



CHORAL EDITION

Spring 2010

The Official Publication of

WEST VIRGINIA ACDA



The President's Overture



Mr. T. Edwin Harkless,
WVACDA President

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West Virginia ACDA is a member of the American Choral Directors Association

Spring is here! Many colleges have had their commencement exercises, high school seniors across the state have begun their "count-down", WesTest is

in full swing, and many of us are looking to the fall with excitement at the thought of another new beginning. Of course, we are all, no doubt, anxiously awaiting the opportunity summer provides to find new repertoire, study scores, research travel sites, and so on, the list is seemingly endless. And, along the way, spend time with family, maybe leave town, or, as we used to say, "Swing on the gate post and play with the dog".

With spring comes a new President-elect. Congratulations to Mr. Robert Wray! As you know, Rob has been the newsletter editor and is a professor of Choral Music Education at Marshall University. I have been fortunate to work with Rob on several projects and concerts and I know he will be a great president for our organization.

I hope that those of you in schools have all had a wonderful year. Church musicians, while our season may be closing, the all important "wedding season" has arrived! (I am playing for at least three and my youngest daughter is getting married in July!) Maybe some time for summer reading sessions, clinics and workshops will be in our summer plans, if we are fortunate. For WVACDA members, you will be hearing some news about an exciting new summer event soon! Please watch the web and your e-mail!

On the subject of e-mail, please know that if your e-mail account/address changes, **YOU** must notify the National Office, Bruce Ensinger (our membership chair) cannot. At the state level we can download info form the National but individual members must take the time to keep their information current with the National ACDA office. To do that, please go to the www.acda.org website, look at the left side of the page, close to the bottom and click on "log in". Your user name is your membership number and your password is your zip code. Check and make sure that your information is correct. Remember, when you change e-mail providers and the new provider gives you an option to send a mass e-mail to everyone in your address book announcing your new address, it does not apply to organizations you belong to because of privacy issues and password protected log-ins!

Important for you to note, looking at next year, is the date of our state conference in Charleston. Your board elected to move the conference to the first week-end of February so that we could have our Conference Concert in the Clay Center. Dates for the conference are February 3-5, 2011. Watch for info re: auditions, registration, etc. on our website. Julie Watkins – Junior High/Middle Chair, Clara Glover – High School Chamber Choir Chair, and Teresa Dody – Collegiate Chair are working on finalizing plans for the honor choirs. Ideas for workshops, sessions for 2011 and reflections on last year's conference would be appreciated from **you**, our members so that we can work to plan a meaningful experience for you and your students! ThanX!

A number of us from WVACDA were fortunate enough to go to the ACDA Southern Division Conference in Memphis during March. We had representation in every honor choir! I have asked those who went to submit articles for this publication. You can find them elsewhere in this newsletter, along with some pictures of the event. The honor choir performances were outstanding! The guest choirs were amazing and the workshops I attended were incredible! There were several sessions on sight singing skill building, three which I attended. It brought home to me, yet again, that "solfege is the way to go!" Along with time in workshops and concerts, it was a great time to network with other choral directors, renew friendships and enjoy some of what Memphis had to offer.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR NEXT YEAR!



Info at <http://acda.org/index.php?q=conferences/2011>

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Another date for your calendars: the 2012 Southern Division ACDA Conference in Winston Salem, NC! February 29 – March 3, 2012, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Tom Shelton, President.

I hope that with both of these major events so close, we can continue to have a high level of participation from West Virginia!
Have a great summer!

Ed

*Mr. Harkless is the Director of Collegium musicum
and Madrigal Choir at
Cabell Midland High School in Ona, WV*



2010 State Conference Review

CHAMBER CHOIR

Ms. Clara J. Glover, Chair

The 2010 West Virginia ACDA Conference has come and gone, spring is here (almost), and I am once again in awe of the accomplishments of our young West Virginia singers.

I am one of those types who do not listen to a recording of a performance until well after the event is over so the timing of my receipt of the CD from All State Chamber Choir was timely. The WVMEA Conference was also complete and I returned home to find the recording of the WVACDA concerts in my mail.

Many students (and choral directors) expressed doubts about the "sanity" of using the Barber "Reincarnations" with high school students. Even our guest conductor, Dr. Mark Simmons, was questioning his own sanity after using them earlier this school year with another high school honor group.

One of the greatest things about the 2010 Choir was the fact that EVERY high school that auditioned students had at least one singer in the group. This resulted in representation from a more widespread cross-section of the state. I want to emphasize that there were no "gifts." Everyone involved earned the position on his or her own vocal merit.

When talking on Saturday after all of the performances were finished, Dr. Simmons, Judith Willoughby, Bruce Ensinger, and myself were discussing the level of excellence that our West Virginia All State Chamber Choir aspired to and achieved. Dr. Willoughby stated (and Dr. Simmons agreed) that the West Virginia All State Chamber Choir has a national reputation of being one of the top three or four choirs in the country that guest conductors wish to acquire. Many have said that, if offered this position, it should be accepted by any means possible.

This is such a spectacular tribute to the choral directors in our West Virginia high schools who year after year prepare the students to strive for this level of literature, performance, and excellence. I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to all of you and feel honored and humbled to be a part of this group of music educators.

I have always felt that the All State Chamber Choir is a life-changing experience for my students. They come from a rural West Virginia high school where money is in short supply and private instruction in voice is not available to them. I believe that part of our responsibility as choral conductors includes making opportunities available to our students. I have always stressed that hard work and commitment are vital to earning honors such as this.

One of the qualities about West Virginia singers that set them apart from the rest is their love for music and their desire to go the extra mile. My students are taught from the time that they enter my sixth grade choir that respect for all choral conductors that they work under (whether they agree with them or even like them) is vital. Experiences such as the All State Chamber Choir are not about personal or individual recognition or gain; they are about team effort, sincere co-operation, and respect. This is what sets us apart and this is why guest conductors walk away from West Virginia ACDA conferences with nothing but praise for the students and their teachers.

Again, my thanks to everyone for continued participation in the event, especially to all who work behind the scenes to make it possible.

*Ms. Glover is the Director of Choral Activities at
Tyler Consolidated High School in Sistersville, WV*



2010 West Virginia High School Chamber Choir

JUNIOR HIGH / MIDDLE SCHOOL

Ms. Julie Watkins, Chair



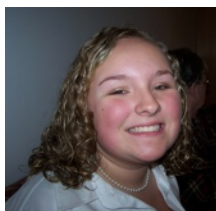
The Junior High/Middle School Choir was comprised of 187 singers this year. Under the direction of Judith Willoughby (Oklahoma City University) the choir performed some very difficult selections including "Kyrie" from *Mass in B* by Franz Schubert, "No Rocks A' Cryin'" by Rollo Dilworth, and "Danza!" by Linda Spevacek. Jennifer Bowling, choir director at Milton Middle School, served as accompanist and did a superb job! Thank you, Jennifer! Students and parents alike were thrilled with the performance and the venue, and in spite of the snow, everything was successful! Music is still very much alive in West Virginia!

*Ms. Watkins is the Director of Choirs at
Edison Junior High School in Parkersburg, WV*

Blues, Brahms, and Barbeque: 2010 Southern Division Conference in Review

BASKETBALL TO BEALE

Kacie Jo Brown



My name is Kacie Jo Brown and I had the privilege of being selected and attending the 2010 ACDA Junior High Honor Choir in Memphis, TN.

I was excited when my choir director, Mr. Bruce Ensinger, suggested that I audition for the choir and was even more thrilled when my letter was received. I was shocked and happy that I was chosen and then after reading the letter over and over, I realized

how special this was going to be for me and what an honor it was for not only me, but my school, county, state, and Mr. Ensinger. There were only 3 chosen from WV and I was one of them!!

I was not able to start rehearsing right away because I was involved with my school basketball team and then WV was hit hard with snow from December to February and school was canceled numerous times! I must tell you that Mr. Ensinger braved the roads and battled the cold to come to school and call me in to rehearse. I wouldn't have been prepared without his amazing help! We pulled it together and, as the time got closer, I began to realize just how huge this was and that I was actually one of over 200 kids chosen! WOW!

I arrived in Memphis and checked in on the first day with butterflies in my stomach and very nervous. Mr. Caldwell and Mr. Maxwell were so awesome and made us all feel comfortable that it didn't take long for my butterflies to leave and my nerves to settle. They made each day fun and exciting with learning the songs and new techniques to help with my singing and it was the most amazing time I've ever had anywhere in my life! I will never forget this experience and I am so proud and honored to have been there. I came as a stranger, but left knowing I had met some cool people and made friends that will last a lifetime for me!!



2010 ACDA Souther Division Junior High/Middle School Honor Choir

*Miss Brown is a 7th grade student taught by
Mr. Bruce Ensinger at New Martinsville School
in New Martinsville, WV*

LIFE ON LOCATION

Melissa Life



What an amazing experience in Memphis, Tennessee!

First, Memphis was an absolutely wonderful location to hold the conference. The hotels they used for the Honor Choruses and teachers were directly beside each other with the Cannon Center connecting to the convention center. We arrived with plenty of time to explore Memphis, Tennessee and all of its culture. It was so great for my students to see the history of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. where he was shot and explain to my students the significance of his life and death. We also went to B.B. Kings where my students had the opportunity to listen to some wonderful jazz music. Of course, who can forget about the food! There was barbeque everywhere in sight.



Second, I would like to say on behalf of my students how much they enjoyed the opportunity to perform with other students across the southern portion of the United States. I had the privilege of having three male students participate in the High School Men's Honor Chorus. Joshua Morgan, a senior at Parkersburg South High School stated, "Dr. Jonathon Reed is an amazing conductor. He really helped affirm my decision to major in music education." I also had four of my ladies participate in the High School Women's Honor Chorus. Hannah Robison, a junior at Parkersburg South High School stated, "I am very thankful to be offered opportunities to where I can work and grow in my musicianship skills."

"...I had such a wonderful time in the different clinics and honor group performances."

Third, I must say that I had such a wonderful time in the different clinics and honor group performances. Being a choral director at a large high school, I find it very difficult for myself to get out and hear other groups. It was so refreshing and rejuvenating to hear choirs such as: Stetson University Women's Chorus, University of Southern Mississippi Southern Chorale in which several of my friends that I knew from my undergraduate school participated in, and the East Carolina University Chamber Singers under the direction of Dr. Daniel Bara, who conducted the WVACDA All-State Chamber Chorus in 2009. Through sitting through sessions on musicianship skills and attending these concerts, I left Memphis with the determination to work harder at my skills as a choral conductor and challenge my students in a different way.

I cannot stress how much this conference and the other ACDA conferences have helped to shape me and reaffirm my decision to be a music educator. It is my hope that more music educators make the decision to attend the Southern Division conferences and the National conferences as well. West Virginia is so blessed to have such wonderful music educators. I decided to be a music educator because of my former teachers love/passion for music and wanting their students to have every opportunity to improve their skills and from also being a member of the WVACDA All-State Chamber Chorus. It's our goal as educators to share the love of music with our students. Consider giving them this wonderful opportunity. I know that you and your students will not be disappointed.

Ms. Life is Director of Choral Activities at Parkersburg South High School in Parkersburg, WV

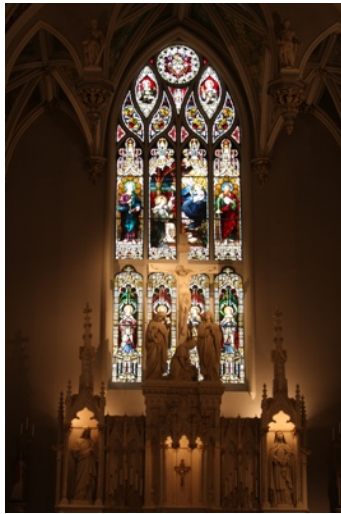


2010 ACDA Southern Division High School Men's Honor Choir

Memories of Memphis



2010 ACDA Southern Division High School Women's Honor Choir



St. Peter's Catholic Church



Cabell Midland High School Honor Choir Participants



West Virginia ACDA Representation in Memphis

ACDA - INTERKULTUR Partnership Helps American Choir Directors Grow Musically on a Global Level



In the spring of 2008, when Dr. Sharp arrived at ACDA as our new Executive Director, he set forth a series of four initiatives. One of those initiatives states that:

I envision a twenty-first century ACDA that becomes fully engaged in world choral initiatives.

ACDA is a founding and active member of the International Federation for Choral Music. There are IFCM programs and member benefits that can help any ACDA member connect with the world. To adapt architect Louis Kahn's statement, choral music "begins with the immeasurable, moves through the measurable, and returns to the immeasurable." One aspect of this "immeasurable" is the beauty, peace, harmony, and common human spirit possible through choral music, and a way we "measure" those ideals is our connection with the world choral community. (http://acda.org/about_us/vision)

In the year that has transpired since writing those remarks, Dr. Sharp and the ACDA Executive Committee have worked to make that initiative a reality. As a result, ACDA has joined with INTERKULTUR, a German non-profit group that hosts international festivals and competitions, to bring a series of three festivals and competitions to the United States between November 2010 and July 2012. They will also hold the 6th WORLD CHOIR GAMES in Shaoxing, China from July 15-26, 2010.

Begun in 1988 with the 1st International Choir Competition in Budapest, Hungary, INTERKULTUR strives to bring people of all nations, cultures, and world-views together in peaceful competition and song. The events provide choirs and choir conductors the opportunity to learn from others, share their talents, and experience music on a truly global level. Participants in the competitions compete through different rounds, with an awards ceremony and ranking at the end of the event. Festival participants perform in encounter concerts and become exposed to the wide variety of choral music and practice as it exists throughout the world; the focus for these participants is the exchange of ideas and practices. These participants are also encouraged to sit in on the adjoining competition rounds to observe and learn from the quality performances given by the talented choirs choosing to participate in choral competition. Whichever event a choir decides to participate in, they no doubt walk away having engaged in the choral arts on a level that is hard to experience anywhere else.

INTERKULTUR's mission melds solidly with ACDA's goal of promoting excellence in choral music and in connecting chorally on a global level by creating opportunities for American choral directors to join the world's choral community in positive, engaging, educative events. ACDA's enthusiasm for these events and for the opportunities they offer to ACDA members has resulted in the dedication of a staff member at the Oklahoma City office to work with ACDA members and to help them explore, learn about, and attend one of the upcoming INTERKULTUR events.

All types and all levels of choirs are welcome to participate. For more information about the 6th WORLD CHOIR GAMES in China (July 16-26, 2010), the American International Choral Festival in St. Louis (November 17-21, 2010), the American International Choral Festival in Reno-Tahoe (May 4-8, 2011), or the 7th WORLD CHOIR GAMES in Cincinnati (July 4-14, 2012), please contact:

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<http://acda.org>

Rarely do American choir directors have the opportunity to experience the global world of choir music. The partnership between ACDA and INTERKULTUR brings that opportunity to our doorstep.

Take advantage of it!

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Women's Choirs

Vacant

Dates Worth Noting

September 6, 2010 - Choral Edition Deadline

February 3-5, 2011 - WVACDA State Conference in Charleston, WV

March 9-12, 2011 - ACDA National Convention in Chicago, IL

Know anyone who would benefit from membership?

-*New members* application form is on the national website at: <http://www.acda.org/formregistry>

-If you need to renew, start at: http://www.acda.org/decision_1

-Want to see what other states are doing? Go to: http://www.acda.org/chapters/state_chapters

With a few clicks, we have available to us a wealth of news and information about the art of making choral music. Check it out!

Editor's Notes

Robert T. Wray
Editor, *Choral Edition*



It seems that every year we become more and more busy while trying to make our choirs (and ourselves) more and more active. The danger in this vicious cycle is that, in our hectic lives, it is very easy to forget why we teach, and love, music. If we forget this, it becomes very easy to lose our passion for the profession we care so deeply about.

On the first day of Choral Methods, I start class by asking, "Why do you want to be a music teacher?" The responses are what you would typically expect fourth and fifth-year college students ranging from, "I can't imagine doing anything else," and "I had an awesome high school or middle school music teacher who showed me the joy of music," to "my parent is a music teacher," and (my personal favorite) "I was told that a performance degree would do me no good, so, I thought I would teach!" Needless to say, these answers can tell me a great deal about each student. That being said, the number one reason I ask this question on the first day is so each student tells hears his or her own answer. I then divulge that there will be times that each one of you will question yourself, your passion, and your profession and each time that you do, you need to remember your answer to this question and it will lead you back home!

It is this question that I believe also leads us to one of the (if not the) most important question in the profession of choral music education today: Why are the majority of kids today not interested in singing? We could go round and round addressing this topic for days and weeks on end. What I have found is that we, as teachers, are very quick to criticize administration, society, and upbringing for the shortcomings of music programs in our schools. Each time I find myself ready to name the "usual suspects" in explaining why we are where we are, I catch myself and first ask, "Am I doing all that I can do to help children want to keep singing?" Unfortunately, for myself, the answer is always the same...."No!"

Please understand that I am in no way saying that we music teachers should "take the sword" for the situation in which we find most of our choral programs, despite that being one of the louder cries from society. Before you all send nasty emails my way, I pose these two questions to you:

1. If just half of the students who were in choir in elementary school continued singing in middle school and eventually in high school, how much greater would our numbers be?
2. Why (and where) are we losing students from choir?

Before you answer number two, I would like to tell you a little bit about my daughter, Devon Michelle. Devon will be three in September, and as some of you know, she has gone through more in her almost three years than most of us have to go through in a lifetime. She truly is my hero! The reason I bring her into this is not to focus on her difficulties, but on that which she excels. Devon was diagnosed with severe hearing loss at three months of age and we eventually learned that she has no ear canal on her right side. After a number of tests, she given a bone-anchored hearing aid and now can hear rather well. As much of a success as that is by itself, it gets better because she sings...remarkably well! Listening to my daughter sing "Twinkle, twinkle little star," absolutely melts my heart. She sings when she wakes up in the morning; she sings in the morning while watching *Mickey Mouse Clubhouse*; she sings when she goes down for a nap; she sings when she wakes up from her nap; she sings for a majority of the evening; and, she sings with her CD player when she goes to sleep each night.

Now I can already hear some people saying, "she sings because her father is a choir teacher and her mother is a strings teacher!" While that may play a part, the songs I hear her sing (aside from the "Hot Dog Dance" from *Mickey mouse Clubhouse*) are songs she has learned in either her music class at Marshall, or now, her preschool. Her preschool, though it is designed especially for children with hearing difficulties, is not unlike other preschools and elementary schools in that every student has the opportunity to sing. Boys and girls, young and old, it does not matter. Everyone in her class enjoys singing. At some point WE ALL ENJOY SINGING!

This brings me back to my point. How do we go from a situation where children truly enjoy singing to a situation where a teacher is lucky to have 10% of the school enrolled in any music class? This is where we as music teachers need to look inside ourselves and ask, "Am I doing all that I can do to help children want to keep singing?" If you are like me, the answer may disappoint you.

It is often said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. While this might explain why I have heard so many people say that one must be insane to want to be a music teacher, I issue this simple challenge to everyone: What can you change about your approach to teaching choral music that will help keep your students (and my children) interested in singing during the ascent through the public school

**"Why do you
want to be a
music teacher?"**

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system? Some may find that simply visiting “feeder schools” will help increase enthusiasm. Some may find utilizing a greater variety of teaching techniques (including technology) will help garner greater student interest.

Though these all seem like legitimate steps to building a larger, more successful program, the end result will not be as enriching for the student or as fulfilling for the teacher if he or she cannot find the deep-seeded passion for music that he or she once had. It is the same passion we all have, that my daughter has. It is to this end that I pose my last question: “Why do **you** want to be a music teacher?” If you are like me, the answer may delight you!



*Mr. Wray is Assistant Professor of
Choral Music Education at
Marshall University in Huntington, WV*

Choral Edition - Fall 2010

**Article Submission Deadline
Monday, September 6**

What to look for in the next Choral Edition

- 2011 State Conference Information
- 2011 National Conference Information

ACDA Advocacy Resolution

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

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

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

CHORAL EDITION



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