



Colorado RE:View

The Newsletter of the Colorado Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association
Vol. 28, No. 1 Fall, 2010

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A Fond Farewell to President Sidney Poppe



CoACDA President Sidney Poppe recently accepted a new job in Idaho, and has relocated there with her family. We will all miss Sid, but we certainly wish her the best of fortune in her new endeavors, and look forward to seeing her at future ACDA conventions!

Past presidents Galen Darrough, Margie Camp, and Mike Kornelsen are working on elections for an Interim President to fill out the remainder of Sid's term, and hope to have election information and ballots distributed to the CoACDA membership later this month. Candidates for President-Elect, scheduled to take over as President in July 2011 after the Summer Workshop, will be represented on the same ballot.

Mark Your Calendars!

Choral Celebration at Metro State

Thursday & Friday, November 4 & 5, 2010
King Center Concert Hall & Recital Hall, Auraria Campus
855 Lawrence Way, Denver
Free Admission

Collegiate Choral Festival

7:00 pm, Friday, November 13, 2010
King Center Concert Hall, Auraria Campus
855 Lawrence Way, Denver
Free Admission

CoACDA Summer Workshop

July 25-27, 2011
Bethany Lutheran Church
4500 E. Hampden Ave, Englewood

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kornelse@mscd.edu

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hohenseefam@msn.com

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Colorado Christian University
feychaner@ccu.edu

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Metropolitan State College of Denver
kruegema@mscd.edu

Webmaster

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Chatfield High School
josh.jackson@comcast.net

Men's Choir: There is an App for That

Larry Meerdink, Men's Choir R&S Chair
Westminster High School



Having been presented with (as one colleague cajoled), an obscene amount of 72 freshman and sophomore men this year (some very well taught by their middle-school teachers, but the vast majority having never sung or been in a performing music class before), I have been trying to keep their attention and focus using a variety of technology resources.

Over the years I have come to rely on a projector as one of my biggest teaching assets. I use it to display iTunes Visualizer as the students come in the room, present calendar reminders, goals for the day, and recently with the addition of a document reader, a new way to direct instruction. Anything one places beneath a document reader can be projected onto the screen. The days of standing in line at the copier to make transparencies for the overhead are over. I have been able to use a pencil as a pointer to assist students in tracking scores, melodic and rhythmic sight reading material, or simply anything I could think of or might have previously done on the board. As I was setting up the room for the year and learning how to use the document reader, I had placed my iPhone on the desk and happened to glance at the screen and saw the phone's screen clearly displayed. It didn't take long for this ancient brain to realize what an opportunity this was.

The iPhone has apps available that I have used before individually with students but had never thought to use with a large group. Using a piano app, whilst attaching a 1/8" cable to the speaker system, has enabled me to visually show the relevance of the piano to everything we do. Teaching intervals, why key signatures involve those weird little symbols, and anything else one can teach from a piano with a student looking over my shoulder has become easier for a large group to see and understand. A metronome app that shows the beat as well as plays it in a dizzying amount of subdivisions, and a tap button to identify tempo, have gone miles in explaining the significance of time's effect on music to my students. There are a plethora of music theory apps one can display and use to pit the tenors against the basses in an "Ultimate Music Cage Match" of correctly identifying note names, intervals, or key signatures. Finally, one app that I have previously used to help singers who have yet to learn the joys of matching pitch (perhaps mine more than theirs), is Pitch to Note. This app possesses a harmonic analyzer that visually shows what pitch is being performed with a different color for each pitch and a chromatic note name. By playing or singing the desired note to show them what it looks like on the screen, they then have a visual indicator to assist them in matching the given pitch. And yes there is joy in that app.

I have found another app that requires no iPhone and is web based to assist me in showing Youtube of quality performances to my students. While some school districts restrict Youtube access and some internet connections are simply too unreliable to count on, Keepvid.com provides a way to download Youtube video to your hard drive to allow showing from your computer, or in the case of an absent projector, burning it to DVD to show from a television or other monitor. By highlighting and copying the address (URL) of the webpage while in Youtube, pasting into Keepvid.com and downloading, one can present video of the Texas All-State Men's Choir performing "The Pirate Song," The Ambassadors of Harmony, 2009 International Barbershop Chorus Champions, performing "76 Trombones," Straight No Chaser performing one of their standards, or anything you find of value. Want to get your basses' testosterone flowing even more? Try searching Basso Profundo on Youtube and show them what a G-1 sounds like when performed by a Russian men's choir. Happy Geeking!

Student Teaching

Sarah Harrison, High School R&S Chair
Cherry Creek High School



Student teacher programs provide educators with an invaluable opportunity to ensure the continuation of successful choral music education. This system of collaboration and mentorship helps the future teacher implement skills learned in college.

A good student teacher should enter the classroom with knowledge of the adolescent voice, and of methods that promote a healthy, rich, vibrant, and expressive tone to young voices joined in chorus, be they female, or changed, unchanged, or changing male. She must have a confident, well-executed conducting gesture with clear preparatory beats, tempos, phrasing, and articulation. She must have (at least) intermediate piano skills. And, she must know how to teach music literacy and musician independence for all levels. Importantly, the student teacher should be provided a safe yet constructive environment in which to practice her fledgling skills.

I am currently hosting student teacher Stacy Miller from Colorado State University. I am constantly asking myself how best to help Miss Miller. At first, my goal was to set up a trusting working relationship that would open her to constructive criticism while praising her successes. Through this relationship we were able to discuss all aspects of teaching including self-assessment, organization, and the emotional vulnerability that accompanies teaching.

The following passage by Miss Miller, written after only a few weeks of student teaching, provides us with valuable insight into issues faced by student teachers.

Walking into a school as a student teacher is the most terrifying thing I have done. Being a bookworm who is used to succeeding in every class, I found it difficult to be in the role of underdog, lacking experience and credibility as an educator. Yet by building a positive relationship with my mentor teacher, I have discovered my own teaching style and confidence that will lead me into what I hope will be a successful first year of teaching that launches a fulfilling career.

I have learned I need the following from my mentor teacher:

1. **Structure.** *I need deadlines in order to set and accomplish goals in my teaching.*
2. **Feedback.** *As a beginning teacher it is difficult knowing the difference between good teaching, including pacing and effectiveness, and teaching that needs improvement. Specific feedback sheds light on areas of improvement and success.*
3. **Open Communication.** *Having an open relationship allows me to ask challenging questions and work through tough issues with my mentor teacher.*

The relationship I have developed with my mentor has been exceptionally valuable to me as a student teacher. Collaborating with somebody who provides me with feedback, structure, and open communication has helped shape me as an educator and discover confidence in the classroom. This guidance has already positively impacted my career and will continue to benefit me as a beginning music educator.

Miss Miller has embarked on her teaching career with commendable strength. As she and many other new teachers enter the profession, experienced teachers must reach out and support them in order to uphold the quality choral education we hope all future students will receive.

Repertoire & Standards Chairs

College and University

Beth Wagstrom
Adams State University
bwagstrom@adams.edu

High School

Sarah Harrison
Cherry Creek High School
sharrison7@cherrycreekschools.org

Jazz and Show Choir

Julie Williams
Cherry Creek High School
jwilliams67@cherrycreekschools.org

Multi-Cultural

Sue Williamson
University of Colorado, Boulder
sue.williamson@colorado.edu

Men's Choir

Larry Meerdinck
Westminster High School
lmeerdinck@me.com

Middle School/ Junior High Co-Chair

Abigail Kilcoyne
Sunset Middle School
klilcoyne_abigail@stvrain.k12.co.us

Music and Worship

Dan Grace, DMA
Bethany Lutheran Church
dgrace@cybox.com

Women's Choir

Jill Burleson
University of Northern Colorado
jill.burleson@unco.edu

Children's Choir

Lori Bammesberger
Colorado Springs
Children's Chorale
lori@kidssing.org

Youth and Student Activities

Leila Heil
Colorado State University
lheil@colostate.edu

Wisdom from the Masters

Leila Heil, Youth and Student Activities Chair
Colorado State University



Greetings, Choral Colleagues:

I hope that your year is off to a tremendous start and that it brings much joy in music-making. This past summer, I had the honor of spending time with three most wonderful individuals who also happen to be outstanding models in our profession: Weston Noble, Simon Carrington, and Joseph Flummerfelt. I would like to pass on some of their *thoughts* that I found, not only compelling, but also deeply thought-provoking. These ‘gems of wisdom’ gave me pause to contemplate my own teaching and conducting modalities in a fresh, new way. I hope you will find them insightful as well.

Throughout our conversations, a theme emerged that concentrated on the importance of musicianship, connecting with the music we conduct/teach and the creative and intuitive interaction in music-making. Let me begin with a thought shared by Joseph Flummerfelt: “Everyone hungers for connection—especially the connection with the inner self.” We further our capacity for connecting with music by constantly striving to improve our musicianship. This deep connection translates into a profound level of engagement in our music-making that transcends mere craft. Weston Noble applies this concept to our daily teaching lives by stating, “In every rehearsal, no matter what our situation, we are trying to give voice to our spirit side. This matter of spirit is very personal and can mean, for each individual, either a small ‘s’ or a big ‘S.’”

Simon Carrington brings up an interesting point about the manner in which we, as conductors, frequently view our craft. He says that American choral music, which is at a very high level, seems to be oriented to a very methods-based approach. Teaching in England is different. Singers and conductors learn to respond to what they *hear*, rather than what they should do. The skill of listening and developing the ability for immediate musical response is the priority.

In total agreement, Joseph Flummerfelt continues with, “Our affliction is methodology and technique—we need to get beyond this. We are fixated on getting things correct rather than going for truth. This places our focus on the outside.” He further believes that conductors do not conduct with their hands, but rather with their ears. “Conducting is about connecting with sound, which means really listening.” Flummerfelt feels that we are so frequently stuck in the cognitive (what we plan) that we forget to listen. His advice: “Stop thinking and just listen!” This deep level of listening, combined with outstanding musicianship, results in an interactive circular process, allowing us to open to intuition. By trusting our intuition, we become creative communicators and ‘music happens.’

Allowing intuition into our teaching might be a new and uncomfortable concept. Weston Noble reminds us: “Vulnerability is the key to life. It means having openness to beauty, openness to change, and openness to get rid of the roadblocks that divert the power of the music.” Simon Carrington echoes that with: “Take risks—bring the heart out of the music.”



Repertoire Suggestions

Dayeinu!

- Gerald Cohen
- SATB with Piano – Hebrew
- Difficult
- Oxford University Press, \$2.35

“Dayeinu” translates “it would have been enough for us,” and speaks of the many acts of kindness God has performed for the Jewish peoples. The piano part is quite difficult, and adds a lot of interest and fire to the irregular rhythms and joyful flourishes of the vocal lines.

And Draw Her Home with Music

- Nancy Hill Cobb
- TTBB with Piano
- Difficult
- Santa Barbara, SBMP 905, \$1.95

This is a rich and modern setting of a text from Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. A great opportunity to improve and highlight your men’s choir’s warm tone and musicianship

Potter’s Clay

- Paul Fowler
- SSSSAA a cappella
- Difficult
- Santa Barbara, SBMP 860, \$1.70

Beginning with a mantra from the Buddhist tradition, the text of this piece advises us to “be at peace with how life goes,” and was written by Naomi C. Rose as part of a story from a children’s book, *Tibetan Tales for Little Buddhas*. The structure is complex and fascinating, and the piece is very challenging, with meter changes, dissonance, and aleatoric passages.

Mama Afrika

- Sydney Guillaume
- SSAATTBB a cappella, with Percussion – Creole
- Difficult
- Walton Music, HL08501716, WJMS 1108, \$2.25

The text by Gabriel T. Guillaume speaks of Africa as the origin of human life, “but the children of Africa continue their ordeal.” The music is complex and exciting, and there is a lot of language to learn, but a pronunciation track and a recording of the piece are available on Walton’s website. This piece will be a challenge students will be excited to overcome.

Mick McGuire

- Arranged by Eric M. Pazdziora
- TTBB with Piano
- Medium
- Alliance Music Publications, AMP 0792, \$1.90

This is a jaunty Irish tune set with interweaving lines. Most of this setting is just 2 parts, but there are spots where it expands to 3 and 4 parts. Humorous text with lots of “diddle-dowdle” nonsense.

“Va pensiero” from *Nabucco*

- Giuseppe Verdi, Ed. and Arr. by Patrick M. Liebergen
- SATB with Piano – Italian
- Medium
- Hinshaw Music Inc., HMC 2202, \$1.90

A very famous opera chorus (also known as “The Chorus of Hebrew Slaves”) full of lush chords and legato lines. This piece will make your singers feel like opera stars.

Under the Willow

- Stephen Collins Foster, Arranged by Susan LaBarr
- SSAA a cappella
- Medium-Difficult
- Santa Barbara, SBMP 896, \$1.95

Foster’s most famous song is “Oh! Susanna;” this song represents another side of his output, the sentimental ballad. The text is a tear-jerker about a young mother weeping at the grave of her infant daughter. Some divisi adds a bit of challenge. The melodies and harmonic lines are plaintive and beautiful.

Liebst du um Schönheit

- Clara Schumann, Arranged by Drew Collins
- SSA and Piano – German
- Medium
- Santa Barbara, SBMP 913, \$1.85

Clara Schumann wrote this piece for solo voice and piano in 1841, the year she married Robert Schumann. Collins has added choral parts that add to the richness of this beautiful composition. The text is a graceful love poem by Friedrich Rückert.

A Red, Red Rose

- Earlene Rentz
- SATB div. and Piano
- Medium
- Neil A. Kjos Company, Ed. 9099, \$1.95

An unexpectedly buoyant and light-hearted setting of the familiar poem by Robert Burns. The rhythmic changes make this setting joyful and full of life. Students will be challenged and engaged.

Red River Valley

- Arranged by Timothy Jon Tharaldson
- TTBB/Bar. Solo, a cappella
- Medium
- Santa Barbara, SBMP 886, \$1.65

This is a lovely setting of the beloved folk song by a Colorado composer and conductor. There is a great opportunity for one or more soloists, and the harmonies have a very satisfying “men’s glee club” feel.

Over My Head

- Arranged by Clif Hardin
- SATB div. with Piano
- Medium
- Neil A. Kjos Music Company, Ed. 9061, \$1.85

With its 6-8 part divisi and its chordal accompaniment, this African-American spiritual feels broad and substantial. Students will enjoy the fullness of the sound, and the dynamic contrasts.

The Dover Cliffs

- Vicki Tucker Courtney
- SATB with piano
- Medium
- Alfred, 31291, \$1.75

Optional flute and percussion. A Celtic flavor pervades this sweetly melancholy song, making it feel like an old folk song. There are several opportunities for optional solos and duets.

I Am a Cloud

- Neil Ginsberg
- SA and Piano
- Easy-Medium
- Santa Barbara, SBMP 883, \$1.85

Young women or children's choirs will love this setting of Sara Teasdale's airy poetry. This piece provides lots of opportunity to teach line and shape, and some unexpected harmonic shifts give it color. A returning melodic pattern ties it all together.

Field of Violets

- Valerie Showers Crescenz
- SSA with Piano and opt. Flute, opt. Guitar
- Easy-Medium
- Hinshaw Music, HMC 2199, \$1.90

This is a heartbreaking text about a young girl who waits for her love to return from war; when he finally does, it is to be buried. The dedication is to a soldier killed in Viet Nam in 1968, whose last name is the same as the composer's. Singers will love the sweetly poignant melody.

Carrickfergus

- Arranged by Philip E. Silvey
- SATB and Piano
- Easy-Medium
- Santa Barbara, SBMP 902, \$1.95

This is a gorgeous Irish folk song filled with longing, set beautifully and effectively by Silvey. There is a little bit of divisi in the soprano part, and some optional divisi in the bass part, which add to the lush effect.

"Wheels of a Dream" from the musical *Ragtime*

- Stephen Flaherty, Arranged by John Leavitt
- TTB with Piano
- Easy
- Alfred, 33162, \$1.85

This beautiful song is set with stirring, satisfying harmonies for young male voices and a thick, florid accompaniment. The text tells of a man's proud dream that his son will have a better life, without the hatred and prejudice he himself has had to face.

I Want Jesus to Walk With Me

- Arranged by Tom Shelton
- SATB and Saxophone
- Easy
- Hinshaw Music, HMC 2187, \$1.80

This arrangement combines two well-known spirituals, "Talk about a Child" and "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me." The saxophone solo has some challenges, but is not too daunting, and really adds to the plaintive quality of the music. The piece begins and ends with a vocal solo, which could be sung by any voice type.

Concert Dates

Concerts by area professional, semi-professional, and community choirs

Ars Nova Singers

"Winter Reflections," Dec. 10, 12, 17, and 18
Conductor Thomas Edward Morgan
www.arsnovasingers.com

Cherry Creek Chorale

"Star in the East," Dec. 10 and 11
Conductor Brian Patrick Leatherman
www.cherrycreekchorale.com

Colorado Chorale

"Christmas Collage," Dec. 16 and 17
"Christmas with the Denver Brass," Dec. 19
Conductor Frank Eychaner
www.coloradochorale.org

Denver Gay Men's Chorus

"This Shining Night," Dec. 17, 18, and 19
Conductor Ben Riggs
www.dgmc.org

Denver Women's Chorus

"Girls Rock the Radio," Jan. 22
Conductor Mark Zwilling
www.rmarts.org/dwc.php

Harmony, A Colorado Chorale

"Winter Nights," dates TBA
Conductor Bill Loper
www.harmonychorale.org

Kantorei

"A Spotless Rose," Dec. 10 and 12
Conductor Richard Larson
www.kantorei.org

Longmont Chorale

"My Spirit Rejoices," Dec. 11
Conductor Scott Hamlin
www.longmontchorale.org

St. Martin's Chamber Choir

"Lux Perpetua," Nov. 12 and 14
"A Boy Was Born," Dec. 17, 18, and 19
Conductor Timothy J. Krueger
www.stmartinchamberchoir.org

The Editor's Last Word: Conducting with Passion

MB Krueger, Newsletter Editor
Metropolitan State College of Denver



One of my responsibilities at Metro every fall semester is teaching MUS 3510, Basic Conducting. Each semester, there are always some students who have a somewhat natural ability with conducting, as well as some for whom the coordination of patterns, cues, releases, expressive gestures, etc., is awkward and ungainly. This semester, I have one student who has been conducting a church bell choir for over 20 years, but who has asked me to be merciless in helping him identify and break bad conducting habits. Most of the others have sung or played in ensembles for at least 10 years, and therefore we assume they have been observing the conductor for all those years as well; but many have never done so *consciously* before, and are just learning to be aware of all that a conductor must know and communicate. I love teaching this class for a variety of reasons, not the least being that in teaching this subject, I am forced to be continually evaluating my own conducting and communication.

I usually find that one of the biggest challenges to beginning conductors is showing emotion. While standing in front of their peers, concentrating on coordinating the left hand while keeping a steady 3 pattern that maintains the proper planes (not to mention trying to throw a cue here and there), one can imagine what their facial expression might be communicating – focus, counting, confusion, despair . . . ? And of course there is the need to look cool. Everyone knows that fake facial expressions and self-conscious gyrations look every bit as dumb as poor coordination of the gestures. So one of my challenges is to guide my students into finding true emotional content in the music they are conducting, so that their face naturally expresses what they are feeling in the music. Most of the time, if a student is having trouble with this part of conducting, it is because they really don't know the piece as well as they should. This can be true of all of us, teachers and students alike.

I often stress to my class that in Basic Conducting, they learn all the rules – what their posture should look like, what their hands should be doing, how to prepare and mark a score, when to show cues and releases, etc. In reality, if they go to a performance and watch the conductor, they will see a lot of rules broken in the name of passion, sometimes with purpose and to great effect, and sometimes not so purposeful or effective. In my spring semester class, Choral Conducting, I use a text by Peter Loel Boonshaft called *Teaching Music with Passion*. One chapter is titled “Put Yourself in a Straight Jacket and Dance a Free Dance.” This is the balancing act a conductor must perform – the straight jacket is the rules of conducting which lead to clarity of the gestures, and the free dance is the passion we want to show in ourselves and elicit in our singers.

A few years ago, Charlene Archibeque came to Metro to work with our choirs and conducting students. The bit of advice she gave my students that has really stuck with me is this: music is designed to elicit emotion, so we as performers must never be afraid to show that emotion. Without passion, we are simply making sound, not making music.

Last week, my husband Tim and I watched a documentary called “Leonard Bernstein: Reaching for the Note.” There was quite a bit of video footage as well as still photography showing Maestro Bernstein on the podium. I was inspired by the obvious passion, fervor, and love that poured out of him as he conducted. His entire being was invested in the emotion of the moment, and sometimes changed completely and drastically from phrase to phrase. I found myself wanting to weep, laugh, shout, sigh, jump up and down – all because of Bernstein's obvious commitment to the music at every single moment. There was never a single note that he did not know, love, anticipate, cherish, and prepare for; there was never a moment when he was simply beating time. Every sound, every silence, had meaning, beauty, and depth.

The next day I went to my Basic Conducting class and tried to describe my sense of inspiration. How incongruous, to compare Leonard Bernstein with first semester students of conducting. And yet, how vital to illustrate for them where they are heading, here at the very beginning of the journey. Without that goal before them, learning and following all the rules of Basic Conducting can seem pretty pedantic and dull. Of course Maestro Bernstein knew all the rules; but his passion sometimes transcended them, and even rendered them unnecessary.

Now and then, students will ask me, “When do we get to break the rules?” And I answer, “Not in my class – wait until you are as big as Leonard Bernstein.”



Colorado RE:View

Heather Samsel, Treasurer
13320 Jasmine St.
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Mark your Calendars for the **CoACDA Summer Workshop:**
July 25 - 27, 2011

National ACDA Advocacy Resolution

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

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

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

Learn more and find ACDA Membership Application forms at www.acdaonline.org.

Visit the CoACDA Website:
www.coloradoacda.org