

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

OCTOBER 1983



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF NORTH CENTRAL ACDA

Cover:
Reading session at the IOWA CDA summer convention.
PHOTO BY STEVE WOODIN

Melisma

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

OCTOBER 1983

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Melisma is a publication of the North Central American Choral
Directors Association. It is published 2-3 times yearly.

NCACDA KICKS-OFF NEW PUBLICATION

With this first issue of **Melisma**, North Central division of ACDA moves into the vanguard of choral publications. **Melisma** is the first divisional-level magazine to appear. Its birth was mandated by the state presidents of the North Central division. The presidents were seeking a publication which would be a magazine format, with specific guidelines which call for coverage of state and divisional activities, particularly convention; articles from the membership; updates from standing committee chairs; and reprints of outstanding articles from state publications of the division. Appropriate photos for the cover and the interior of the magazine are also to be included.

The name **Melisma** is musically-based, meaning quite literally "running notes." The title, then is something of a play-on-words, in that the magazine will endeavor to be a continuing commentary on activities in the division. The banner and additional art work are the work of graphic artist Parish Stapleton, a former Iowan and member of the Iowa All-State Chorus, now studying and free-lancing in Mobile, AL.

NCACDA President Wayne Kivell has named Sandra Chapman of Fort Madison, IA, as the first editor of **Melisma**. Chapman edited the Iowa CDA **Sounding Board** newspaper for six years and has recently been appointed to the editorial board of the **Choral Journal**. She is a secondary choral director in the Fort Madison Schools and co-directs the Iowa Youth Chorale on annual European tours and the Iowa State FFA chorus at spring conventions. A graduate of Baylor University and the University of Iowa, Chapman has been an Iowa CDA executive board member since 1977, 1983 ICDA convention chair, member of the Speakers Bureau, and Hospitality Co-Chair for both the 1982 North Central and 1983 National ACDA conventions. Her husband Allen directs the Fort Madison Chamber Singers who appeared at the 1983 ACDA convention; the Chapmans have one daughter, Anne.

Assuming the position of ad editor for **Melisma** is Robert Anderson of Mt. Pleasant, IA. He is choral director in the Mt. Pleasant secondary schools; his concert choir performed at the 1983 IMEA convention. Anderson recently retired as ICDA Southeast District representative.

Contributions to the North Central magazine are being accepted by the editor; mail news items and articles to 1209 Avenue C, Fort Madison, IA 52627.

Note From Gene Brooks, ACDA Exec-Secretary

The North Central Division of the American Choral Directors Association has always been a division that has presented ACDA with some of the most outstanding

choral groups for conventions. The choirs selected for the 1984 Division Convention are certainly among the very best not only in its division but among the best choirs in the United States. The 1984 North Central Division Convention in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, promises to be one of the most exciting conventions in the illustrious history of this division. Your division president and his convention committee have voluntarily spent countless hours of work on the planning of this convention. We urge every member of the North Central Division of ACDA to make plans now to attend your division convention in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, March 1-3, 1984.

Let me extend congratulations to the North Central Division for the excellent work that is being contributed to their division newsletter. This newsletter will make it possible for the ACDA membership of North Central to constantly be aware of the activities being prepared for its membership. Wayne Kivell, President; Charles Thomly, Past President; Diana Leland, President-Elect; and Sandra Chapman, Editor, have all contributed so much to this division and to its growth. This newsletter is one example of their dedication to the membership. We urge each of you to support them by submitting articles for publication in this "**Melisma**" newsletter.

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

There are many opportunities for us, as choral directors, to challenge ourselves and expand our knowledge. Choral workshops, college classes, and reading sessions are not hard to find. One can choose between a few days or many weeks, mountain or lakeside, near to home or far.

But one of the best sources of knowledge is right at the fingertips of every ACDA member — the **Choral Journal**, and it is in this regard that I issue a challenge. Do you scan the octavo reviews, look to see who is performing at the next convention, flip the pages of a repertoire list, and then toss it into a magazine rack never to be picked up again? Instead, try reading **all** the articles in at least one **Journal**. Perhaps a larger percentage of the magazine than you realize would help to broaden you in your work. Occasionally I hear members criticize the **Journal's** scholarly articles as being too deep or esoteric, saying, "I could never perform any of that music with my choir." That quote may be true, but what about reading some articles just for your own edification? Though you may not perform the Liszt **Requiem**, reading Donald Studebaker's article in the May '83 **Choral Journal** may help your appreciation of the work the next time you have an opportunity to hear it, whether live or recorded. Being very interested in Renaissance music, David Taylor's article on the ballets of Thomas Morley (April '83) was extremely useful to me. But even if you only perform an

occasional madrigal, there is something of value in the article for you. David Hensley's "Recruiting Techniques That Work" (March '83) should be required reading for anyone entering the field of choral music.

In addition to the **Choral Journal**, there are specialized periodicals for every director's unique interests, whether they be early music, church music, or jazz. Weston Noble's closing address at the Iowa Summer Convention made all in attendance realize the value of also reading outside one's major field. Music is, after all, only one of the many ways in which we guide our choristers. In summary, there is no cheaper or better way to expand the mind than by reading. Let's renew a forgotten pastime, and start with the **Choral Journal**.

Naturally, the North Central state presidents and I hope you will also enjoy reading the new **Melisma** magazine. It will attempt to educate as well as inform. We are pleased to have Sandra Chapman, of Ft. Madison, Iowa, assuming the duties of editor. Having edited the Iowa **Sounding Board** for six years, she brings experience, efficiency, and fresh ideas with her. Welcome aboard, Sandra!

Wayne M. Kivell, President
North Central Division

Ad Editor Invites A Word From Sponsors

ROBERT ANDERSON

It is with great excitement and anticipation that the North Central Division of ACDA enters a new era with the revamping and first issue of our magazine "**Melisma**." The addition of advertising to the magazine brings a challenge to all members of NCACDA to help this journal be a financial success as well as a news success. As advertising editor I am currently laying the groundwork for what we hope will be consistent advertisers in "**Melisma**."

The magazine welcomes advertising from all music-related ventures. You, as members, are invited to advertise music-related items you have available to other members, such as costumes for musicals, old choir robes for sale, etc. I encourage you to use this as an outlet. If you have special contacts with music-related companies in North Central that I should know about, please send me information about them. With the Convention in Sioux Falls this year, we hope to get special advertising related to that in the January issue. If you know of special advertisers or potential advertisers for that issue, please contact me. These could be advertising for motels/hotels, restaurants, or any businesses in the Sioux Falls area.

Any assistance you can give me in expanding our advertising will be greatly appreciated.

NCACDA CONVENTION
MARCH 1-3, 1984
SIOUX FALLS, S.D.
BE THERE!



From The Editor

One of the perks of any editorship is the opportunity to vent one's spleen in print. Having been editor of the Iowa CDA newspaper for six years, my spleen has been vented in quite a few directions. I try to speak on topics of interest to the divergence of membership in ACDA. Occasionally, my comments have more of a school-slant than I would like, but I try not to overlook the vast number of members in other areas of choral conducting.

In this new publication, this is what I would like to do: (1) Make this magazine an organ of communication for the membership. (2) Blend news with articles of interest. I believe that people want to know who's doing what, and I'll run current items which are sent to me. I further believe that scholarly articles which have reader-appeal do not have off-putting titles, excessive footnotes, and/or run on eight pages telling that Pulenc wrote the guillotine scene in "Dialogue of the Carmellites" in Mixolydian mode because Sister Mary Immaculata was mean to him in the 3rd grade. I'm NOT putting the knock on research and scholarship; I have an MA in music literature and have been around the academic block a time or two. I AM saying that I am interested in printing articles that are intelligible and informational for the readers. (3) Feature events from the six states of the North Central division. I'd really like to find a person in each state to act as news liaison. The state editors have enough to do, so if someone else would come forward, it would be appreciated. (4) Keep the division informed of division-wide events. Convention news and elections will have priority. (5) Install recurring columns; Point-Counterpoint, addressing controversial issues in choral music, based on reader contribution; church music concerns; student ideas, etc. This column will be strictly opinion. (If you care to refute what I say, write.) I usually have some burr under my saddle that I share with the readers.

My current burr is competency testing and merit pay for teachers, specifically choral directors. Theoretically, merit pay is OK (they couldn't afford to pay us hourly; the overtime alone would bankrupt them), but who is qualified to evaluate a choral musician's effectiveness? Most administrators have knowledge of only the externals of a choral program: Were the robes all the same length at the Christmas concert? Did the show choir do a good job at the Rotary Club? Is the choir room properly ventilated, and are the chairs stacked neatly? By the same token, a competency test might judge whether or not you can spell a Neopolitan chord or list Vivaldi's major works.

But a test — and often an administrative evaluation — cannot measure the qualities which make a great choral director: compassion, fairness, concern, insight, warmth . . . These things can't be quantified, but they often make the difference between a good choir and a fine choir. The director's ability to convey his love for his art can't be charted or graphed, but I submit that this is a true measure of a director than his ability in theory, history, or even conducting. Obviously, a choir will not succeed merely because a director is a caring person, but a director who has his singers afire with the love of music would be difficult to label incompetent. Maybe that's the beauty of our art: it can't be adequately codified, boxed-up, or counted like so many beans in a jar. It defies definition, description, and designation. Competency Test Sample Question: Complete the sentence, "Music is _____." How absurd. Our joy and our success lie in the fact that that sentence is already complete: "Music is."

SANDY

NCACDA Features Chorus With SD Symphony

One of the exciting features of the ACDA North Central Division Convention will be the Director's Chorus performing Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana" with the South Dakota Symphony. Under the direction of Kenneth Kline, director of the South Dakota Symphony, the Director's Chorus will be comprised of ACDA directors from six states and students from South Dakota colleges and universities. Scheduled to rehearse for the convention during March 1-3, 1983, in Sioux Falls, S.D., the Director's Chorus is sure to be a highlight of the convention.

In order to assemble a balanced chorus of 150 voices, William McMillan of Dakota State College, Madison, South Dakota, has been appointed chair of the Selection Committee by David Bauer, program chair of the 1984 convention.

The committee will review all applicants and choose a well-balanced chorus in voices, maturity, and experience, as well as a representative group of singers from all states of the North Central Division. In order to be considered for the Director's Chorus, an official application and cassette must be submitted by November 15, 1983. Taped selections are the choice of the applicant.

The music will be provided by the South Dakota Symphony. Individuals may purchase copies from the Symphony if they care to keep them. Notification to applicants is planned for December 1 so that the score will be learned before arrival at the Convention.

Since it is imperative that members selected to the Director's Chorus be in attendance at all rehearsals, it is urged that they plan their convention schedule around the rehearsals. The proposed rehearsal schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, Feb. 29—7:00-10:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 1—8:00-9:15, 11:30-12:30, 6-7:30 p.m.

Friday, March 2—8:00-9:00, 12:00-1:15, 7:00-10:00 with orchestra

Saturday, March 3—2:00 and 8:00 concerts

All North Central Division ACDA members interested in being a part of the chorus are urged to complete the application form and mail it with

their cassette tape to William McMillan, Dakota State College, Madison, South Dakota 57042. Early mailing will facilitate the work of the Selection Committee. Application deadline, again, is November 15, 1983.

ACDA Director's Chorus
Chorus Application
1984 North Central Division
ACDA Convention
March 1-3, 1984 Sioux Falls, South Dakota
APPLICATION DEADLINE —
NOVEMBER 15, 1983

Name _____

Street _____

Phone: Area Code () _____

City/St. _____ Zip _____

1. _____ Number of years you have been a choral director.
2. _____ Number of years of vocal study.
3. Soprano Alto Tenor Bass
I II I II I II I II
4. Voice range and tessitura, that is, your best five notes.
5. Singing experience.
Solo work —
Choral singing —
6. Yes No Do you presently teach voice?
7. Yes No Have you previously sung Orff's "Carmina Burana?"
8. Yes No Can you definitely attend all rehearsals?
9. Yes No Can you attend both performances on March 3rd?
10. Yes No Are you presently a member of ACDA?

SEND YOUR AUDITION ON A CASSETTE TAPE TO: William McMillan
Dakota State College Madison, SD 57042

President Elect's Message

DIANA LELAND

Greetings to all North Central ACDA members! Thank you for giving me the privilege and opportunity to serve you as President-Elect of the North Central Division. It is truly an exciting challenge for me to represent a Division with so many turned-on choral directors!

Hope you're enjoying the first issue of **Melisma** — North Central ACDA's new magazine format which will replace **Newsnotes**. We are extremely fortunate to have acquired the very capable and creative editorship of Sandra Chapman from Fort Madison, IA. We welcome Sandy and her new ideas and innovations for sharing North Central's choral activities with us.

I hope all of you are making plans to attend the March 1-3, 1984, North Central Division Convention scheduled for Sioux Falls, SD. South Dakota's convention planning committee has been working vigorously and diligently to compile a fabulous convention which will include a "Chuckwagon Stampede," a concert by the ACDA South Dakota High School Honors Choir conducted by Alice Larsen of St. Olaf College, and a convention Grand Finale presentation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

MESSAGE continued

of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* through the collaborative efforts of the SD Collegiate Chorale, ACDA Director's Chorus, and the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra.

Before closing I want to challenge each of you to invite a non-ACDA member to an ACDA event in your state or our Division during 1983-84. Also offer that non-member a copy of *The Choral Journal*. **ACDA needs all choral directors and likewise all choral directors need ACDA!** The membership of our Division could easily reach 3,500 members if each of us successfully encourage one non-member to join ACDA. Go to it!

Best wishes to you in all your choral endeavors. Have a great year!

CHOIRS CHOSEN, SESSIONS SET . . .

NCACDA CONVENTION

Twenty-one choirs, representing each state in the North Central Division, ten clinicians covering a variety of topics, the South Dakota ACDA Honors Choir, and the South Dakota Symphony joining with the voices of ACDA members and South Dakota Colleges, Universities in a performance of "Carmina Burana," will highlight this convention in Sioux Falls. The featured choirs are: Lefler Junior High Select Choir, Lincoln, Neb., Joan Evans; Bullen Junior High Concert Choir, Kenosha, Wisc., Donald Crouch; Oak Grove Concert Choir, Fargo, N.D., Arvid Berg; Freeman Academy Choir, Freeman, S.D., Calvin Buller; Washington High School Concert Choir, Sioux Falls, S.D., Dione Peterson; Waverly-Shell Rock High School Chamber Choir, Waverly, Ia., Alan Haugen; University of North Dakota Concert Choir, Grand Forks, N.D., Terry Elder; Luther College Nordic Choir, Decorah, Ia., Weston Noble; University of Wisconsin Women's Chorus, LaCrosse, Wisc., Gwen Brubaker; Varsity Bards, Grand Forks, N.D., Terry Elder; Scarlet & Cream Singers, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb., Ray Miller; Ellis Street Singers, Mankato State University, Mankato, Minn., Allen Wortman; University Singers, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb., Edward Brunner; The Augustana Choir, Sioux Falls, S.D., Olaf Malmin; First Lutheran Church Choir, Sioux Falls, S.D., Jerry Hanson; Plymouth Chancel Choir, Des Moines, Ia., Carol Stewart; Our Saviour Lutheran Choir, Sioux Falls, S.D., Don Levson; Valley Male Chorus, Orange City, Ia., Charles Canaan; Eau Claire Musical Arts Chorale, Eau Claire, Wisc., Gregory Vancil; Charles City Singers, Charles City, Ia., Gary Schwartzhoff; The Paul Kaye Singers, Minneapolis, Minn., Paul Kaatrud.

Interest Sessions scheduled are: "Children Can Learn to Sing Well," Sister Lorna Zembke (Wisconsin); "How to Mold, Motivate, and Maneuver Junior High Choirs," Richard Schirmacher (Minnesota); "The Chorus in Musical

Theater," Larry Mitchell (Iowa); "Music of the Sioux Indian," Dr. Ronald Tice (South Dakota); "Physiology of the Voice," Prof. Theodore Bleibaum (Germany); "Pacing the Choral Rehearsal," Dr. John Windh (Wisconsin); "The Show Choir . . . What Makes it Go!," Jon Peterson (Nebraska); "Music Reading Skills . . . Academically Relevant/How They Are Applied," Jean Opitz (Wisconsin); "Authentic Instruments Used for Choral Accompaniment," The Shrine to Music (South Dakota); "Placement Tips . . . Finding the First Job!" and "Surviving the First Year," Mark Lehman, (Student ACDA).

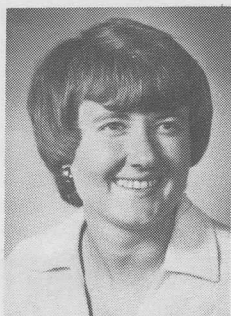
ACDA members interested in singing in the chorus or as soloists with the South Dakota Symphony in the performance of "Carmina Burana" should contact their State president.

Mark your calendar and plan to join us in the beautiful and spacious First Lutheran Church of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Behind The Bylines

In each issue of *Melisma*, there will appear a "Behind the Bylines" feature, linking up the faces and careers with the articles written by ACDA members. Some of the biographical information is sketchy, but every effort will be made to include a bit about each author. Also appearing here is a photo of the magazine's editor, Sandra Chapman, whose vita is contained in the lead article on the establishment of *Melisma*.



DIANA LELAND

Three years as General Manager of The Dale Warland Singers (a professional choral ensemble based on Minneapolis-St. Paul).

CAREER SUMMARY

- 1983- : Choral director, Edina Public Schools (Valley View Jr. High), Edina, MN.
1980-1983: Full-time General manager, The Dale Warland Singers, Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

• Served as president of the American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota from 1979-1981, and assumed responsibility to represent Minnesota choral directors locally, divisionally, and nationally — as well as to chair and delegate responsibilities to

an 11-member state executive board that meets three times yearly and holds an annual state convention.

PERSONAL

Bachelor of Music Education, 1969, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN.

Master of Science in Teaching Music, 1971, University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

President-elect, North Central Division of the American Choral Directors Association.

U.S. tour coordinator, The Swedish Radio Choir (March 1983), United States 3-week coast-to-coast tour.



AXEL THEIMER

Mr. Theimer, a native of Austria, has been Director of Choral Activities at St. John's University since 1969. The major influence on his interest in choral music was his membership in the world-famous "Vienna Boy's Choir."

Mr. Theimer received most of his musical training in Vienna and became director of the "Chorus Viennensis," a male chorus consisting of former members of the Vienna Boy's Choir, at the age of 21. After two years with the "Chorus Viennensis," Mr. Theimer came to the U.S. to take up his present position at St. John's University. Besides conducting the Men's Chorus, Mr. Theimer also directs the SJU/CSB Chamber Choir, the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis "Minnesingers" (a group specializing in the music of romantic German and Austrian composers), and teaches classes in Choral Conducting, Choral Literature-Arranging, Vocal Repertory, Diction for Singers and Applied Voice.

He has appeared as soloist in recitals and concerts and has directed numerous choral workshops and vocal masterclasses throughout the state of Minnesota. He holds a B.A. from St. John's University, an M.F.A. (Master of Fine Arts) in Choral Conducting from the University of Minnesota and is presently a candidate for a D.M.A. (Doctor of Musical Arts) in Vocal Performance at the University of Minnesota.

Associate Professor and member of the Graduate Faculty — University of Nebraska — Lincoln. Teaches three sections of Music Methods for the Elementary Education Major, a course in Vocal Pedagogy for Music Educator, and is a member of the choral faculty. Directs the University

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



CAROLEE CURTRIGHT

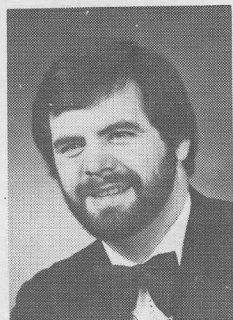
Chorale, an ensemble for treble voices, that has performed for state MENC and ACDA conventions. Also directs Pueri Cantores, a community boys' choir, that was first organized to sing the "War Requiem" by Benjamin Britten with Robert Shaw.

Has been active in church music. Spent 15 years as Director of Youth and Children's Choirs and Assistant Organist at Country Club Christian Church, Kansas City, Mo. Also has directed the Jr. High-High School Choir at Westminister Presbyterian Church, Lincoln, NE, as well as organizing choirs for young children, aged 3 through 3rd grade.

Is co-author of a text used in Music Methods classes. Also is a published composer and arranger of music for children, jr. high, high school, and college. Won the first prize in a Mu Phi Epsilon composition contest in 1977 for "Three Pieces for Oboe and Piano" (national contest).

Junior High clinician — 1982 and 1984; Montreat Conference on Worship and Music — Montreat, North Carolina.

Conductor of Festivals and Clinics in Nebraska, Missouri, and Colorado.



GREGORY VANCIL

Gregory Vancil received his D.M.A. in Choral Music from the University of Southern California, where he was a student of Rodney Eichenberger. His undergraduate degree is from the University of Washington, Seattle, where he majored in organ. After a year of musical studies at the Akademie "Mozarteum" in Salzburg, Austria, Dr. Vancil returned to the University of Washington to earn joint Master of Music degrees in Choral Conducting and Organ Performance.

Dr. Vancil joined the music faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in 1979 as conductor of the University Oratorio Society and Women's Chorus, and instructor

of conducting, music literature and appreciation. Under Dr. Vancil's direction, the UW-EC Women's Chorus performed at the 1980 Wisconsin Music Educator's Convention, and at the 1983 North-Central Division Convention of ACDA. Dr. Vancil currently serves as division chair to the ACDA National Committee on Women's Choruses.

In Eau Claire, Dr. Vancil is musical director of the Eau Claire Musical Arts chorale, a community chamber choir that in 1982 took first place in the community chorus division at the Great American Choral Festival in Minneapolis; the Chorale has been invited to perform at the 1983 ACDA North-Central Division Convention. Dr. Vancil serves as choir-master/organist at Trinity Lutheran Church, Eau Claire.



ELIZABETH STODOLA

EXPERIENCE: 20 years in Iowa schools
1976-1982 Director of Music, St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul, MN
1982- Sudlow Junior High, Davenport, IA
Organist, Dir. of Music First Congregational Church, Moline, IL
1981-1982 Dean of A.G.O., Minneapolis-St. Paul Chapter
1981-1983 Regional Church Choir (North Central Division)

EDUCATION: B.S. from University of Minnesota, Music
M.A. from University of Iowa, Music



ROBERT RITSCHER

Robert Ritschel, a member of the music education faculty since 1981, teaches choral music education courses and conducts the UNI Singers and the UNI Women's Chorus. He received his bachelor of arts degree in education from Northeastern Oklahoma State University. He later served in the U.S. Air Force and then received his master of music degree in performance (Conducting) from the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Ritschel was recently awarded the doctorate

of education (Music Education) from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

He has had extensive experience in teaching choral music in the secondary schools (Kansas, Oklahoma) and conducting community, church choirs and other ensembles ranging from elementary to college age singers. He is a member of the American Choral Directors Association, Music Educators National Conference, American Choral Foundation, College Music Society, the National Association of Teachers of Singing and Phi Delta Kappa. His current position is Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education at UNI.



SANDRA CHAPMAN

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Where Have All The Male Voices Gone?

By Axel Theimer, Male Choir Chair

One of the major concerns of many choir directors has been — and most likely will be in the years to come — the lack of participation of male singers in their choir programs. I am not even talking about the male choir in particular, nor of male ensembles, glee clubs or barbershop quartets, but choir in general — be it on the Junior High or Senior High level, Community Choir or Church Choir. This lack of participation has grown to such proportions that, in recent meetings, the ACDA Male Chorus Committee decided to channel its efforts toward trying to increase the numbers of male singers in choir programs.

It is impossible not to generalize in an attempt to find some reasons for the limited participation of male singers in vocal ensembles. But if we continue to blame the small numbers on

a) **the size of the student population in our particular school** — we also have to admit that there are large schools and small schools with well balanced, outstanding choirs — that success does not depend on the size of the school;

b) **scheduling difficulties in our schools** — we have to agree that: where there is a will there is a way — even if it means having to sacrifice some extra personal time (lunch break), or, if possible, rehearse before or after school;

c) **competition with other “extracurricular activities”** — we know that you will always find the students who are in choir the ones with above average talents and interests in other areas, such as sports, theater, speech, etc., no matter which school you visit — and yet, some of these schools do not have to worry about a lack of men who choose to sing.

Maybe we should take a closer look at our music and choir programs and try to find reasons why students **would want to join** our activities as well as why they are staying away. Let us see if we provide them with what they are looking for — within reason, and without compromising our artistic standards and values. If you would have a choice to join your own program as a singer, would you do it?

a) do we challenge our singers sufficiently or do we try to only please their taste, which, as we know, is frequently geared toward the “entertaining aspect” of music, confronting them with easy arrangements, because we think that is all they can master;

b) do we make their time spent in rehearsal worth their while or do they join choir for the main reason of having “a good time”;

c) are we demanding discipline, attention, participation — all the time (“controlled” periods of relaxation are essential) or do we ignore those who disturb and disrupt our rehearsal;

d) are we knowledgeable and competent (=comfortable) enough to help the young voice through the difficult years or do we discourage the singers during these years to remain quiet, providing them with only a few, if any, answers to their vocal questions; do we treat the 15 year old singer vocally the same way as the 17 year old;

e) do we provide extra time for the student with the changing voice to consult with us — are we voice teacher and coach, in addition to being the choir director;

f) do we despair because of the limited musical and cultural background we face in some student bodies and discontinue guide of their musical taste toward “good” music;

g) are we still enthusiastic, energetic and dedicated enough, as we were when we started our jobs, to turn a group of amateurs into a committed group of musicians, eager to improve their skills or have we given up hope, admitting that **nothing can be done** for this bunch of kids?

This list of “blames,” of “do’s and don’ts” could be continued “ad infinitum,” most definitely “ad absurdum.” But all of us know how much the success of a music program in general and a choir program in particular depends on certain qualities in the person of the director. We probably even know the conductor who seems to have all the necessary training, has all the right answers and all the talents needed to make him/her an outstanding musician, but yet lacks the gift relating his knowledge and inspiring young people. And we most likely have met the director who might not have been blessed with all these musical talents, who was not fortunate enough to be exposed to continuous extensive musical training, but yet seems to have “the right touch,” attracts students to the choir and never needs to worry about low numbers, in any section, of enthusiastic and dedicated singers. We all have seen excellent choir programs fade away and weak ones improve dramatically. What is it in some teachers that triggers success, that makes things “click”? How did they become “Master Teachers?”

As long as we continue to blame others for their lack of interest in our subject we will not solve the problem of low participation. We have to self-evaluate our own performance, our own dedication and commitment.

A FIRM FOUNDATION

By Carolee Curtright, Children’s Choir Chair

Even though the 1983 ACDA National Convention held in Nashville has been over for several months, many of the events of that convention are still very fresh in my mind. For the national committee on children’s choirs, the events of the convention were a milestone, the culmination of many months of hard work and the realization of dreams and plans made two years before at our first meeting in New Orleans.

Our primary goal at the convention was to raise the awareness of our many colleagues in

choral music as to the contribution children’s choirs can make to the training of the choral musicians of tomorrow. There were many firsts at the convention that were planned and accomplished by the children’s choir committee with Doreen Rao as our chairperson and “guiding light.”

1. An Honor Children’s Chorus with over 130 children from 25 states and Canada rehearsed for three days under the able direction of Jean Ashworth-Gam, director of the Toronto Children’s Chorus. The culmination of rehearsals was a performance of fine choral literature, including composition with German, French, and Latin texts, for the entire convention. North Central was well represented in the honor choir with children from two Iowa choirs directed by Dixie Brueck and Eulaila Young and from Pueri Cantores, Lincoln, Nebraska.
2. A commissioned work, “If I Could Turn” by Michael Henigan was performed by the Honor Chorus for the convention.
3. Members of the children’s choir committee conducted some of their most successful choral literature as a part of reading sessions during the convention.
4. Two interest sessions were offered, entitled “Music Learning Through The Choral Experience — Part I and II” by Mary Goetz — Indiana University. The University Children’s Chorus served as the demonstration choir. Convention participants who attended those sessions (over 600) were thrilled with the young choir’s abilities and accomplishments and inspired by the application of the Kodaly Concept in their training.
5. A luncheon was held for those interested in children’s choirs with Colleen Kirk, our National President, Michael Henigan, and Jean Ashworth-Gam in attendance as guests. We were able to identify many more directors of children in choral music and added them to our reference list that is being compiled. I am sure this reference will be valuable to all of us.

The committee on Children and Choral Music was indeed proud of the success of its portion of the convention program but we had only scratched the surface. Our original goals are still very much in mind — among them to perform quality literature and further the choral art for the enjoyment of singers and the contribution of musical life; to develop musical taste and attitudes for a lifetime of musical involvement. There is so much more left to do. Membership in a children’s choir whether in school, church or community provides a “firm foundation” on which to build positive attitudes, good singing habits and appreciation of fine choral literature. Those of us who are involved with children’s choirs know that we are fostering and nurturing the sopranos, altos, tenors and basses of tomorrow. We are anxious that the success of the National Convention pervade each Division and State. I encourage all of you who are working with children’s choirs to send tapes of your performance to state, division, and national levels for appearance on convention programs. I know that budgets are tight but if appearances of this kind are possible the enthusiasm of parents and the community can be used to help with any

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FIRM FOUNDATION continued
financial needs. Do continue to lobby for sessions for children's choir directors on convention programs. Only in this manner will we make our colleagues in junior highs, high schools and colleges aware of the valuable training offered by children's choirs.

Our Division Convention will be held in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in March of 1984. There was only one tape of a children's choir that was received for review and a possible performance on the convention. I know that there are some excellent children's choral ensembles in our Division and yet none will be heard on the convention program. However, there will be two sessions specifically for the directors of children's choirs. Sister Lorna Zemke, a certified Kodaly specialist and clinician who is much in demand throughout the United States, will present two sessions dealing with music learning through the choral experience, entitled "Children Can Learn To Sing Well." Also included in the reading sessions will be literature for children's choirs. **DIRECTORS — THERE IS SOMETHING FOR YOU.** Won't you begin to plan now to attend? As the division chairperson I have set in motion plans for a breakfast or luncheon for us so that we can share ideas, dreams and future plans. Please come!!! Let us celebrate our work together and gain inspiration from sharing our successes with each other.

I am interested in identifying those of you who are presently directing children's choirs. Many of you are already on our mailing list. I made many fine contacts during the last convention and have also received names from the children's choir chairperson in each state. However, there are many of you that I do not know about. Would you fill out the form that is included with this article and return it to me? A mailing list of this kind can be extremely valuable to all of us. It can be used for the sharing and distributing of information, the identification of clinicians, and the identification of choirs for touring and exchanges.

Children's Choirs

Name _____

Address _____

Current Position _____

Town and Zip _____

I am currently directing a children's choir in my school _____

Church _____ Community _____

I am not currently directing a children's choir but am interested in being on a mailing list _____

Membership in my choir: Girls _____

Boys _____ Mixed _____ Select _____

Non-select _____ Ages included _____

Number of Members _____

Does your choir do any touring? Yes _____

No _____

Kind of music performed: Sacred _____

Secular _____ A variety including Sacred and Secular _____

Number of performances a year: _____

Name of the Ensemble: _____

Please return to: Carolee Curtright, School of Music, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0100.

HALLELUJAH! Church Choir Comments

Elizabeth Stodola, Church Music Chair

I am delighted to have the opportunity to address what I perceive as a renewed interest in the field of church music, especially as it applies to the school choral musician.

Church music may affect many school musicians in a variety of ways, but two of the most important are the following:

Besides their regular school duties, a growing number of choral directors are taking jobs as church choir directors, usually to augment school salaries or because they enjoy working with adult voices. It seems to fit right in with what they are doing at school. On the positive side, this also gives the churches the opportunity to have a professional musician on the staff.

There are a couple of concerns connected with these situations. One is that some directors elect to receive a salary that is very low — if not non-existent. This makes it difficult to establish a sense of professionalism for those for whom church music is their main income. Many clergy feel that if you are a housewife and if the church income is the secondary one in the family, time should be donated. Not true! If you are in doubt as to what is a fair amount for you to be receiving, please contact the A.G.O. Chapter in the closest large city. Many of them have already compiled fee schedules and many also include rehearsal fees both for the organists and choir directors. If you cannot get such a fee schedule, please contact me. Even if the amount is small, it should be contracted, if possible, and a job description appended in a professional manner. It is time churches consider music as a profession. They would never think of not paying for a T.V. or electrician's service call, but they **would** think of not paying for an extra service or a wedding in the church.

On the other side of the coin however, we, as musicians, must take great care in the handling of the clergy and the volunteer choir. We must remember that the main reason for the existence of the choir is to lead the congregation in the service and to inspire them in prayer. How many times are we tempted to show off our choir with a great splashy anthem when it might not be apropos to the season or the occasion?

It takes much extra work to find appropriate music which is both challenging for the choir (and to us), liturgically and texturally complementary, yet well written and beautiful. It's a big order but very much of a necessity.

Secondly, have you noticed how many college and universities are now offering not only undergraduate, but graduate degrees in church music? With the music budgets in public institutions being cut year after year, an alternative for a talented music student might be to pursue a degree in church music. More and more churches are building into their budgets money for full-time liturgists, musicians, music coordinators or directors of music. It is possible to earn a living doing this and now a few of our school musicians have moved over into that field into full-time jobs.

Just this year, St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN) has added a church music program to its curriculum, John Ferguson heading it. Indiana University is doing the same with Marilyn Keiser being brought to direct the program there. Add these to other new programs and many other excellent, already existing programs, such as Westminster Choir College, Yale School of Sacred Music, Southern Methodist University, Emory in Atlanta, Wittenberg and Valparaiso,

CONFIDENCE & TRUST FOUNDATIONS OF A GIRLS' CHORUS

By Dr. Gregory Vancil
Women's Choir Chair

(The author wishes to acknowledge Prof. Rodney Eichenberger and his course in Choral Development for much of the material presented in this article.)

When I was in high school, the girls' chorus was a joke — an alternative for girls to study hall, a place to kill time. The school had an excellent, large mixed chorus, and a good chamber vocal ensemble. Why was the girls' chorus so weak? Was there really that great a musical gap between the kids in the mixed choirs and those in the girls' chorus?

Yes, most all the best girl voices were in the mixed ensembles, but not all those in the girls' chorus were weak by any means. The same director conducted all vocal ensembles. He was the key. His approach to the group in terms of planning the year, selecting literature and conducting rehearsals is almost certainly the primary reason for the group's quality. Like too many others in our profession, he apparently considered his girls' chorus a second-rate group, and that's what he got. It was a "holding tank" for the "better" ensembles, and so he probably only gave it a minor portion of his thought and energy, when in fact he should have been pouring more and more thought and energy into this group, the one that most needed him.

I am convinced that a choir will reflect in a very short time the amount of care and energy the conductor invests in it. I am convinced that girls' choruses represent the single largest pool of untapped choral potential in this country today. And I am convinced that this potential can be brought to life quickly by developing individual confidence on the part of the singers, and mutual trust between the girls and the director. The girls' chorus can and should be able to achieve a level of emotional expression and depth not often found in high school mixed choruses. Girls mature faster, emotionally as well as physically. As such, girls are able to better relate to and express the wide variety of emotions and moods to be found in choral literature of quality.

Assuming that the conductor has committed himself to giving at least as much care and attention to the progress of his girls' chorus as he does his mixed ensembles, it is important that he carefully analyze exactly where the group is **at that time**. A lot of frustration can be avoided by pinpointing the level of achievement the girls can attain **now**. Even if that level is only a blended unison, it is vital that the group experience some degree of success from the very beginning. Nothing can be more demoralizing than to be in a group that has been traditionally considered second-rate, and to be frustrated at the outset because the director's expectations are too high or (far worse) too low. Achieving success points is essential to building confidence and trust, because (attention everyone, important truth coming) **former achievements stimulate new ambitions**.

Nothing motivates better than the knowledge that one is going to succeed to some degree; and the greater the confidence or success, the greater the willingness to risk new achievements. And really, risk-taking is one of the quickest routes to growth in most areas. To the young singer, the major extrinsic motivators are probably the conductor and (maybe) the music. (To some girls' chorus members, it may be the desire to avoid something even less pleasant than girls' chorus!) The major intrinsic motivators are

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CONFIDENCE continued

probably personal desire and personal expectations. The latter generally translates down to "the program as it was," that is, before the director was enlightened to the exciting possibilities of his girls' chorus by this article. I think it is fair to say that most high school girls' chorus members have low personal expectations. What about their directors?

Too often, conductors allow themselves to be used as the sole motivator: if he's not "up," the choir's not "up." If he's excited, the choir's excited. In other words, the singers surrender their reasons for coming to choir to the drive and personality of the conductor, and I think this does not in the long run serve to promote the goals of individual confidence and mutual trust. A proud choir feels good about itself on a group and on an individual level, and we must never lose sight of the fact that all groups are made up of individuals who come to rehearsals for as many different reasons as there are people. Molding them into a unit capable of expressing beauty is a thrilling challenge we all share.

What basic steps can be taken toward the goal of intrinsic motivation? The first step lies in analyzing where the choir is **now**, not what one envisions them to be in May, not that "dream choir in the sky." Then, determine what they can do that is **new** and exciting, then give them success at it. Engineer success points and point them out. These success points will often be very small, subtle differences in tone, balance, diction, whatever. The important thing is that the conductor must constantly offer positive reinforcement **based on actual progress**. Do not fib. If something does not work, they will know it, and the director only undermines his credibility by offering false praise. False praise should not be necessary, however, if the conductor from the start strives to make the less obvious events or stages within a task become obvious, so that progress becomes more obvious. Point out the tiniest improvement, then build from that success. It is essential that the director keep reminding the girls of what they have done and how they did it. Again, these achievements will stimulate new ambitions and increased personal expectations.

Throughout all this motivational development it is essential that the conductor be honest with himself in front of the group. Thomas Gorton, from whose **Parent Effectiveness Training** and **Teacher Effectiveness Training** books many of these ideas have been drawn, urges people in leadership roles to own their own problems by the use of "I" statements, and not give them away with "You" statements. In other words, it is more effective motivationally to deal with a problem by addressing it from an "I need" angle than from a "You should" angle. The conductor should assume the problem as his own, not someone else's, in this case the singers'. And in a sense, all problems within a rehearsal are the conductor's problems since he is ultimately answerable for the result that appears in concert.

I have found that I get much quicker and longer lasting results when I approach a problem from the "I need your help . . ." angle than from the "No, you should be doing this . . ." In the latter case, I am passing off the problem to the struggling and insecure student who is least capable of effecting an improvement. In fact, by a "You" statement I only increase the singer's insecurity and widen the gap between us. Then how can I expect any degree of empathy or trust come concert time if I have created an emotional schism between the singers and myself?

NATIONAL REPORTS CONCLUDE OUR 'RT IS THE FOURTH R!

Robert Ritschel

Writing about a topic of concern in May for readers in September or October is a risky proposition at best. While the issue may be timely at this point, there's a real danger that in a few months it may be received with all the enthusiasm of eating yesterday's oatmeal. Despite this possibility, I'm sure most of you will remember the headlines, the news reports, and the boiling over of what may result in one of the hot issues of the 1984 election campaign. The controversy started with the report issued by the National Commission on Excellence in Education: "Our Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Excellence." It's doubtful that we'll see an end to these report cards on education/teaching any time soon, for no less than 24 studies of the public schools are currently in progress. Because of public concern at the state level, the Legislative Council of the Iowa Legislature is appointing a Task Force to view the educational picture of Iowa's public and private schools. It's also very likely that many local school boards will begin to examine their curricula in an effort to persuade the voters that their children are receiving the "best education money can buy." As music educators, we mustn't avoid this issue, but rather acquaint ourselves with the features of these reports that directly concern our profession.

Our Nation At Risk identifies "Five New Basics" and recommends that high school graduation requirements be strengthened. Music educators who fought the War of the Back-to-Basics Movement can rest at ease this time around, because it won't be necessary to re-arm for battle. Included in the paragraph following a description of the New Basics, the commission continues:

A high level of shared education in these basics, **together with work in the fine and performing arts** and foreign languages, constitutes the mind and spirit of our culture. (My boldface.)

Any administrator or school board attempting to delete the performing arts from the curriculum under the guise of improving the quality of education must be challenged to address the entire report and its full recommendations.

Too good to be true, you say . . . the best is yet to come. The report also contains recommendations for implementing the changes in content. Following the narrative addressing the suggestions for English, mathematics, science, social studies, computer science, and foreign language, the commission writes:

The high school curriculum should also provide students with programs requiring rigorous effort in subjects that advance student's personal, educational, and occupational goals, such as the fine and performing arts and vocational education. These areas complement the New Basics, and they should demand the same level of performance as the basics.

A second section of the report suggests that certain standards and expectations be adopted. The commission begins by stating:

We recommend that schools, colleges, and universities adopt more rigorous and measurable standards, and higher expectations for academic performance and student conduct . . .

It can be argued that the musical art form parallels these suggestions, that students should strive toward the best possible performance to which they are capable, i.e., high expectations. As music teachers, we are never satisfied with a mediocre performance of an ensemble and we often propose measurable standards (instructional objectives) for all our music classes. As a profession, we sponsor festivals, contests, clinics, and conventions, which are designed (in part) to raise the level of performance of our students. I propose too, that the success of many music groups frequently can be traced to the pride exhibited by the members of the ensemble — a pride which cultivates exemplary conduct among students.

Beyond this, I suggest that what has been written by Meg Greenfield, appearing in **Newsweek** in response to **Our Nation at Risk**, could be easily applied to our discipline:

. . . the report suggested that the value of learning is not contingent on any material public or private 'payoff.' The activity itself, pursued not just in school but rather throughout a lifetime, is the payoff.

Included among the goals of any music program must be to ensure that all music courses are taught in a manner that students will want to continue their musical experiences as consumers and/or participants, not only from grade to grade, but for years following graduation. The payoff doesn't occur at the concert, or by receiving a superior rating at contest time — it comes when we give our students the awareness of the expressive import of music, a feeling they'll want to repeat throughout their lives.

Hidden away in the report is an important word to both parents and students. You may want to consider including the following passage in your first letter home to the parents inviting them to the boosters' club meeting or to the music programs for the elementary PTA:

As surely as you are your child's first and most influential teacher, your child's ideas about education and its significance begin with you . . . nurture your child's curiosity, creativity, and confidence; and be an active participant in the work of the schools.

I believe that the commission's admonishment to the students should be placed prominently in each rehearsal from across the state:

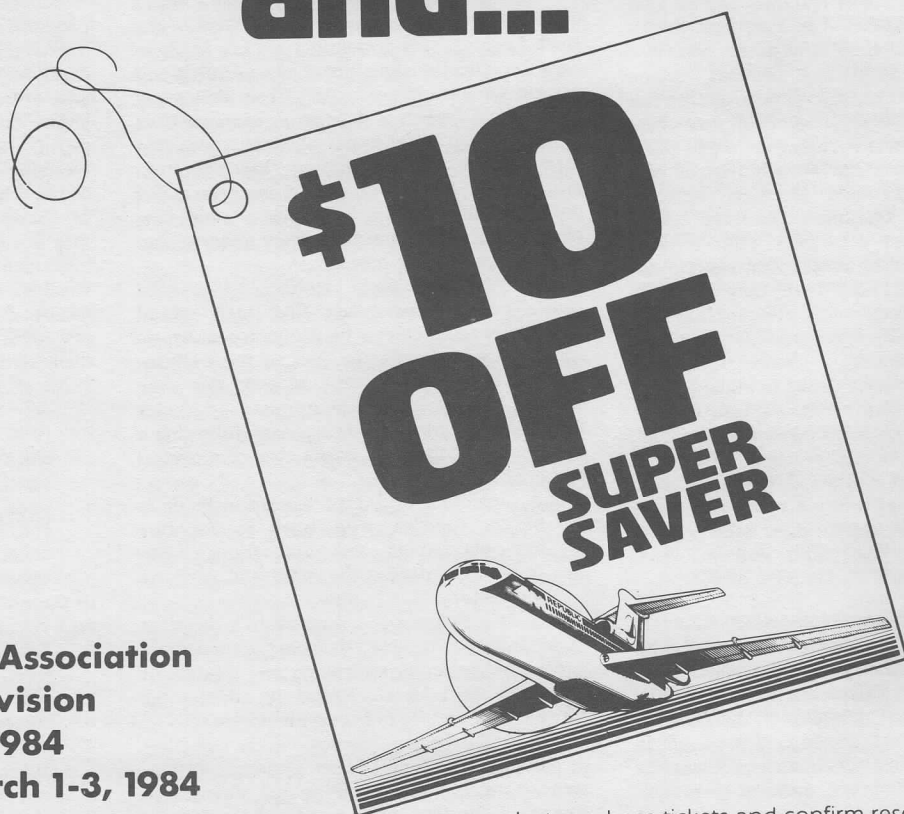
Take hold of your life, apply your gifts and talents, work with dedication and self-discipline. Have high expectations for yourself and convert every challenge into an opportunity.

Another less publicized, but no less important report comes from the College Board, "Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need To Know And Be Able To Do." It is intended to serve as a curricular guide for the high school and consequently deals more with the preparation of the college-bound student. For this reason, high school music teachers should become acquainted with a few specific items which may aid them in achieving support for the music program.

To begin with, the report clearly labels "The Arts" as a basic academic subject designed to give potential college students "a fair chance of getting full value from their college education." (It must gladden the heart of any music teacher to read music labeled a basic rather than a frill.)

Past experience with "hot issues" may cause some readers to believe that after all the knee-jerk reactions, the education issue will fade away to nothingness. I expect, however, that it will remain intact throughout the 1984 election, simply because it is the kind of issue that few politicians will have trouble supporting.

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