If there are set rules to a specified end, the task does not allow for creativity and does not inherently contain anything that could be intrinsically motivating.

External rewards are perfect for these types of tasks, which could include rote memorization or worksheets. The sage-on-the-stage approach to teaching fits here, too, if students are asked simply to follow directions.

Complex tasks are messy. They allow for creativity and spontaneity. They synthesize a variety of routine tasks in a multitude of ways. The process is intrinsically motivating, and doesn’t require anything external. The goal is to experience and explore a composition within a choral community.

What do you want your classroom to look like? I prefer the messy path. I select music with depth and integrity, thoroughly analyze the scores, plan outcomes that touch on skills, knowledge, and affect, create student-centered strategies, and constantly assess the effectiveness of my teaching. We explore, together, the riches within the music, and feel the intrinsic value of the

journey. I don't need to supply trinkets or candy; the gift of the process is better, and we know it. All students succeed.

I reject the idea that some students are musically talented and others are not. I want all of my students to know that they are musical beings, that music is their birthright. I want my students to experience depth of emotion through music-making, to know that this expression of humanity belongs to them. I want to teach them to love the process, to enjoy the work and the fruits of their labor. 10,000 hours takes years, but I can guide them, one hour at a time, to ensure the foundation and desire for more. ■

SUGGESTED READING:

- "Bounce: Mozart, Federer, Picasso, Beckham, and the Science of Success," by Matthew Syed.
- "Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us," by Daniel Pink.
- "The Talent Code: Greatness Isn't Born. It's Grown. Here's How." by Daniel Coyle.
- "Talent Is Over-Rated: What Really Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else," by Geoff Colvin.



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music in
worship

John Albrecht

NC-ACDA Repertoire & Standards Committee Chair
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HIGH

1. *Lenten Litany*. Martin How.

Boosey & Hawkes, OCUB6080.

Written for baritone solo, unison voices, upper treble voice group in two parts, and organ, this scoring is flexible (works well with SATB choirs) and dramatic (telling the Lenten story, interspersed with pleas to the Trinity.) Effective use of mild dissonance in both organ and choral parts provides accessible, strong writing.

2. *Tantum Ergo*, Op. 55. Gabriel Faure. Carus 70.301/50.

Your outstanding first-tenor soloist will shine in this setting, joined by SATBB choir, harp and organ. Homophonic writing for the choir, repeating the solo material introduced by the tenor,

wrapped in the lush harmonies of Faure.

3. *Teach Me, O Lord*. David Hurd.

GIA publications, G-2715.

This responsorial setting of Psalm 119 for SATB choir, congregation, and organ layers the refrain and verses over an ostinato organ accompaniment, culminating in random choral pitch clusters for the setting's ethereal conclusion.

4. *Thanks and Praise*. Ruth Dwyer and Martin Ellis. Colla Voce 24-96700

An imaginative text ("Thank you for the coal black sky...") and infectious melody will challenge heart, mind and voice of your church or community children's choir (unison, optional 2-part). Mixed meters provide rhythmic energy, and the

singer-friendly key of G major modulates to a contrasting section in A-flat major, finally returning the opening material to the new key. A well integrated piano accompaniment by Dwyer makes this piece soar.

5. *Pues si Vivimos*. arr. Alice Parker.

Hal Leonard, 08596533.

Scored for SATB choir, congregation and piano or freely improvised guitars and percussion, this setting of the Spanish hymn "While We Are Living" includes both English and Spanish, and is stylistically informed by Parker's masterful, playful touch. Includes a page that may be reproduced for the congregation. ■

In Tribute

Our congregation, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Appleton, WI, celebrated the life and rich music ministry of **Mary Kay Easty** (1936-2011) with a music-filled memorial service on Saturday, Jan. 22, 2011. Mary Kay's thirty-four years of dedicated service as Director of Music Ministries at our church, as well as her service at Zion Lutheran, her leadership in the North-east WI Chapter of AGO, her membership and performing participation in ACDA and its conventions (Mary Kay was the recipient of WCDA's first Outstanding Church Musician Award), and her artistry as an organ recitalist, affirmed, for me, some fundamental truths about music in worship:

Why sing that piece? Whether it was an adult testimonial telling how the children's musical grounded an early love of music, or the joy and sense of accomplishment of our adult choir challenged by years of singing

masterworks with orchestra, quality literature impacts lives for the better.

Singing is therapeutic and one of the very best ways to share our faith. We formed an "open choir" for the memorial service, gathering former choir members and colleagues to join with our Sanctuary Choir and singers from Zion Lutheran. We raised the roof with "With a Voice of Singing" (Martin Shaw) and mourned together through the choral gem "Ave verum corpus" (Mozart).

Context can be powerful. A favorite Advent hymn of both Mary Kay and her daughter, "Of the Father's Love Begotten," took on new and deeper meaning in the context of a memorial service.

Our music is by nature inclusive, rather than exclusive. Gathered under one roof, we have the opportunity to teach and enrich the lives of our youngest children (through such offerings as "Pizza and Pipes," or closely gathering

around the organ console for a postlude) through the elderly, encouraging musical gifts in a safe performing environment, nurturing congregational song, and opening ears to new possibilities.

Music ministry builds community—within your staff, within your parish, within your own network of artists, within your small town or larger area. Music ministry as "an artistic island unto itself" defeats its purpose.

We handle dynamite! The power of music, sometimes combined with the artistic temperament, can be combustible—all the more reason to handle our art and our musical relationships with love, joy, and care. Will there be conflict? Yes, of course!

Persistence, professionalism, high standards, dedication, determination—these most often elicit a response in kind, as demonstrated so beautifully in the lifelong work of Mary Kay Easty. ■

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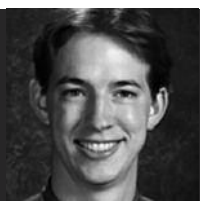
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male choirs

Gregory Douma

NC-ACDA Repertoire & Standards Committee Chair
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Collaboration: Thinking outside the box

Have you ever felt like you are a “department of one?” Whether you are a school teacher or church musician, choral directors often lead a somewhat isolated professional existence. We lack the daily collegial interaction of, say, our English teacher colleagues who, at the very least, often have a few teachers in their building or area with whom they can share ideas, collaborate and support each other. However, the field of choral music is strewn with passionate professionals who dedicate themselves day in and day out to bringing music to life for their singers. Therefore, it is important to remember that there are opportunities for extraordinary music-making outside of the standard performance schedule of your program (concerts, conference festivals, regular church services, etc.). Sometimes all it takes is someone like you to ask some important questions, bring people together and create a new opportunity for choral music to thrive—a *collaborative musical event*.

There are numerous benefits to thinking outside the box. There are...

Benefits to our singers

Peer interaction (our singers also need to get outside of the confines of their choir room and their stage)

Experiencing other musicians (singers, conductors, etc.)

Exploring a new genre of music or music performed by larger forces

Benefits to our community

Bringing people together from different areas in the community or from entirely separate communities

Perhaps the collaboration culminates in a

different kind of concert (larger forces, possibility of orchestral/instrumental accompaniment, etc.)

Collaborative projects might celebrate a major event in the life of the community (Memorial Day, Veteran’s Day, opening of a new school, anniversary of an historic event, etc.)

The performers may reflect a wide variety of community members, both young and old.

Benefits to you as a music educator

While we are not in this business for ourselves, it is important to stay creative and fresh in how we see the possibilities inherent in choral music-making. We often learn from our colleagues when we are engaged in collaboration with them. Sometimes the professional connection leads to a personal friendship, as well.

So, if you find yourself curious about opportunities to collaborate, you need to first ask yourself several questions:

- Will this collaborative project lead up to a performance or is it solely about the process?
- Is there a particular event to highlight (holiday, anniversary, etc.)?
- Is there a particular musical work or composer to be studied?
- Is there a theme (music of a particular culture, music of composers from a specific state, etc.)?
- Who is this event for? Church, school, treble, male, community, or children’s choirs—or a combination of some of these?
- Will there be a guest artist or expert (conductor, composer, soloist, poet, dancing company, etc.)?

Once you have a vision—even if it lacks organization at this point—you need to determine with whom you hope to collaborate. Think about your colleagues in the area or in your particular field. Invite a couple people for coffee and begin the process of brainstorming. At this point, challenges are bound to appear. Try to keep your thoughts in line with the spirit of the project rather than become sidetracked by obstacles.

Expect the following challenges:

- Giving up complete control (sometimes difficult for us choral folks to do!)
- There will surely be logistical issues (where, when, etc.)
- Travel considerations
- Time is needed for directors to plan together
- What will this cost? Where will funding be found?

This last issue may be the most daunting and seemingly prohibitive. Perhaps you are blessed with a great budget or a patron with a generous support of unique projects such as this. Maybe there are local businesses who want to support the arts as underwriters of this project. If this collaboration yields a concert, there is always ticket revenue to consider. Chances are the issue of grants will arise. Collaboration is a buzz word in the world of grants, especially if you are bringing together somewhat diverse populations (multigenerational, varying socio-economic realities, etc.). Check out your regional or state arts board for guidance and advice.

It is important to quickly establish a timeline. Your collaborative partners must commit to taking on some of the

“...it is important to remember that there are opportunities for extraordinary music-making outside of the standard performance schedule of your program...”

responsibilities. Not only will you need their help, it ensures they are fully committed and on board with the project.

Once you and your colleague(s) have begun progressing through the timeline, the project will take on a life of its own. **At this point, you can begin to think more about leveraging the event to bring positive attention to your students and program.** Perhaps there is a way to engage your school or church community. If your event requires a “master of ceremonies,” try asking a school principal, pastor, or the mayor of your community. Alert the local media so

that the community at large learns about this new artistic collaboration right in their back yards. In an environment of budget cuts, it is especially important to promote music activities and opportunities. The more that your work is seen as being relevant to the community as a whole, the better the chances are that the community will solidify its support of the arts.

Choral conductors are busy people. All too often we find ourselves stretched in many directions—early morning rehearsals, late night concerts, tours, etc. If the notion of a collaborative project does not excite you, that’s completely

understandable. However, if you find yourself curious and even energized by the idea, I strongly urge you to start brainstorming. **Please consider using your NC-ACDA leadership as a resource.** Not only are Repertoire & Standards Chairs able to offer advice, materials, or experience on the subject of collaboration, they can also be helpful in promoting an event or suggesting colleagues you could contact. NC-ACDA is full of passionate musicians and educators who are eager to help foster musical opportunities for singers, audiences and conductors alike. ■

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boychoirs

André-Louis Heywood

NC-ACDA Repertoire & Standards Committee Chair
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What are you teaching?

As the lights came up and the curtain came down, the audience dispersed, speaking excitedly about various aspects of the performance that stuck with them—the talent of the young performers, the authenticity of the costumes, the scenic designer's attention to detail. While others rushed to get to the exits before the inevitable post-show congestion, I couldn't help but remain standing, as bright-eyed as a proud parent, the beaming smiles of my students during boisterous applause still etched in my mind.

For music teachers, it is no strange thing to witness our students' pride and sense of accomplishment after a performance. It's a little different, though, when you had very little to do with it. Twelve of my choirboys recently had the opportunity to perform in the local community theatre's production of "Oliver!" and I had the opportunity to just enjoy the performance and not have to worry about preparing scores or rehearsing the chorus or working with soloists. In the end, I felt far more proud of them than I ever felt after one of our own performances, not because of their musical accomplishment, but because I had the opportunity to be a third-party observer with first-hand knowledge of how far they've come and how much they've grown both as musicians and as individuals.

It made me think about what it means to be a music educator. Am I someone who teaches music—an admirable objective in its own right—or am I an educator who uses music as the vehicle to teach a variety of important life skills? If I posed this question to most music teachers, they would probably side with

the latter, but perhaps we tend to lose sight of this objective when we find ourselves buried in scores, lesson plans, or grading. I remember coming into my first full-time conducting job right out of graduate school and being very focused on advancing the musical level of the ensemble. That's why I was hired, right? To take the group to the next level. To provide new musical opportunities. It didn't take me long to remember that achieving that musical ideal was the product of a far more complex set of objectives. If singing is body, mind, spirit and voice, then as conductor, I am inevitably responsible for the nourishment of all four in the rehearsal room.

So as choir directors, what do we teach exactly?

We teach community—or better yet, how to function successfully within a community. We teach our singers how to balance independence with interdependence. Music is an intimate form of personal expression, and yet choral music allows us to blend our experiences together into one voice. Singers learn how to work with one another, how to depend on one another, and how to support one another. As conductors, we facilitate the development of this community. We establish a safe, stable and dynamic environment that can accommodate change as singers come and go.

We teach confidence. The performance opportunities we provide are invaluable experiences. So many people cite public speaking as one of their biggest fears, yet we consistently ask our students to go one step further, to open up their voices and express their musical ideas in front of

hundreds or even thousands of others. Our focus on preparation should help to serve our students' confidence in their final performance. We have all witnessed how our students grow in confidence after a successful event.

We teach responsibility. Our singers understand the importance of practicing their part on their own, focusing during rehearsal and doing everything that's necessary to put on a good show.

They hold each other accountable and each individual knows that (s)he is accountable to everyone else. No one wants to let the others down. As conductors we can continue to apply the right amount of pressure to our singers to engage them more fully in the artistic process and to understand how their work contributes to the good of the ensemble.

We help form identity. Through musical expression, our singers often discover who they are. I think of many of my young boys, some of whom have not found a place in traditional "masculine" activities. Choir becomes their outlet for social interaction, for physical activity, for personal expression, for solace, or for leisure.

We teach art, history and culture. How often does our repertoire lead us to lessons about different cultures or historical events? I think of my choirboys' experiences of singing Hebrew holocaust texts, or Latin Gregorian chant, or Balinese folk rituals, or African-American spirituals. These experiences allow them to identify with other cultures and provide a broader perspective for understanding how they fit into the world, both in time and place.

Our efforts to improve in our own

“If singing is body, mind, spirit and voice, then as conductor, I am inevitably responsible for the nourishment of all four in the rehearsal room.”

musical capabilities are vital to our success as music educators, but must be balanced with efforts to ensure that we nourish all aspects of the singer, and not just the voice. In my experience, when attention is given to body, mind and spirit, all the “voice” stuff just seems to come more naturally. As I grow in my understanding of this concept, my choirboys grow too—both personally and musically. I find myself able to approach more challenging works and more advanced musical concepts with them. The actual result of this broader curriculum is the instillation of the pursuit of excellence in each boy which carries over into their musical learning and performance.

Our choir opens every season with “Boys on Broadway”—a musical theater revue that engages the boys in so many levels of learning, both musical and non-musical. The process has inspired some of our boys to explore the dramatic arts further. It’s been a joy to watch them grow in this exploration. I can’t help but smile at the sight of the rambunctious young boy who had few outlets to express his overwhelming creativity, now entertaining audiences as the Artful Dodger. I marvel at the bashful third grader who used to be so afraid of meeting new people and now is making lots of new “theater buddies.” I can’t help but tear up when I hear the extremely talented young boy from a small rural town melting the audience’s collective heart as he sings “Where Is Love” and receives a standing ovation from a full house.

Yes, they learn how to sing. But we’re proud because they learn so much more. ■

ED. NOTE: We are pleased to welcome André-Louis Heywood to the NC-ACDA Repertoire & Standards Committee. He was born in Trinidad, grew up and studied in Canada earning undergraduate degrees in both biochemistry and music education and a Master of Music degree in choral conducting from the Don Wright Faculty of Music of the University of Western Ontario.

André is a specialist in working with young male voices. He served as assistant conductor of the Amabile Boys’ Choir for two years after singing with the choir for over a decade.

He is an adjunct instructor at Saint John’s University where he directs the All-College Choir and serves as a Faculty Resident. He sings frequently with the Saint John’s Abbey Schola and Gregorian Chant Schola and is a sought-after performer of liturgical music, art song, gospel, and musical theater. André is a member of ACCC, CMEA, and the VoiceCare Network.

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community

Tom Porter

NC-ACDA Repertoire & Standards Committee Chair

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“That’s Entertainment!”

Rehearsal time and performance opportunities for my community choir are prime commodities. I value the two hours that members carve out of their weekly schedules, the unique position that the chorus holds in the musical community and in the region, and the quality performances that we share with our audiences. But I have to be careful not to take myself too seriously.

Sometimes the opportunity to make music with talented adults leads me to the false assumption that everything needs to be classical, hard, in a foreign language, and impressive. Yet there is an important entertainment value that comes into play for both rehearsals and performances.

Rehearsals

I am very conscious in my university choir that students leave each rehearsal having made music, not just singing notes and rhythms. In order to accomplish this, we establish high standards or expectations of basic things like posture, tone production, and attentiveness. We focus on mastering small pieces of the music and incorporating them into larger sections. We move rather quickly from piece to piece, enjoying the luxury of daily rehearsals and the opportunity to review and build skills.

By the time I get to Monday evening community choir rehearsals, I have had a full day of teaching, and my choir members have had a full day of life as well. It is important to remember, encourage and enable the same high standards in the basics of making music. To allow singing with poor posture, constant talking during rehearsal, or less

than vibrant, blended tone is to discourage singers from participating. Balancing review and rehearsal is an important component for each piece in the folder. But making music at every rehearsal, even a few measures of real music, is vital to the life of the ensemble. Good, quality, vibrant, hair-raising, spine-tingling music.

Preparing for and assessing the rehearsal, I ask myself some basic questions:

- Did we progress in the process of making music?
- How were the members engaged in the rehearsal?
- What was fun about it? If I were a member of the choir rather than the director, was the content, pacing, etc. enough to keep my interest and make me want to come back next week?
- What was the entertainment value of the rehearsal?
- How much music did we make?
- What kind of response would the rehearsal elicit to the perennial question, “Sorry I missed rehearsal. Did we do anything important?”

Performances

Performances are a snapshot of the choral experience. If the music is engaging and entertaining for the choir members during the weekly rehearsal process, it will have a chance of being engaging and entertaining for the audience. Every concert includes music that demonstrates different colors, textures, emotions, and characters; it is my responsibility to arrange them in waves to provide an overall exciting experience for the choir and the audience.

Reviewing the folder for the concert, and assessing the progress of the ensemble, I ask myself (on a regular basis):

- What is the “wow” piece, and how are we progressing with it? Are we making music regularly?
- Is there a song that will make them laugh? Tap their feet? Sing along?
- What is the piece on the program that is unique to this choir in this community, something that no high school/college group is performing?
- Is there a discernable story or theme to the event? Not that everything has to fit in a mold, but audiences enjoy the progression of a story, or the unfolding of an idea.
- When the concert is over, what will the chorus members remember? The audience? Was it fun? Was it entertaining? Why?

Regular assessment of rehearsals and performance repertoire will ensure that our choir members are musically sustained and our audiences entertained and enriched. By maintaining high standards of musicianship and remembering that people like to have fun, we create an atmosphere of excitement among the members of our ensembles and within our communities. ■



1. ***O vera digna hostia***, Tarik O'Regan. SATB divisi, *a cappella*. Novello and Co Ltd #NOV200255.

Commissioned by The Vaulkhard Choral Trust for The Choir Schools' Association and the Choir of Winchester Cathedral, this stunning motet beautifully sets a portion of the Sequence for St. Wulfstan. The opening section blossoms into an infectious eighth note motif that ornaments the lyrical melodic line. A slower middle section accentuates the medieval-inspired harmonic language. The vocal ranges are not extreme but the heavy use of divisi may create problems for younger choirs. O'Regan's creative setting of this unfamiliar text will reward your singers and audience alike and would serve beautifully as a concert opener.

2. ***ME-NA-RI*** (Space Music). Hyo-Won Woo. Three Groups Choir (SATB) & Percussion. Chorus Center #CCC-00006.

ME-NA-RI is much more than a musical work, it is an experience. Hyo-Won Woo, one of the leading women composers in Korea, composed this work for Dr. Hakwon Yoon and the tremendously skilled Incheon City Chorale. Woo scores the piece for three separate choirs and soprano soloist and she provides a performance guide instructing the conductor on choir placements, lighting and movement. These elements can be varied depending upon your specific performance venue. The primary text is simply the word "Ahrirang" which is used throughout the work along with some other 'nonsense' syllables. The piece is divided into sections, each highlighting different spatial elements of the performance hall. Overtone singing

is also incorporated into the work. Woo concludes the piece with the choirs leaving the stage and singing from offstage. Although ME-NA-RI is an investment in both time and finances, it is an experience your singers and your audience will never forget.

3. ***Make a Joyful Noise***, Heinz Werner Zimmermann. SSATB divisi, *a cappella*. Chantry Music Press, Inc.

This joyous introit motet sets the first three verses of Psalm 66. It was commissioned by and composed for the 12th International Choral Festival in Cork, Ireland. Zimmermann masterfully colors the descriptive text through the use of mixed meters, playful harmonies and a wide range of textural contrasts. A recurring *Alleluia* provides cohesion to the overall formal structure. The work concludes with a setting of the *Gloria Patri* text juxtaposed against the praise-filled *Alleluia* ostinato building to a powerful fortissimo at the end. This piece would serve well as an opening work for your concert.

4. ***My God is a Rock***, arr. Ken Berg. SATB divisi, *a cappella*. Colla Voce #36-20138.

Ken Berg's setting combines the lyricism of André Thomas (to whom the work is dedicated) and the rhythmic energy of Moses Hogan to create an exciting new addition to the African American spiritual genre. The work opens with a choral fanfare that melds into a repeated rhythmic motive undergirding the traditional melody in the women's voices. Berg playfully captures the essence of the text as he colors each "chapter" of the story with interesting harmonic turns and textural changes. The piece culminates in an expanded repetition of the opening

chorus that will definitely inspire your singers and audience alike. If you are looking for a familiar spiritual with a new sound, I highly recommend this setting.

5. ***Jesus Walked that Lonesome Valley***, arr. Kenneth Dake. SATB, *a cappella*. Published by the composer, kdake@marblechurch.org.

This is a wonderful new arrangement of this haunting spiritual. Kenneth Dake masterfully scores the spiritual for SATB (with a very small amount of divisi) and mezzo soprano/alto solo. The work is very straightforward and finds its beauty in its simplicity. However, one should not underestimate the sensitive musicianship it takes to realize the full emotional impact of the piece. The soloist is also critical to the piece's overall success. The melody normally rests upon the soloist with some support from the choir. The harmonic language varies from simple and stark to rich and robust. This piece works equally well in the church and the concert hall. A wonderful recording with the composer conducting the piece can be found on the CD "With Many Voices" recorded by the Marble Collegiate Church Sanctuary Choir. ■

In Memoriam



Curtis E. Hansen,

of Edina, Minnesota, passed away peacefully on January 31, 2011, at age 90. He was the last surviving of the seven founders of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) in 1959.

After graduation from Amery, WI High School and St. Olaf College where he studied and sang with F. Melius Christiansen, he earned a masters degree from the Minneapolis College of Music. He began his teaching career in Luck, WI, and Brainerd, MN. His choirs performed at state and national music educator's conferences and conventions.

In addition to being a founder of ACDA, he was a charter member and ACDA national vice-president. He served as president and vice-president of the Minnesota Music Educators Association (MMEA). He was honored as the recipient of ACDA-MN's F. Melius Christiansen Lifetime Achievement Award and was inducted into the MMEA Hall of Fame. He was a long-time member of the Bloomington Medalist Band, a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Minneapolis since 1963, and held membership with the American Legion in Brainerd, MN. He became the music editor of Schmitt, Hall & McCreary, Minneapolis, in 1963, and founded Curtis Music Press in 1977, providing new music for school and church choirs.

Curtis Hansen first served his country as a member of the U.S. Navy Band and later was commissioned as an officer in the amphibious forces that made a D-Day landing at Omaha Beach, France and in Okinawa in the Pacific.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Arthur and Lorena and his sister Bonnie Wolff. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Muriel; daughters, Mary E. Farrell of Vienna, Austria and Jeanne (Chris) Rosauer of Girdwood, AK; sister, Helen Fuhs of Anchorage, AK; two grandsons; and nieces and nephews.

Memorials are preferred to the F. Melius Christiansen Endowment Fund (www.fmcendowment.org), Bethlehem Church Capital Campaign Fund or the donor's choice.

Curtis Hansen was interviewed by Diana Leland on May 5, 2008, as one of ACDA's founders. To view that video, please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVMuygADCYo>.



Charles M. Thomley,

of McFarland, Wisconsin, died unexpectedly on January 20, 2011, at age 75. He was a past president of the ACDA North Central Division and assistant chairman of national ACDA conventions in Nashville,

Tennessee; San Antonio, Texas; and Salt Lake City, Utah.

"Chuck" was born on November 15, 1935, in Whitehall, Wisconsin. He graduated from Hixton High School in 1953, Luther College in 1957, and received his master's degree in choral conducting from Occidental College in California in 1960. In the Army, he was pleased with his assignment as chaplain's assistant where he played the organ, often wearing combat boots. The highlight of his army career was conducting the Orleans American Chorus in Handel's *Messiah* in December, 1959 in Orleans, France.

He was a high school choir director in the Osseo, Mequon and McFarland, WI school districts, as well as church organist at McFarland Lutheran Church. In 1980, he became business administrator at Bethel Lutheran Church in Madison. Soon after his sons were accepted into the Madison Boychoir, Chuck was asked to be an assistant director under Carrel Pray.

He directed Lutheran church choirs in Osseo, Stoughton, McFarland, and Monona. He was privileged to accompany the Bethel Mass Choir on the Overture Center organ at Bethel Lutheran's 150th anniversary celebration, and was very proud to serve on the Friends of the Overture Concert Organ Board. He has also been vice-president of the Madison Association Musicians/American Guild of Organists Chapter. As an organist, he loved filling in for churches in the Madison area, especially at Bethel Lutheran.

Charles Thomley is survived by his wife, Jo, of McFarland; brother, Lester "Sonny" (Karen) Thomley Jr. of Osseo; sons, Chad (Melissa) Thomley of Verona, Troy (Barb) Thomley of Stewartville, Minnesota; four wonderful grandchildren, Anna and Allison Thomley of Verona and Domonique and Andre Thomley of Stewartville.

A memorial will be established in his name at Bethel Lutheran Church. Chuck will be remembered as 100 percent Norwegian. He was a caring friend to all, faithful, steady and warm, with a great sense of humor.

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A postcard reminder will be mailed to all North Central members.

Suggestions and comments welcomed!

Please contact Bill Ross, editor.

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