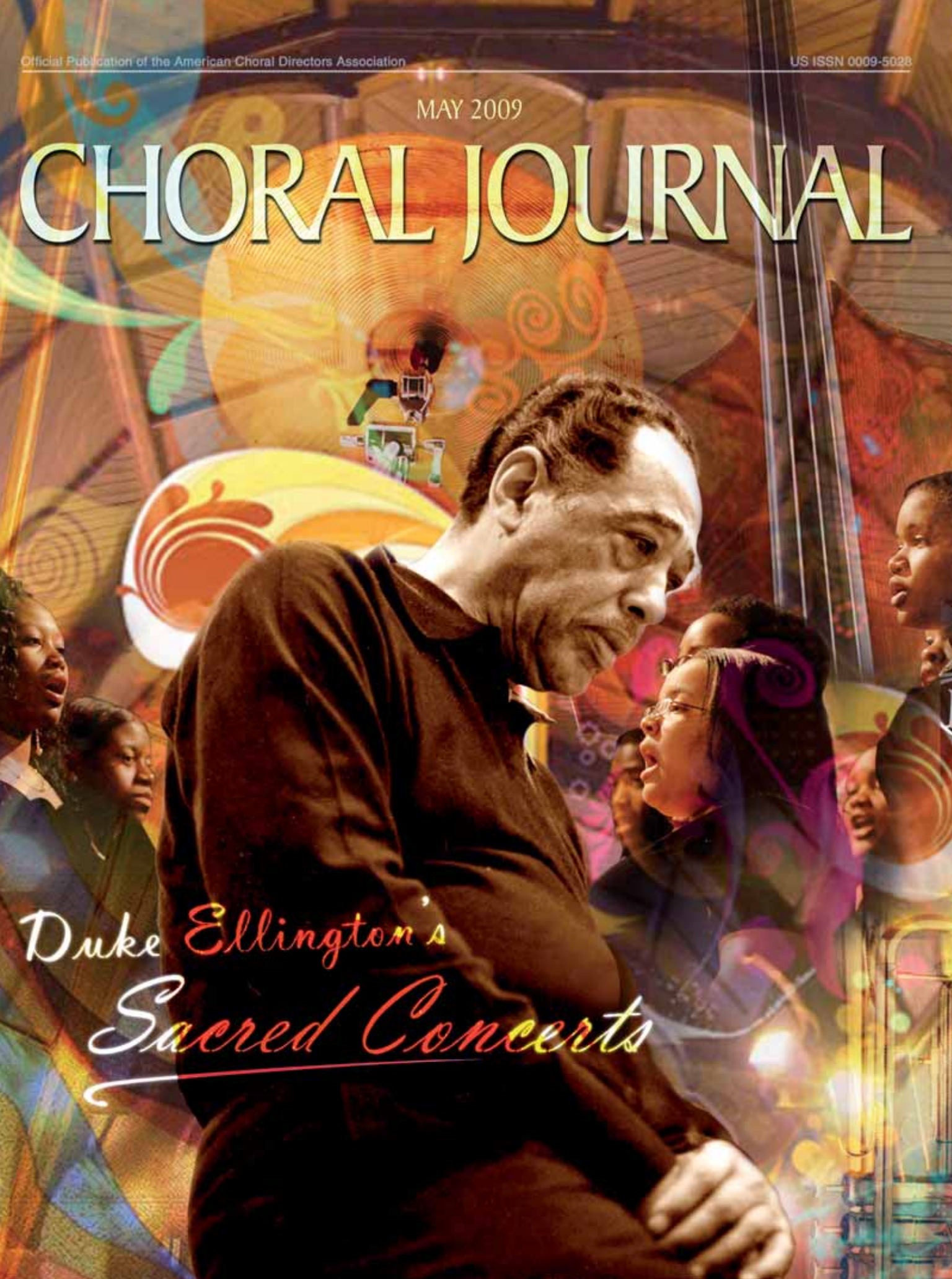


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MAY 2009

CHORAL JOURNAL

The cover art is a vibrant, abstract collage. In the foreground, a black and white photograph of Duke Ellington is shown in profile, looking down. Behind him, a color photograph of a diverse choir is visible, with some members singing. The background is filled with various abstract elements: a large, stylized sun or flower in shades of orange and yellow, a green and blue swirl, and a small, colorful illustration of a person playing a saxophone. The overall composition is dynamic and artistic.

*Duke Ellington's
Sacred Concerts*



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The *Choral Journal* is the official publication of The American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). ACDA is a nonprofit professional organization of choral directors from schools, colleges, and universities; community, church, and professional choral ensembles; and industry and institutional organizations. *Choral Journal* circulation: 19,000.

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From the Executive Director



Tim Sharp

From my very first experience of an American Choral Directors Association national conference (New Orleans, 1981), I have known that these professional gatherings offer us a microcosm of what is so very good about our artistic medium of choral performance. While the performance element involves the deepest structure perfection of delivering a text in unison or harmony by vocal instruments, the zeitgeist of the ensemble has been harder to analyze

and describe. For many of us, that is why our gatherings are so important—they remind us in a concentrated way of who we are, in addition to improving the way we do what we do.

Allow me to relate three stories that go much further in defining the human beauty that is behind the sonic beauty of what we are all about in the American Choral Directors Association. All three of these stories, along with the story that ACDA President Hilary Apfelstadt offers in her column, tell of the human response to the choral experience.

At the conclusion of the Peace Event at the recent ACDA national conference in Oklahoma City, as some 5,000 of us exited the Oklahoma City National Memorial (site of the 1995 terrorist bombing) following an extraordinarily moving choral event, our ACDA site staff approached the staff of the National Memorial to volunteer to help with the cleanup of the outdoor site. In response to this offer of custodial help, the Memorial staff told them there was no need for any help due to the fact that not even a candy wrapper had been left by the attendees to be picked up. Over 5,000 people, all with programs and their belongings in tow all entered the space and exited the space without so much as leaving behind a tissue. The experience was so intense and so moving, not one person permitted herself or himself to defile that sacred space. I invite you to glimpse just a few moments of what left all of us in total reverence by visiting ACDA's YouTube site at <www.youtube.com/user/NationalACDA>.

One woman from the Oklahoma City area chose to attend the Peace Event as a result of ACDA's open invitation to the region to participate in this time of choral reflection. Hear her words as related to me by one of our ACDA members:

After the Peace Event, a woman approached my friend and me. Gently, a tap on my shoulder.... "Did either of you have anything do with this event,?" she asked, tears still streaming down her face. "No," we replied. She looked distressed.... "Well, kind of," we explained, "We're members of the American Choral Directors Association, and the administration organized this event." Relief. She said: "I have to tell someone. You see, my husband was on the 4th floor of this building that day and" her voice broke and trailed off. Recovering, she said "I have not been able

to come back here since it happened. I tried once, but I fell to the ground and could not make myself enter the Memorial. It was too traumatic. I had to leave. You see, I was the one to issue the death notices to the families and it was so hard. But today—TODAY, I came back to find this beautiful program. The music—the dancers—the poetry... I just had to thank someone for ... the healing. I think God led me here today."

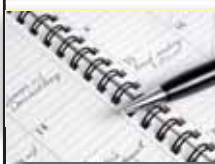
Urgently, we looked for Tim Sharp in the crowd, so she could tell him. She was rummaging in her backpack, and had a little heart shaped tin, filled with a variety of small angel pins. She explained to us that the families of the victims could not access the bombing site, and rescuers worked around the clock to free those trapped by the explosion. These angels had been sent by the families of the victims to be given to the rescue teams as a small way of communicating their thanks and prayers. Not every angel was given away (the rescue teams were overwhelmed with gifts), and she had saved these in this little heart tin. With a grateful heart, she offered us each one of the angels so that we would always remember this moment. Tears streaming down our faces, we each took an angel to treasure.

And here is one more story resulting from the life and work of one of our recently departed ACDA members. In her recently disclosed will, Sandra McCabe wanted to continue the work of the choral association that had inspired and nurtured her professional work and career as a choral director, well beyond the expanse of her own life. It was Sandra's desire to perpetuate the inspiration of her profession through a choral association that, in her words, "would be around for a long, long time." To this end, Sandra recently left a bequest of over \$240,000 to ACDA, the largest single gift from an individual in the 50-year history of our guild. Sandra was a high school choral director.

As we all continue to work on balance and blend in the rehearsal room, please keep the above stories in mind as you remind yourself that we all are working in the medium of life-balance, and life-blend. In our unique art form, it is not one or the other. While one is perhaps easier to define, analyze, and teach than the other, they are mutually inclusive in our profession as we meld together the sonic and the human experience.

Tim Sharp

Executive Director's Log



WHAT'S ON TIM'S DAY PLANNER

Apr	18	Tulsa Oratorio Chorus Tulsa, OK
Apr	23	Presentation to OKC CVB Oklahoma City, OK
Apr	24 - 26	Northwest Division Conference planning Seattle, Washington
Apr	28	Casady School Choral Concert Oklahoma City, OK
May	17 - 20	Executive Committee Meeting Oklahoma City, OK
May	22 -25	ACDA Technology Retreat Seaside, FL



WHAT'S ON TIM'S IPOD®

Del Tredici/Paul Revere's Ride
Theofanidis/The Here and Now
Bernstein/Lamentation from "Jeremiah"
ASO & Chorus/ Robert Spano and Norman Mackenzie
Slumdog Millionaire Sound Track
A.R. Rahman
Tormis Litany to Thunder



WHAT'S ON TIM'S KINDLE®

The Element by Ken Robinson (Viking)
Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell (Little Brown)
Mendelssohn in Performance by Siegwart Reichwald (Indiana)
The New Yorker magazine

National R&S Chairs

National Chair
Nancy Cox
580/482-2364 (voice); 580/482-1990 (fax)
<nrcox@swbell.net>

Boychoirs
Julian Ackerley
Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus
520/296-6277 (voice); 520/296-6751 (fax)
<ackerley@boyschorus.org>

Children's Choirs
Robyn Lana
Cincinnati Children's Choir
513/556-0338 (voice); 513/556-9988 (fax)
<lanarr@uc.edu>

College and University Choirs
To be Filled

Community Choirs
W. Robert Johnson
301/654-3380 (voice)
<wrjohnson@aol.com>

Ethnic and Multicultural Perspectives
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Junior High/Middle School
Tom Shelton
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<tomshelton@triad.rr.com>

Male Choirs
Frank Albinder
202/986-5867 (voice)
<FSAlbinder@pobox.com>

Music in Worship
Paul A. Aitken
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Senior High Choirs
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Bexley High School
614/539-5262 (voice)
<ablosser@bexley.k12.oh.us>

Show Choirs
Ken Thomas
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334/347-2623 (voice)
<kthomasmu@charter.net>

Two-Year Colleges
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Vocal Jazz
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From the President



Hilary Apfelstadt

As I write, the 2009 national conference in Oklahoma City has just ended. Thousands of people are returning to their homes across the United States, Canada, South America, and Europe. All were drawn to the same place for several days because of their passion for choral music, and the knowledge that they could gather with others who share that commitment. For a few days, we had the luxury of immersing ourselves in choral music. Whether listening to concerts, attending presentations, searching exhibits for repertoire, or sharing a meal with colleagues, we were able to focus on being a part of an extended choral community. At

times, conversations turned to economic realities: tales of diminished budgets, lost positions, reduced tour plans, and generally cautious behavior, were all too common. At the same time, however, each of us rejoiced in the respite the conference provided; while surrounded by music, we could not despair.

People gather together at these events in search of community, I believe. Yes, they come to conferences because they will hear stellar concerts and find new repertoire and see their friends, but the overriding reason, in my observation, is because of shared community.

During the event in Oklahoma City, ACDA members had several powerful experiences of community. At the opening ceremonies celebrating our 50th anniversary as an organization, we shared in a native American blessing that reminded us of the founding communities of Oklahoma. During that same ceremony, we sang Mendelssohn's *Verleih uns Frieden* under the direction of Paul Salumunovich, one of America's choral giants. Talk about the sound of a powerful choral community: we created it and we heard it.

At the Oklahoma City Memorial, we crowded around the Reflecting Pool, near the Rescuers Orchard and the Survivor Tree, moved deeply by readings and singing led by Conspirare and Craig Hella Johnson. None of us will ever forget the lyrical solo voice that introduced *The Pearl*. As we sang fragments of familiar tunes, improvising together, we literally felt the power of our collective voice, merging individuals into one community of remembrance and an appeal for peace.

At the evening presentations of Dominick Argento's powerful *Cenotaph*, a Brock Memorial commissioned work, we also heard Vaughan Williams' stirring *Dona nobis pacem*, both under the able direction of Ann Howard Jones, and were inspired again to contemplate the power of music in its appeal for peace. A chorus comprising several university and adult choruses melded into one voice, drawing us into the moment and making us a part of their community as we listened.

At the 50th Anniversary Legacy Dinner, attended by several charter members and past-presidents of ACDA, organizational officers were linked together by shared experiences of how people came to join ACDA years ago; we honored past leaders who share an unswerving belief in the power of choral music and the need to promote it throughout the country and beyond.

At the ACDA national headquarters Museum, members and visitors traced the steps of history as we walked through the room, following the chronological path of events that began in 1959 with the formation of ACDA and led to the present day conference in Oklahoma City. Young members who may have heard the names of famous ACDA members could see pictures and read about them: Julius Herford; Robert Fountain; Roger Wagner; Robert Shaw; Colleen Kirk; Elaine

Brown; Wayne Hugoboom; Gene Brooks—these are but a few of the names of prominent choral leaders who influenced our profession beyond imagination.

Each performing choir formed a community of their own. The experiences that each ensemble had shared prior to the conference were known only to those groups; the results of those experiences we shared together, however, and often, we rose to our feet in acclamation.

Nowhere was community more evident than in the honor choirs. Hundreds of young singers came together from all over the United States to form ensembles that worked together for several days, building on the foundation that each singer brought individually, and culminating in a musical whole. As I looked at the faces of the high school singers in particular, I noticed the high level of energy and involvement on each one. At great sacrifice, financial and otherwise, each singer had worked for months to get there, to sing powerful music as one, and each singer will surely remember that experience for a lifetime.

The greatest show of community, however, in my 2009 convention experience, came at the end of the second high school honor choir concert for parents. During that day, it had come to our attention that one young lady who had traveled with her mother by train for two days to get to Oklahoma City, was experiencing some difficulties. The student reported to coordinators that her mother had become very ill. One of the parent chaperones drove the student back to the hotel and was able to assist the mother in getting to the hospital by ambulance. That was only the first of several kindnesses.

By working after school at a part-time job, the student had raised the entire amount of money she needed to cover the trip, including her mother's train ticket. It soon became apparent that her ill mother could not spend another two days on a train to get home but would need to fly, as soon as she was able. Two one-way airline tickets would cost nearly \$700, money the student certainly did not have. Upon hearing of this situation, several honor choir parents suggested we try to solicit donations to help the family. After a promise from ACDA's leadership to cover part of the cost, I made a plea for the rest to the audience.

At the end of the concert, a dozen volunteers holding red bags donated by one of our exhibitors, stood at the doors so that people could make voluntary donations. Many of the singers in the honor choir dropped bills into the bags as they left the hall. Multiple audience members donated money. When a group of us gathered to tally the receipts a few minutes later, we were astounded to count nearly three thousand dollars, more than enough to cover the cost of the entire honor choir experience for the young woman: travel home by plane, hotel, meals, registration and anything else. We were able to transfer the money to our ACDA headquarters office and our accountant agreed to send a check for the full amount to the mother and daughter.

I write about this for several reasons: (1) because it happened at the parents' concerts, many ACDA members would not know about it; (2) because it was such a remarkable show of generosity, it must not go unnoticed; (3) because it was a response in the context of our choral community, with each giver connected as a performer or an observer by the thread of choral music, it is a reminder that human issues bind us all. I will remember this entire 2009 national conference not only as a remarkable musical experience, but moreover, as a stunning example of the power of community and what we can accomplish when we join forces.

Hilary Apfelstadt

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From the Editor



Carroll Gonzo

In This Issue

The *Choral Journal* editorial board held its annual meeting at the ACDA National Convention in Oklahoma City. Rather than review the past two years of the board's work, the meeting focused on the future of the *Choral Journal* in the twenty-first century. The board was not bound by a prescribed agenda, but instead encouraged to think creatively, with the view that the Journal can always be improved ergo, better. In that context, a lively discussion ensued, lasting nearly six hours.

By mutual consent, it was decided to look at each column to determine whether it was still relevant, was its content and mission still beneficial, and what could be changed. Beginning with the "Choral Reviews" column, it was decided that:

- A statement of the criteria will be created for selecting and reviewing a score will be published at the beginning of the column;
- Criteria for how to become a reviewer and how to write a review will be created to encourage more ACDA members to become reviewers;
- All reviewed scores will conclude with a Web link to the publishers for the purpose of hearing and seeing the music;
- Music of the past, especially the masters, will be reviewed as well as that of new, emerging composers;
- More scores primarily designed for the college choir will be included in the reviews;
- Each review will have a logo that identifies it in terms of its voicing; and
- More reviews will appear in the *Journal* than in the past.

In the next issue of the *Journal*, the "Book Reviews and CD Reviews" columns will be discussed.

.....

Two additional ideas were presented that did not relate to the columns. The ACDA Headquarters Museum was open to the convention members, and many found it to be quite revelatory regarding our past history. The board expressed the view that this information should be made available to all our readers. Therefore, Christina Prucha, ACDA's archivist, has agreed to edit a regular column that focuses on ACDA history and past presidents and members who helped chart our history.

The second idea surfaced when it became apparent that many ACDA members might not be aware of the multitude of offerings on our Web site. Accordingly, Paul Dubie and Shane Sanderson will present a one or two-page description of Web site links in each issue of the *Journal*.

Carroll Gonzo

Julius Herford Prize

2008

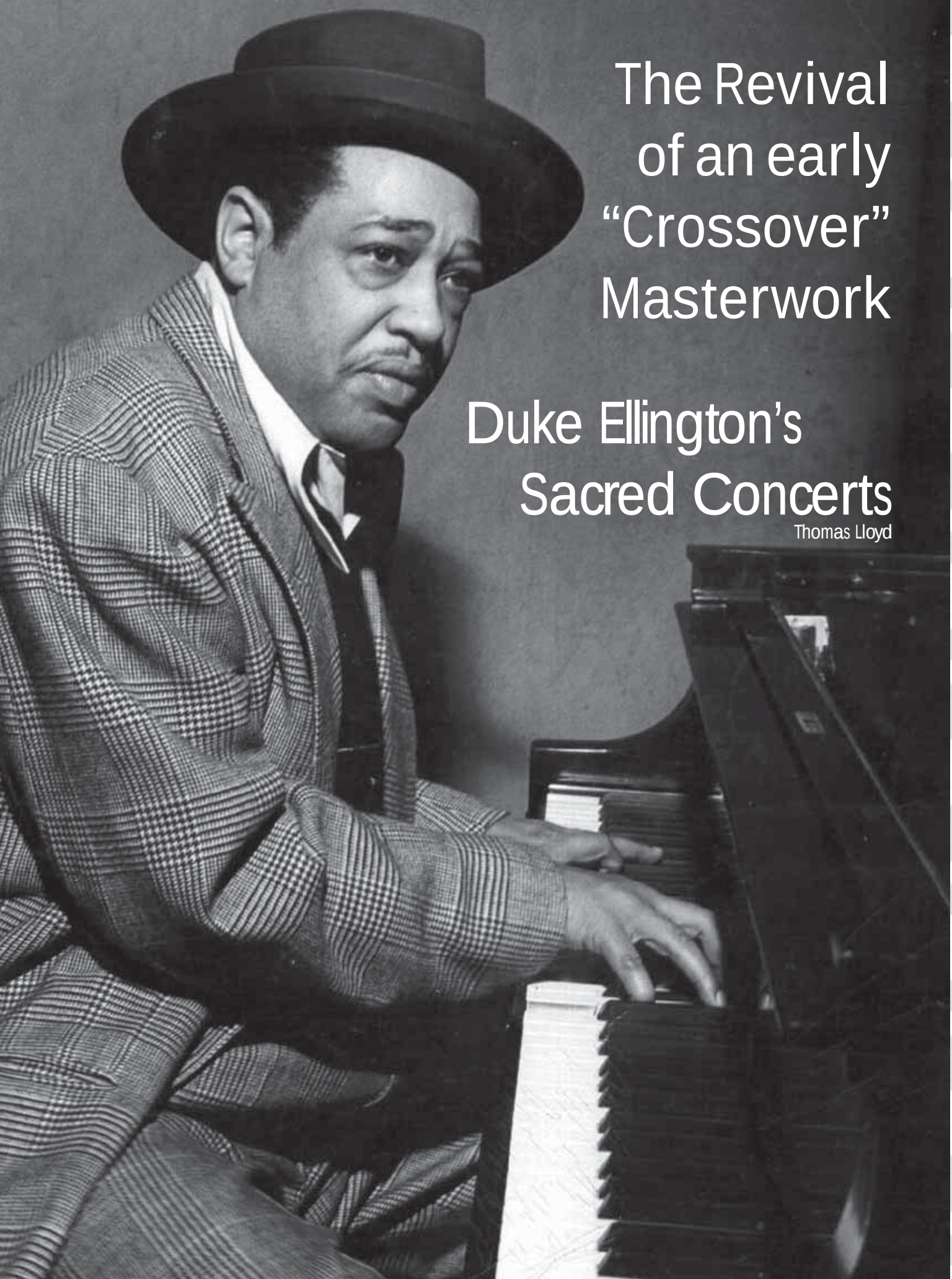
Call for Nominations

The subcommittee for the Julius Herford Prize, given annually by the American Choral Directors Association, is now accepting nominations for the outstanding doctoral terminal research project in choral music for 2008. Projects are eligible if they comprise the principal research component of the degree requirements, whether the institution defines the project as a “dissertation,” a “document,” a “thesis,” or “treatise,” etc. Eligibility is limited to doctoral recipients whose degrees were conferred during the period January 1 through December 31, 2008. The winner will receive a \$1000 cash award and a plaque.

Nominations must be submitted by the dean, director, or chair of the music unit. An institution may submit only one document. In the event that there are two nominations of equal merit from one school, the administrative head of the unit must submit a letter justifying the additional nomination.

A letter of nomination signed by the administrative head of the music unit and one unbound copy of the dissertation must be submitted no later than June 30, 2009 to:

Dr. Grant W. Cook III, Chair
Julius Herford Prize Subcommittee
Department of Music
Heidelberg University
310 E. Market St.
Tiffin, Ohio 44883
Phone: 419.448.2084; fax: 419.448.2124; e-mail: <gcook@heidelberg.edu>



The Revival
of an early
“Crossover”
Masterwork

Duke Ellington's
Sacred Concerts

Thomas Lloyd

Editor's note: The musical example for Figure 5 can be found on the ACDA Web site. Click on the interactive link on the *Choral Journal* page <www.acda.org/publications/choral_journal>.

“Every man prays in his own language, and there is no language that God does not understand.”-
Duke Ellington, from
“Third Sacred Concert”

Duke Ellington's three full-evening jazz suites, known as his *Sacred Concerts*, are now recognized as the central creative focus of the last decade in the life of one of America's greatest composers. During Ellington's lifetime performances of these three works for jazz big band, full choir, vocal soloists, and dancers were major artistic and cultural events, performed for huge audiences in the United States and Europe. A combination of incomplete performing materials and the genre-crossing nature of the music, however, has left this inspired and important body of work without a natural home in the repertoire. Yet, a wave of recent performances by professional and community choral ensembles has given new life to music that reminds us how the live

concert experience is still unique and irreplaceable in a musical world dominated by recordings.

A published complete and accurate set of parts for the *Sacred Concerts* is not currently available. The original recordings, under Ellington's direction, are available for the first and second concerts, but not the third. Though produced by musicians close to Ellington near the time of the performances, the only published vocal score is an abbreviated reduction, and has been out of print for years (though still available in many libraries). A rental edition of the vocal score and band charts is currently available from G. Schirmer, but for only about half the original numbers. These charts reflect, for the most part, a direct transcription of the early recordings of the concerts, but the music evolved a great deal after those first performances, making these scores far from definitive or free from significant errors. We know from surviving performers and materials that the music was revised significantly from performance to performance. The only publicly available notated record we have of these changes is the incomplete and loosely organized parts in the Ellington Collection at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Some performers involved directly in the original tour concerts believe that a complete set of charts could be reconstructed from parts still in the hands of the estates of arrangers now deceased who worked directly with Ellington on the *Sacred Concerts*. The all-too-common legal complications between those closely associated with Ellington and the publishers who now hold the rights, however, have prevented these sets from being made available to the public.¹

The music of the *Sacred Concerts* also defies categorization. The nature of the choral writing was unprecedented both for jazz and within the choral repertoire. Much of the solo vocal writing calls for classical control as much as for jazz finesse. The music is self-consciously sacred, but its jazz idiom and the idiosyncratic language and theology of Ellington's

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Duke Ellington's Sacred Concerts

original texts have resisted acceptance by many Christian churches. Even some of the harmonic language and orchestration of the purely instrumental numbers has been a challenge for jazz aficionados in relation to Ellington's earlier compositions.²

Yet, in spite of these odds, Ellington's orphaned masterworks have seen a flurry of performances just within the last year, both by professional ensembles: the Los Angeles Master Chorale under Grant Gershon and VocalEssence directed by Phillip Brunelle, and smaller community choirs such as the Brookline Chorus (MA) directed by Lisa Graham and the Choristers of Upper Dublin (PA) under the baton of David Spitko.

As a result, a reassessment of the striking originality of these works is in order. Drawing on recent experience, performing these works with college and community choirs, this article will advance the view that despite the

practical challenges of working with the limited resources available, deeply gratifying performances of these great works are still quite possible.

Duke Ellington's Religious Background

As a child, Ellington attended church twice each Sunday: one service with his mother at her Methodist Church, where the choir sang restrained European anthems and arrangements of the Spirituals, and the other with his father at a traditional Baptist church, where gospel singing and improvisation "raised the roof."³ When his musical night life began in his late teens, he no longer attended church regularly, and was fully immersed in the cabaret life in which most jazz musicians neces-

sarily found their living.

But Ellington also made a point of telling everyone that he had read through the Bible four times.⁴ He was a regular subscriber and reader of the Episcopal Church's weekly inspirational magazine *Forward*, after having been given a copy by Ethel Rich, a professor at Milton College in Wisconsin.⁵ And on his tours, he befriended a number of priests and pastors, in particular the legendary "pastor to the jazz community," John Gensel of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in New York, founder of the Jazz Vespers series and a jazz program that flourishes to this day.⁶ One of the movements of the second *Sacred Concert*, "The Shepherd Who Watches over the Night Flock," is a musical portrait of Gensel.⁷

The Emergence of Sacred Jazz in the 1960s

One of the pastors who befriended Ellington was the Reverend Jack Yaryan of the Anglican Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. Yaryan convinced the Dean of the cathedral, Reverend Julian Bartlett, to commission a concert of sacred jazz from Ellington and his band as part of a concert series in 1965 that also included Britten's *War Requiem*, a performance of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with choreography, and a mass accompanied by the jazz instrumentals of the Vince Guaraldi Trio.⁸

The burst of liturgical innovation that followed the ground-breaking reforms of Vatican II in the early 1960s resulted in a few efforts to bring jazz into the Roman Catholic liturgy by composers such as Frank Tirro, Edgar Sommerlin, and Mary Lou Williams.⁹ Around the same time, a complete jazz setting of the Jewish liturgy was written by seventeen-year-old Jonathan Klein for his rabbi father's Temple Emanuel in Worcester Massachusetts, and was recorded in

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New York in 1968 by emerging jazz stars Herbie Hancock, Thad Jones, Ron Carter, and Grady Tate.¹⁰

Since that time, there have been several composers following Ellington's lead in composing large-scale sacred jazz works. The jazz pianist Dave Brubeck has composed a large body of sacred choral works, though, in most of these, the choir primarily sings music written in a modernist classical style rather than in a jazz idiom.¹¹ Jazz legend Billy Taylor was commissioned by Tufts University in 1980 to write a work in the style of the *Sacred Concerts* called *Make a Joyful Noise* and later was commissioned by Vocal Essence to write an homage to Martin Luther King titled *The Peaceful Warrior*.¹² Philadelphia-based pianist, organist, and composer Trudy Pitts wrote a full-length jazz cantata in 1996, *A Joyful Noise*, though the chorus here serves primarily a backup role.¹³ Hannibal Lokumbe has written three major jazz cantatas with a historical orientation, involving substantial choral parts.¹⁴ More recently, composer and conductor Carl Maultsby [sic] wrote a remarkable "jazz requiem" titled *Strong and Graceful Oaks* for his Rejoice Ensemble in New York City, devoted to the performance of sacred vocal jazz literature.¹⁵

Ellington was not writing music to be used in the main liturgical service of the week, but in a concert setting, albeit one that was held in the church and as such intended to be devotional in nature. This venue gave him the creative freedom to incorporate the full-blown forces of big band jazz, vocal soloists, large choirs singing in jazz style, and dancers. This non-liturgical setting also allowed him the freedom to set mostly his own original texts, in his own distinctively personal, colloquial language.

Putting such highly charged, openly emotive music into a sacred context, even outside a worship service, was considered quite daring, even at a time

when many other cultural shibboleths were openly challenged. In many churches, including most traditional black churches where gospel music reigned supreme, jazz was still tainted by its association with the hedonism of the night clubs and brothels from which it emerged in the not-so-distant past and with the high life of the dance halls of the more recent big band era. It was no accident that the first sacred jazz performances were in urban cathedrals or churches such as St. Peter's Lutheran Church in New York. These churches had missions with a broader, more ecumenical reach than churches more closely tied to particular communities.

The Origins of the First Sacred Concert

For the Grace Cathedral San Francisco commission, Ellington merged five new movements with five previous compositions, four of which were from *My People* (1963), along with "Come Sunday," from *Black, Brown, and Beige* (1943). "Come Sunday" was written first as a solo for saxophonist Johnny Hodges before being given sacred lyrics for Mahalia Jackson in 1958. These earlier works were extended "jazz suites," portraying the history of the African-American people. Grounded in his family upbringing and his experience growing up in the black church, pride in his black heritage, and the struggle for justice and freedom became natural themes for these extended works, as they were again in the *Sacred Concerts*.¹⁶

The freshly composed "In the Beginning God" was the ambitious opening number, a twenty-minute extended composition for the band and baritone soloist based on a six-note motive for the words of the title, the first words in the Bible. The movement contains riveting choral incantations of the names of all the books of the Bible over solo sax

improvisation and rhythmic breaks from the brass section. The grand finale of the first *Sacred Concert* was "David Danced" for band, chorus, and solo tap dancer. This movement also first appeared as part of *My People* as an up-tempo version of "Come Sunday." There was to be no shying away from the association of jazz with dance, even in a church concert.

A large and diverse audience received the Grace Cathedral performance with enthusiasm. Pastor Gensel arranged for performances in New York soon thereafter at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. One of these two New York performances was recorded and later made available on the now out-of-print Ellington Centennial collection.¹⁷ At least twenty-five additional performances of this first *Sacred Concert* were given at venues as diverse as Coventry Cathedral in London, Bright Hope Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Albion College in Michigan, Temple Emmanuel in Beverly Hills, CA, and Constitution Hall in Washington, DC.¹⁸

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The Second Sacred Concert

The premature death from cancer of his musical disciple and alter ego Billy Strayhorn in May of 1967 had a major emotional impact on Ellington. When one of his clergy acquaintances, Canon Harold Weicker of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, suggested the idea of a second *Sacred Concert*, Ellington was soon channeling his grief and creative energy into writing a completely new suite of integrated pieces.¹⁹

For the longest movement of the work, "Freedom," Ellington chose to feature Strayhorn's personal vision of the "four major moral freedoms," an alternative to the traditional "four freedoms" of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.²⁰ This gesture of remembrance and respect for his friend was also an indication of the lack of creative inhibition Ellington felt in choosing words that challenged emblematic texts, whether they be sacred or secular. Making the subject of freedom a central part of a sacred program also reflected Ellington's belief in the congruence of basic sacred and secular values.

The second concert also includes instrumental numbers that reveal Ellington pushing the boundaries of his own harmonic language and musical style, such as the opening "Supreme Being," for which we have only a few of the in-

dividual charts in the Smithsonian collection and the recording itself.²¹ Where Ellington's vocal numbers with their colloquial texts give us unusually open and direct access to the composer's beliefs, these somewhat edgy and freely imagined instrumental movements suggest some of the complexity of his faith that lay just beneath the surface of his smooth conviviality.

The premiere of the *Second Sacred Concert* at St. John the Divine in January, 1968, was attended by a capacity audience of 7,000 people, with many more turned away at the door. Well over fifty performances were given over the next five years in churches, colleges, and concert halls all over the United States, and in France, Spain, and Sweden.²² A studio recording made in New York shortly after the premiere sold well and was recently re-released on the Prestige label.²³ Most observers have found the *Second Sacred Concert* to be the most fully realized of the three. Ellington declared it to be "the most important thing I have ever done."²⁴

Ellington's New Approach To Solo Vocals in the Second Sacred Concert

Ellington took a different approach to vocal solo writing in the *Second Sacred*

Concert. As was often the case before, Ellington was probably inspired directly by a particular musician, a Swedish singer he had encountered in Paris a few years before named Alice Babs.²⁵ She was a classically trained choral singer and coloratura soprano who also had a natural affinity for jazz phrasing. She allowed him to conjure up sinuous melodic lines with huge skips and chromatic intervals that required both the range and control of an opera singer and the flexibility and finesse of a jazz singer. In slow numbers such as "Heaven," "Almighty God," and "T.G.T.T." there is relatively little room for improvisation, because Ellington has written out a melody that looks like the transcription of an improvisation, which is how he often worked with instrumental solos as well (Figures 1 – 3).²⁶

Her understudy for these solos, which fall well outside the comfort zone for most classical and jazz singers, was a young soprano from Philadelphia, DeVonne Gardner. The recent high school graduate was first brought to Ellington's attention at a picnic given for members of the Singing City Youth Choir by June Read, an arts patron from New Jersey who was also a close friend of Ellington.²⁷ Shortly after this picnic, Ellington called Read saying he was "looking for a young, clear-voiced, soprano" and a "strong, young, gutsy basso" to sing in his *Sacred Concerts*. Read arranged for

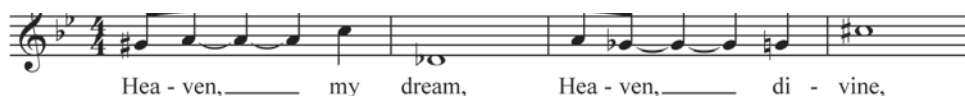


Figure 1. Duke Ellington, *The Second Sacred Concert (Praise God and Dance)*, "Heaven," mm. 1–4. Opening Vocal Line

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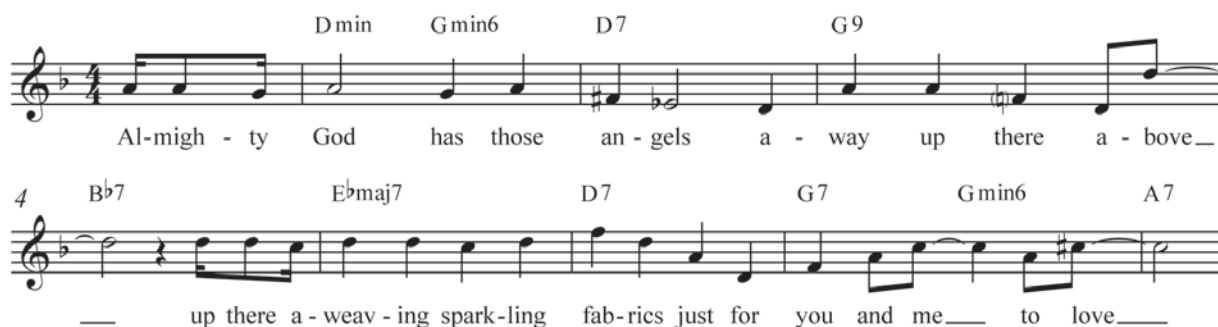


Figure 2. Duke Ellington, *The Second Sacred Concert (Praise God and Dance)*, “Almighty God Has Those Angels,” mm. 1–9.
Opening Vocal Line

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Gardner and fellow Singing City youth Tony Watkins to audition for Ellington in New York.²⁸ Assigning them back-up vocals at first, Ellington soon had Gardner take over for Babs in most performances of the second Sacred Concert when Babs returned to Europe. Tony Watkins became the main baritone soloist in the concerts, featured in numbers such as “Don’t get down on your knees and pray.” A third member of the Singing City Youth Choir, Roscoe Gill, took on the role of preparing the choirs, helping with choral arranging, and updating

frequent changes in the charts. Gill and Watkins are no longer alive, but Gardner is still an active performer and teacher in Philadelphia and a rich repository of memories and hand-written revisions from the Sacred Concert tours.²⁹

The Third Sacred Concert

The remarkable success of the second *Sacred Concert* with a racially diverse and religiously ecumenical audience led to the commission of the third

Sacred Concert for the 25th anniversary celebrations of the United Nations set to take place in London in 1973. By the time of the commission in 1972, Ellington was already in the advanced stages of cancer, but was determined to accept and complete the commission. Given the condition of his health and his awareness of the reverberant acoustics of Westminster Abbey, most of the music this time is unusually slow, and richly meditative.

The crowning finale of this program was a set of six pieces alternating be-

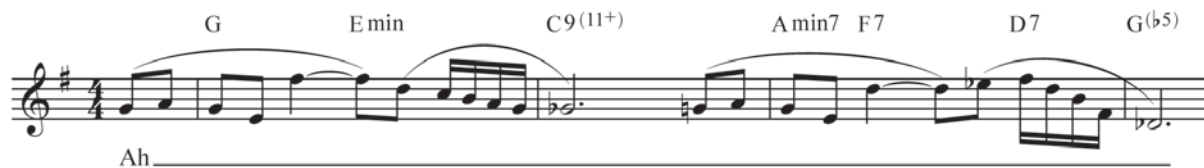


Figure 3. Duke Ellington, *The Second Sacred Concert (Praise God and Dance)*, “Too Good To Title (T.G.T.T.),” mm. 1–4.
Opening Vocal Line

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tween unaccompanied choir and solo vocal and instrumental writing, "Every Man Prays In His Own Language" was as true an epitaph as there could be for the composer's beliefs and his vision for the *Sacred Concerts*. In between two choral statements of the title phrase, there are five different versions of the "Lord's Prayer": (1–2) two instrumental settings, (3) one for the choir alone, (4) one for Alice Babs sung unaccompanied in Swedish, and (5) one freely set for solo recorder. Roscoe Gill set a final "Wordless Prayer" for choir and solo.

Close associates of Ellington relate that one of the stories he treasured as a source of inspiration for "Every man prays," and for the *Sacred Concerts* in general, was the classic French fable of the "Juggler of Notre Dame." In the story, a ne'r-do-well itinerant juggler is caught in the middle of the night juggling before the statue of the Virgin Mary on Christmas Eve, long after everyone else has left their fancy gifts. His explanation

to the priest is simply, "Juggling is my only gift, and I offer it to God."³⁰

Finished just days before the premier and under-rehearsed, the third *Concert* was not as well received by the critics and was not appreciated as broadly by the American public as the more exuberant earlier works. Some critics have suggested that the music for the third concert was less than fully realized by Ellington because of his health, while others ascribe the spare textures and slower tempi to the clarity of his musical and spiritual vision at the end of his life.³¹ Following the premier, he lived to do one more performance, on December 23, 1973, at St. Augustine Presbyterian Church in Harlem, a few short months before his death. The Westminster Abbey performance was recorded, but not released until the *Duke Ellington Centennial Edition – The Complete RCA Victor recordings (1927–1973)* boxed set produced by BMG Classics in 1999 (now out of print).

Contradictions in Ellington's Persona and Musical Style

Some of the contradictions in Ellington's public persona and musical style bear directly on understanding his verbal and musical language in the *Sacred Concerts*. He was proudly and self-consciously the entertainer who always closed his performances by telling his audiences "I love you madly." And yet film interviews later in his life also reveal a restless musician, who reluctantly kept performing the same popular hits over and over at the peak of his career in order to pay the bills, while he was using every spare minute to write and record his more ambitious extended suites (including the *Sacred Concerts*) on the side.³²

Ellington's combination of personal charm and smooth, up-town sophistication (with its accompanying "hipster" language) had broad appeal to both black and white audiences. He extended his personal charm to individuals as well, whether friends or strangers. He seems to have had an unusual openness to a variety of people, perhaps especially those with a faith perspective to share, even if it was much more doctrinaire than his more open views. In *Music is my Mistress*, Ellington relates a story of how a woman who was a Jehovah's Witness missionary approached him backstage to present her ideas. Rather than turning her away or avoiding future proselytization, he welcomed future conversations that continued on after she married one of his band members. "All of what she had to say was stimulating, and I still somewhat expect the time of Armageddon to come to pass."³³

And yet for all his personal sophistication, Ellington's music also had a distinctive edginess to it, full of dissonant and complex harmonies, bold orchestrations, and hard-driving rhythmic riffs and trademark "jungle growls" in the brass. These bright, hard edges immediately set

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apart the sound of his band from other bands of the era, both black and white. Equally distinctive was the rich coating of sensuality in his ballads, especially those modeled on the unique sounds of hand-picked soloists like saxophonist Johnny Hodges (the original soloist for “Come Sunday”).

Ellington's Personal Approach to Lyrics

Ellington summed up his approach to language in this way:

Communication itself is what baffles the multitude. It is both so difficult and so simple. Of all man's fears, I think men are most afraid of being what they are—in direct communication with the world at large. They fear reprisals, the most personal of which is that they “won't be understood.” How can anyone expect to be understood unless he presents his thoughts with complete honesty?...Yet, every time God's children have thrown away their fear in pursuit of honesty—trying to communicate themselves, understood or not—miracles have happened.³⁴

As mentioned above, for the opening movement of the first *Sacred Concert*, he chose to set the first six syllables of the Bible, “In the beginning, God,” matching these syllables with an angular, six-note motive that then becomes the formal basis for the piece (Figure 4).

Rather than completing the original line from the book of Genesis with the words “created the heavens and the earth,” the soloist begins a litany of what wasn't there before God created the earth: “no mountains, no valleys, no main street, no back alleys ... no night, no day, no bills to pay no symphony, no jive, no Gemini five [astronauts]....” Right away we find a comfortable mixing of the majesty of God with the ordinari-ness and even the mere playfulness of daily life. Jazz critic Dan Morgenstern said of the original Ellington lyrics in the *Sacred Concerts*, “some of his metaphors may appear frivolous, but Ellington's seeming frivolity often is a cloak for high seriousness—the leavening of humor.”³⁵ For the next section of “lyrics” in this opening movement, the chorus launches into a riveting recitation of the names of all the books of the Hebrew Bible over rhythmic breaks from the brass section and a free ranging solo improvisation from the sax.

The Simplicity of Ellington's Solo Lyrics

Some of the lyrics Ellington wrote for Alice Babs are short and epigrammatic, not unlike the texts of the traditional Spirituals, but with even less specificity. “Heaven, supreme, Heaven combines ev'ry sweet and pretty thing Life would love to bring; Heavenly Heaven to be is just the ultimate degree to be.” This brevity and the taking of simple pleasure in the repetition of key words like “love” and “heaven” allows the pure expressiv-ity of the vocal line to fill out the mean-ing. The solo number “T.G.T.T.” (“Too Good to Title”) dispenses with words altogether, and treats the voice purely as a solo instrument.

Lyrics like these and, from the third *Sacred Concert*, “My love, the love of my life, It's love of love that brings me love, the love of Heaven above” can be perceived at first glance as shallow and aimless. But more often than not, the simplicity of the words is a foil for the richness of the music. In their very “simpleness” the words come across not only as casual, but evocative, removing the wall of formality while leaving the window of mystery in place. In one of the last numbers he wrote, for his third and final *Sacred Concert*, Ellington



Figure 4. Duke Ellington, *The First Sacred Concert (In The Beginning God)*, “In The Beginning God,” mm. 1–2.
Opening Vocal Line

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reminds us again of the importance to him of the association of love with the pure being of God when the soloist asks,

"Is God a three letter word for love? Is love a four letter word for God?"

Themes of
Justice and Forgiveness

The basic human need for justice and forgiveness are central themes throughout the concerts. In the second *Sacred Concert*, "Don't get down on your knees to pray until you have forgiven everyone" is typical of Ellington's hard-swinging "concerto-style" numbers that show the band playing off the virtuosity of a particular soloist, in this case the aforementioned Tony Watkins.³⁶

Ellington breaks off this driving swing number mid-way for one of his more reflective, unaccompanied choral sections on a two-word chorus lyric: "Father, forgive" (Figure 6). Reiterations of these two words are interspersed with spoken lines confessing the sins of the day: "The hatred that divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class ... our indifference to the plight of the homeless and the refugee ... the lust which uses for ignoble ends, the bodies of men and women..."

Ellington's Approach to Choral Writing

Choirs with more than one singer on a part have historically been rare in jazz for two reasons: it is much more difficult for multiple singers on a part to sing complex jazz harmonies in tune, and it is equally daunting for such an ensemble to improvise together. Nevertheless, Ellington clearly intended medium to large choirs to be an important part of the orchestral pallet of his *Sacred Concerts*.

He was certainly familiar with church choirs, both gospel and traditional, from his childhood, but what he wrote did not fit comfortably into either idiom. When he began taking the first and second *Sacred Concerts* on the road and introducing different choirs to the music for the first time, Ellington also discovered that choirs generally need a little more rehearsing than one-on-



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a-part professional singers. As a result, many adjustments were made along the way, based upon the particular strengths or weaknesses of the choirs involved.³⁷

Ellington's writing for large chorus in these works involves his very personal adaptations of several traditional vocal styles (see table for examples of each style):

- Back-up chorus harmonization;
- Unaccompanied, freely composed movements;
- Un-pitched, spoken unison rhythmic chanting; and
- Unison singing melody (men and

women in octaves), with written out or improvisatory figures agreed upon in rehearsal

There is only one selection in the three *Sacred Concerts* in which the chorus sings in parts rather than unison, with the big band, the understated but effervescent "Hallelujah" from the third concert. (One might call this Ellington's own "Hallelujah Chorus," notable here for its lightly swinging style in the midst of what is otherwise more reflective, autumnal music).

The traditional "back-up" chorus: a few singers supplying written out harmonization and rhythmic breaks, had long been a staple of jazz arranging, and can be found throughout the

Sacred Concerts. Unaccompanied jazz ensemble singing grew out of the close-harmony traditions of street-corner "doo-wop," gospel, and spirituals based on standard song forms.³⁸

DeVonne Gardner relates how Ellington had a special fascination for the sound of the unaccompanied choir and saw the *Sacred Concerts* as a welcome opportunity to exploit that sonority.³⁹ In these movements (Figures 5 <www.acda.org/publications/choral_journal>, 6, 7, and 8), the chromatic harmonies and voice leading would be relatively easy for instrumentalists but are quite difficult for singers, not only for gospel choirs not used to singing from notated scores, but also for "classical" choirs not used to Ellington's distinctive harmonic

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B

Fa - ther for - give, Fa - ther for - give, Fa - ther for - give,
Fa - ther for - give, Fa - ther for - give, Fa - ther for - give,

Figure 6. Duke Ellington, *The Second Sacred Concert (Praise God and Dance)*, “Father, Forgive,” mm. 28–33.

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language.

As challenging as these tonal elements are to master, these numbers also call for flexibility of phrasing and a sense of dramatic pacing. The rhythms in “Father, Forgive,” and the “Lord’s Prayer” are static, and melody takes a back seat to the role of Ellington’s illusive harmonies in coloring each word or giving a new color to the multiple repetitions of a word. Ellington’s particular sensitivity to harmonic color and its innate connection to emotion, mood, and meaning

may have been reflected in a sketch found on a blank sheet of manuscript paper mixed in with various charts in the Ellington Collection at the Smithsonian. Probably in the hand of one of his arrangers, two chords labeled as the “solitude chord” and “truth chord” are placed side by side (Figure 7a and 7b). These are the final chords from Ellington’s 1934 standard “Solitude” and “Tell me it’s the truth” from the first *Sacred Concert*.⁴⁰

One of the other unaccompanied numbers, the declamatory and highly

chromatic “Will you be there?” in the first Sacred Concert (Figure 8; adapted from his earlier *My People*) leads directly in to a more traditional dance number, “Aint’ but the one,” where soloist and choir engage in a swinging call-and-response jazz “stomp” (Figure 9). Here, Ellington exploits the parallel tertian harmonies of the gospel choir, familiar from days in his father’s Baptist church as a youth.

Ellington’s use of choral and solo recitation, both with the band (“In the Beginning, God”) and unaccompanied

Figure 7a. “Solitude and “Truth” chords from Ellington sketches

Figure 7b. “Solitude” and “Truth” Chords transcribed at concert pitch, assuming 4 staves: Alto, Tenor, and Baritone Saxophones, Trumpets and Trombones

S
A
T
B

Will you be there? Will your name be called? Will your name be called?

Will you be there? Will your name be called? Will your name be called?

Figure 8. Duke Ellington, *The Sacred Concert (In The Beginning God)*, “Will You Be There?,” mm. 1–5.
Choral opening

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1
Ten. Solo
S
A
T
B

Just one! Just one!

Ain't but the one, ain't but the one,

5
Ten. Solo
S
A
T
B

Ain't but the one good Lord a - bove, ain't but the one great God of love.

Ain't but the one good Lord a - bove, ain't but the one great

Figure 9. Duke Ellington, *The First Sacred Concert (In The Beginning God)*, “Ain’t But The One,” mm. 1–8.
Call and response between Tenor Soloist and Choir

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Duke Ellington's Sacred Concerts

[Chorus part from published score]



[Tag added from DeVonne Gardner's notes]



Figure 10. Duke Ellington, *The Second Sacred Concert (Praise God and Dance)*, “Freedom – Word You Heard.” Closing Choral tag from performance notes

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(“Freedom Languages”), precedes the now common use of rhythmic speech in rap and art music by a few decades. The style is much different of course, but he was obviously attuned to the power of speech rhythm and the colors possible in highly flavored language inflection without melody.

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Teaching the Sacred Concerts to Choirs

When I first approached teaching the movements with unison singing to my community choirs, I was afraid the singers would find the lack of harmony and independent parts less than stimulating to rehearse. But numbers such as those in the “Freedom” cycle and “Almighty God has those Angels” turned out to be the most fun of all. Unison singing is always a technical challenge for a choir, especially when classical choral singers who are used to singing only the exact rhythms as they are notated on the page have to “swing” (making even notes un-even) and add the jazz equivalent of “ornamentation” to what is in the written score.

DeVonne Gardner was helpful here in giving us some ideas from the “oral tradition” based on her notes and

memories from earlier performances.⁴¹ This especially affected the varied ways the melodic lines (and especially the closing “tags”) were sung, different both from what we could see in the notated versions or hear listening to the earliest recorded versions. Figure 10 is an example of one such tag from DeVonne Gardner's notes for the end of “Freedom—Word You Heard.”

Conductors considering performances of these works should not be intimidated by these challenges, however. Allowing for the creative flexibility to “work it out” with your particular singers and musicians will result in a much more “authentic” performance than singing only what is notated on the page, or trying to imitate exactly what can be heard on the original recording. Exacting as he was, “working it out” on the go is what Ellington and his musicians did as their

modus operandi. The most unfortunate choice, for both performers and listeners, would be to avoid performing this great music altogether.

Table 1 is an annotated list of the numbers in the three *Sacred Concerts*, along with indications of whether or not they are included in the G. Schirmer rental collection *The Best of the Sacred Concerts*. The chart also references how choral parts can be extracted from the Hansen House piano/vocal score, *Sacred Concerts, Complete—Duke Ellington Inspirational Music*. While each of the three *Sacred Concerts* has a formal coherence when performed separately,

conductors should not hesitate to mix and match numbers from different concerts depending on the materials and performers at their disposal, such as Ellington often did on tour.⁴²

Ellington's Vision: Our Opportunity

Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concerts* provide a perfect illustration of how music finds its fullest realization in live performance. Thousands of people attended concerts in the late 1960s and early 1970s which were more than just performances; they were events.

The special reliance of this music on live performance can be seen in the way it has continued to be widely performed in spite of having a much more tenuous connection to original materials than most other concert repertoire. Unusually diverse audiences heard a remarkably diverse group of performers speaking, singing, and playing in a musical and poetic language that mixed sacred and secular, playfulness and solemnity, sensuality and grandeur, classical and jazz. These combinations were unfamiliar in their interrelationship, but instantly recognizable in their humanity.

It certainly takes a little more work to

Table 1

Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concerts*. Annotated list of Movements (Timings based on Ellington Recordings)

Movement Title	Duration	Schirmer Collection	Comments on scoring/transcription
Sacred Concert No. 1			
In the Beginning God	20'	yes	full band, baritone solo, chorus recitation of books of the Bible—Old and New Testaments
Tell me it's the Truth	3'	yes	full band, alto solo
Come Sunday	4'	yes	clarinets, trombones, alto vocal solo (there is also a high voice version, not in Hansen or Schirmer, with choral intro and back-up)
The Lord's Prayer	3'	yes	full band, alto vocal solo
Come Sunday	6'	no	instrumental version
Will you be there?	3'	yes	a cappella choir, solo recitation
Ain't but the one	2'	yes	full band, tenor vocal solo, choir
New world a-comin'	9'	no	solo piano improvisation based on chart found in Hansen
David Danced	7'	yes	full band, choir, solo tap dancer

Table 1 continued

Movement Title	Duration	Schirmer Collection	Comments on scoring/transcription
Sacred Concert No. 2			
Praise God	3'	yes	full band only, prelude, extended tenor sax solo
Supreme Being	12'	no	full band only, fantasia, with extended choral recitation "Sonnet of the Apple" in the middle and final sections.
Heaven	5'	yes	full band, soprano solo vs.1, alto sax vs.2, verse 3 soprano solo with Latin swing
Something 'bout believing	8'	yes	unison choir, singing and recitation, with full band
Almighty God	7'	yes	stanza 1: solo soprano with band stanza 2: clarinet solo with soprano descant improvised stanza 3: unison choir with soprano descant improvised; repeat last 5 bars as tag last time through.
The Shepherd (Who Watches over the Night Flock)	8'	yes	full band only; extended solos on trumpet with plunger mute; homage to Pastor John Gensel
It's Freedom (recorded sequence given here is different from published or numbered sequence)	13'	yes	multi-section movement: Freedom No. 7: full band, chorus unison with solo improv Freedom No. 4: chorus a cappella w/solo improv. descant Freedom (Word You Heard): four times through: 1) instrumental 2) chorus as written 3) band, clarinet solo, soprano vocal improv 4) chorus with some ornamentation; solo improv repeat last 4 bars as tag (see reference in article) <i>Freedom No. 6:</i> chorus a cappella <i>Freedom (Sweet fat and that):</i> melody unison women, counterpoint unison men (in Schirmer, but not in Hansen); repeat three times, last time ppp with only brushes accomp. <i>Freedom (languages):</i> choral recitation, one singer per translated word for "freedom"; solo recitation at end <i>Freedom No. 1:</i> chorus a cappella under solo recitation of Strayhorn's "four moral freedoms" <i>Freedom No. 7 Reprise:</i> full band, chorus unison with 7 bar tag (published version in Hansen and Schirmer is different from that on the recording)

Table 1 continued

Movement Title	Duration	Schirmer Collection	Comments on scoring/transcription
Meditation	3'	yes	piano solo with double bass; published version is close to a transcription of Ellington's recorded performance
The Biggest and Busiest intersection ("A Fire and Brimstone Sermonette")	4'	no	full band only; up-tempo, blues-based free form, featuring drums and walking bass; DE's depiction of door of Heaven as people converge from all directions to face judgment
T.G.T.T. ("Too Good To Title")	3'	no	wordless solo for soprano and keyboard (electronic on recording); Hansen version is close transcription.
Don't Get Down on Your Knees to Pray / Father Forgive	6'	no	full band, baritone solo, chorus backup to solo refrains (from sketches at Smithsonian, not in Hansen or Schirmer, or on the recording); a "short sheet" score and set of parts available in Smithsonian; interrupted by "Father Forgive" for chorus a cappella and solo recitation (choral parts can be extracted from Hansen version for solo voice and keyboard)
Praise God and Dance	11'	yes	full band, soprano solo, choral recitation, choral singing at end; dancers; extended reprise of first number, Praise God
Sacred Concert No. 3			
The Lord's Prayer	1'30	no	piano solo, segues into "My Love"; Hansen version is a close transcription
My Love	6'30	yes	full band (though not used all at once) with solos for soprano voice, tenor sax, and piano
Is God a Three-Letter Word For Love?	9'	no	full band; piano intro, soprano solo with chorus harmonization from middle of second time through (not in Hansen score); third time through is solo recitation over chorus a cappella, followed by final time with soloist, band
The Brotherhood	6'	no	full band and unison chorus (incl. recitation at end), tenor sax solo; (homage to UN, "our sponsor")

Table 1 continued

Movement Title	Duration	Schirmer Collection	Comments on scoring/transcription
Hallelujah	4'	no	full band and chorus in parts; chorus parts and repeat sequences can be extracted from the Hansen score with help of the recording
Every Man Prays in His Own Language	11'	no	multi-section mvt. (most vocal and instrumental parts can be extracted from the Hansen piano score, which is a close transcription of the recording): 1. Introduction: band (lost) 2. Every man prays...; chorus a cappella 3. Lord's Prayer; instrumental 4. Lord's Prayer; chorus a cappella 5. Lord's Prayer; instrumental; choral "amen" (last two bars of Hansen transcription) 6. Lord's Prayer; solo soprano (not in Hansen; transcribed in Hill, p. 374) 7. Lord's Prayer; chorus a cappella (lost) 8. Lord's Prayer; solo recorder (not in Hansen; transcribed in Hill, p. 376) 9. Wordless Prayer; solo soprano and 6-part chorus, a cappella 10. solo recitation (DE) 11. Every man prays reprise; chorus a cappella with solo recitation; (first 3 1/2 bars words in tenor part only)
Ain't Nobody Nowhere Nothin' Without God	4'	no	full band and baritone vocal solo (transcription in Hansen, minus sax and brass parts)
The Majesty (Beauty) of God	7'	no	full band, tenor sax solo, soprano vocal solo, chorus; there are four versions of this score, two in Hansen and two at the Smithsonian; none completely match the recording, though the choral parts can be extracted from the Hansen reduction; before the vocal solo that begins the Hansen scores, there are several solo variations on the theme/chords of this melody, for piano, then piano and tenor sax; a free piano improvisation, and a brass interlude; the ending, with band, soprano soloist, and chorus, is quite different on the recording than in the Hansen versions.

bring this music to life again, not only in gathering the materials, but in preparing singers and audiences for music that doesn't fit neatly into familiar categories. But Ellington's music and his religious perspectives contain the combination of personal particularity and human universality that is the essence of great art. Ellington's vision offers us a fresh way to celebrate human spirituality as a potential source of unity and hope rather than of conflict and despair.

NOTES

¹ A number of bandleaders either directly or indirectly associated with the original performances have made their own transcriptions and arrangements for specific performances, which are by degrees more or less faithful to performances under Ellington's direction. Contrary to the situation in the United States, arrangements and re-arrangements of varying quality of various numbers from the *Sacred Concerts* have been produced by European publishers, where the music remains very popular.

² Wilbert Weldon Hill, *The Sacred Concerts of Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington*, dissertation, Catholic University of America (1995), available through UMI Dissertation Services, Ann Arbor, MI, 165–81. "Supreme Being" from the *Second Sacred Concert* is especially advanced, employing the octatonic scale, atonality, and other progressive classical and jazz compositional devices. The two instrumental sections are interrupted by an extended choral recitation of the "Sonnet of the Apple." Unfortunately, the only complete record we have of this composition is the recording; according to Hill even the Smithsonian Collection does not have a complete set of parts or score.

³ Ibid., 2.

⁴ Duke Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, (New York: Oxford, 1987), 171.

⁵ Ibid., 282.

⁶ Nat Hentoff, "The Final Chorus—The Shepherd of the Night Flock", in *Jazz*

Times, Vol. 29:1 (1999), 122.

⁷ Duke Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, 273.

⁸ For an excellent outline of the performance history of the *Sacred Concerts*, see Hill, 42–61, from which the essential details in this brief description are drawn.

⁹ Mary Lou Williams' sacred jazz and especially her choral writing may have had some influence on Ellington, for whom she did some arranging during this period. See Gayle Murchison, "Mary Lou Williams's hymn *Black Christ of the Andes* (St. Martin de Parres): Vatican II, Civil Rights, and Jazz as Sacred Music" in *The Musical Quarterly* 86(4), Winter 2002, 591–629; also, her recordings *Mary Lou's Mass*, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings (1974, reissued 2005), and *Mary Lou Williams presents Black Christ of the Andes*, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings 1963, reissued 2004.

¹⁰ Hear, O Israel—A Prayer Ceremony in Jazz, setting of the Sabbath service by Jonathan Klein, with Herbie Hancock, Thad Jones, Ron Carter, Jermose Richardson, Grady Tate, Antonia Lavanne, and Phyllis Bryn-Julson, on the Jonny label, JBH025CD 1968, reissued 2008.

¹¹ See <www.davebrubeck.com> for a complete works list.

¹² See Catherine Clarke King, "Conversation with William ('Billy') Taylor, the JazzMobile man" in *The Black Perspective in Music*. Vol. 10, no. 2, pp.179–88. Fall 1982 for a discussion of *A Joyful Noise*.

¹³ See Karl Stark, "Jazz goes to church in Pitts' 'A Joyful Noise,'" *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11/26/1996, p. D05.

¹⁴ Hannibal Lokumbe was previously known as Marvin Charles Peterson; see Barry Kernfeld, "Peterson, Hannibal." *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 2nd ed. Ed. Barry Kernfeld. Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. 23 Dec. 2008 <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/J352300>>. His *African Portraits* has been widely performed since its premiere in 1990 at Carnegie Hall and was recorded by the Chicago Symphony under Daniel Barenboim in 1996 (Teldec 98802). Recent cantatas include *A Shepherd Among Us* and *God, Mississippi, and A Man Called Evers*.

¹⁵ See <<http://www.rejoicensemble.org/>>.

¹⁶ Mark Sumner Harvey, "New World A' Comin': Religious Perspectives on the Legacy of Duke Ellington," in Jon Michael Spencer, ed., *Sacred Music of the Secular City—From Blues to Rap*, (Duke UP: 1992), 149.

¹⁷ A recent reissue of this recording was made by Status Records: *Duke Ellington Sacred Music—A Concert of Sacred Music from Grace Cathedral*, as well as a DVD of the concert issued by Eagle Rock Entertainment in 2005, *Love You Madly/A Concert of Sacred Music at Grace Cathedral*. There are relatively few recordings of the *Sacred Concerts* by groups after Ellington's death. Two currently available on private labels are *Sacred Music of Duke Ellington* (2006), Seattle Repertory Jazz Orchestra, Clarence Acox and Michael Brockman, Artistic Directors, Oregon Repertory Singers, and soloists Dee Daniels, James Caddell and Nichol Eskridge <www.srjo.org/Recordings.htm>, and *Everyman Prays in His Own Language* (2005), DeVonne Gardner, soprano, the Eric Mintel Quartet, Bucks County Choral Society, Thomas Lloyd, conducting <www.buckschoral.org>.

¹⁸ Hill, 426–30.

¹⁹ Duke Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, 266.

²⁰ Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" proclaimed in his state of the union speech in 1941 were freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, freedom from fear. According to Ellington's recitation during "Freedom No. 1," Strayhorn's "four major moral freedoms" were "freedom from hate unconditionally, freedom from self pity, freedom from fear of possibly doing something that might benefit someone else more than it would him, and freedom from the kind of pride that could make a man feel that he was better than his brothers."

²¹ Hill, 165.

²² Hill, 430–441.

²³ *Duke Ellington—Second Sacred Concert*.

²⁴ Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, 269.

²⁵ *Music is My Mistress*, 287.

²⁶ Now in her eighties, Babs is still alive and living in Sweden.

²⁷ *Music is My Mistress* 288–290.

²⁸ This story was related to me in a

Duke Ellington's Sacred Concerts

conversation with Karen Read Lautzenheiser, daughter of June and Bud Read, on August 7, 2008.

²⁹ These remarks are as related to me over the course of several performances of the *Sacred Concerts* I conducted with DeVonne Gardner as soloist between 2005–07.

³⁰ I heard this story from Karen Read Lautzenheiser in a conversation on August 7, 2008. She was told that her father, Bud Read, first mentioned the fable to Ellington at a time when

Ellington was contemplating the *Sacred Concerts* as a way to “find a graceful transition to elder statesmanship” at the end of his career.

³¹ See Wilbert Weldon Hill, *The Sacred Concerts of Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington*, 60ff; “Gary Giddins on the *Sacred Concerts* (1975)” in Mark Tucker, ed., *The Duke Ellington Reader* (New York: OUP 1993), 375–78.

³² *On the Road with Duke Ellington* [DVD]/ produced by Drew Associates; producer, Mike Jackson, distributed by

New Video, 2002 (originally released in 1974), narrated by Don Morrow; a portrait of Duke Ellington compiled primarily in 1967–68 as he moved from performance to performance, in concert halls, in nightclubs, in churches; includes interviews and intimate candid glimpses of his life on the road as he composed and brought his music to the people.

³³ *Music is My Mistress*, 171–72.

³⁴ *Music is My Mistress*, 261.

³⁵ Dan Morgenstern, ed. Sheldon Meyer —*Living with Jazz*, Pantheon New York: 2004, 135.

³⁶ This number is not included in the G. Schirmer *The Best of the Sacred Concerts*, and only a skeleton vocal score is in the Hansen House collection. But a complete set of band charts and a working score, as well as choral back-ups for the solo chorus, are available in the Ellington Collection at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, <<http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives/d5301.htm>>.

³⁷ Conversation with DeVonne Gardner, 2005

³⁸ Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans—A History* (New York: Norton, 1997), 281–284.

³⁹ Conversation with DeVonne Gardner, 2005.

⁴⁰ From the Ellington Collection at the Library of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. My thanks to band leader Dave Berger for his insight into the context of this sketch—though I should mention too, that he thinks I’m reading too much into the coincidence of finding these two labeled chords together on the same page of manuscript (I remain swayed by my initial impression).

⁴¹ Conversation with DeVonne Gardner, 2005.

⁴² See the listings of performances in the index of Wilbert Hill’s dissertation on the *Sacred Concerts* op. cit., 426–41.



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An Interview with Dave Brubeck

Regarding His Choral Music

William M. Skoog



Dave Brubeck, one of the most renowned jazz musicians of our time and designated a Living Legend by the United States Library of Congress, is a prolific composer of choral music in various forms. This author/conductor first became acquainted with Brubeck's choral works at the University of Denver (DU), performing *Gates of Justice* with the Dave Brubeck Quartet and the DU Orchestra. It was an inspiring experience and it seemed important to learn more about this man's choral music throughout this conductor's career, which, happily, has occurred.

Brubeck's music moves people and delivers a strong message of hope and inspiration to audiences everywhere. At Rudolphinum, in Prague, his Mass, *To Hope*, received three encores, after which the concert manager informed us that this was "... unheard of at the Rudolphinum...." Since that time, a number of his pieces have been performed at Bowling Green State University, where he was commissioned to write a piece for the University Men's Chorus.

The man and his music have enriched this author's life and the lives of many singers and audiences tremendously. Moreover, he and his music represent a significant cultural heritage and American musical legacy. His music deserves to be known and performed, which is the purpose to this article: to introduce Brubeck's choral music to choral directors, and to inspire and encourage conductors to perform it.

Skoog Why and when did you feel the urge to write choral music?

Brubeck The first piece for chorus I wrote was *Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled (ye believe in God)*. It was composed after the sudden death of my nephew, Philip, who was sixteen. I wrote it to comfort my brother Howard. When my friend, the late Ernest Farmer, then president of Shawnee Press, saw the manuscript, he said, "Dave, you have a natural ability to write choral music. Why don't you write an oratorio?" Thus, the idea of composing *The Light in the Wilderness* was born. It was first going to be called *The Temptations and Teachings of Christ*, and the libretto is built around those themes. It was published by Shawnee Press and premiered and recorded in 1968 by the Cincinnati Symphony, Erich Kunzel, conducting.

William Skoog holds a DA from the University of Northern Colorado, and serves as director of choral activities at Bowling Green State University, directing the Collegiate Chorale and the University Men's Chorus, and teaching courses in choral literature and conducting. He has conducted in numerous state, regional, national and international choral festivals, including the Lucerne International Choral Festival and Dvořák Festival in Europe, and has conducted the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Santa Maria and Moravian Symphony Orchestra, and the Toledo and Fort Wayne Symphony Orchestras.

Choral music was not completely unfamiliar to me. For seventeen years my mother directed the Presbyterian Church Choir in Concord, California, and, as a child, I often attended rehearsals. At College of the Pacific, I enjoyed the unaccompanied choir directed by a wonderful musician, J. Russell Bodley. I would often sneak in to their rehearsals to listen, because I liked the sound of the voices.

Skoog It seems that you like to begin with text as an inspiration for choral music. Is that accurate? Many of the texts you select are sacred or reference social values—is there a particular motivation?

Brubeck Once Iola, my wife, was aware of the direction I was headed in writing *The Light in the Wilderness*, she selected most of the texts for me from the King James Bible. It was the obvious and natural source for the narrative.

A year or so ago I read *Christmas Hymn* by the wonderful American poet Richard Wilbur, and set it to music. The most recent poem I have set is one by Wendell Berry. It is titled *The Peace of Wild Things*. My wife and I, working together, have also set the Chief Seattle speech that deals with the environment from the Native American point of view. Also, I have set many poems by Langston Hughes in a suite called *Hold Fast to Dreams*. So, the texts are not always sacred in the sense of being liturgical, but they do deal with philosophical and sacred themes.

Skoog You served in World War II as a private under General George Patton, and it has been said that experience had a profound impact on you and your music. Did this experience affect your musical life?

Brubeck My experience in Patton's Army in World War II is still with me every day, every waking moment, and sometimes in my sleep. This experience changed my view of life. The most threatening part of my Army experience occurred during the Battle of the Bulge when we were overrun by a massive German push. I was lost behind the ever-changing German line trying to find my way back to the American side. During this crucial period, and the events that followed, with our Army liberating prison and slave labor camps, I was profoundly disturbed by what I observed. I told myself that someday I wanted to study and write a composition about the Ten Commandments, because of the inhumanity that I had witnessed. All sides of the European conflict worshipped the same God, yet the basic laws that we had been taught to follow had been ignored. I tried to compose such a piece at that time, but decided what I was writing was not adequate for the subject. So, 60 years later I tried again and wrote a choral piece called *The Commandments* that was premiered by the Providence Singers, with Russell Gloyd conducting, in Rose Hall at Lincoln Center, September 2005, in a concert that included *The Gates of Justice* and was sponsored by the New York Jewish Music & Heritage Society.

An Interview with

Dave Brubeck

Skoog Are there other unique stories behind the composition of certain pieces? Are there specific texts that “spoke to you” in some fashion?

Brubeck Following the premier of my *Mass To Hope*, a priest who had encouraged me to write the Mass, complimented me for what I had done, but said that he regretted that I had left out the “Our Father.” I asked him, “Do you mean *The Lord’s Prayer*?” He said, “Yes. Why don’t you add it to the Mass?”

I answered “No,” because, in my mind I had completed the Mass, and now I planned a vacation with my wife and children in the Caribbean. One night after we were in the Caribbean I dreamt the entire “*Lord’s Prayer*.” It was complete with chorus and accompaniment. Now it is included in the published version of the Mass.

On another occasion, I was asked by the diocese of San Francisco to write a piece for Pope John Paul the Second, who would be conducting Mass in the huge San Francisco stadium, Candlestick Park. They wanted nine minutes of music to be played when the Pope entered and circled the stadium in the Popemobile. They gave me one sentence as text: *Upon this rock I shall build my church and*

the jaws of hell shall not prevail against it. I turned down the commission because I felt that I could not write nine minutes of music on one sentence of 18 words. That night I had a dream that solved the problem. In the dream, I realized that by approaching the text in a Bach-like manner, I could compose a chorale and fugue in which the words are repeated over and over in the fugal pattern.

Though I speak with the tongues quotation was written on a piece of paper that was tacked on the window sill above my wife’s desk. It stood us both in good stead over the rocky days of raising a house full of teenagers. It is one of my favorite passages in the Bible: *without love I am nothing.* I chose *Though I speak with the tongues* while in the process of composing *The Voice of the Holy Spirit*. It seemed to me to be an example of the Holy Spirit speaking a message of love and compassion through Paul.

Skoog You have a large amount of choral music in your repertoire: many short form choral works, unaccompanied compositions, and several large-form choral works written with orchestra. Do you have favorites from among these works; works you would especially like

us to consider, and if so, why?

Brubeck Three of my favorite larger works were recorded with the London Symphony and London Voices with Russell Gloyd conducting. These pieces are available on Telarc Records on an album titled *Classical Brubeck*. I chose those particular works because they are among my favorites and had never been recorded. I would like for choral conductors to take a closer look at my pieces set to poems of Langston Hughes. Individual pieces from the suite are published by Alfred Publishing and are frequently performed, but the entire suite has not been performed since its premier.

There are many short choral pieces, some sacred, some secular, now available for downloading on the Alfred Publications Web site. I enjoy the poems of Wendell Berry, and have set several to music that I think school and community choirs would find interesting.

Skoog Have publishers influenced or affected your work? Does the commercial sale of your choral works factor in to your writing in any way? Do you target certain groups or audiences in your writing, e.g., make it applicable to high school or church choirs?

Brubeck The commercial sale of my compositions does not enter into my musical decisions. However, when commissioned, I do think about the performers and their likely audience. Most of my choral and orchestral music has been composed on commissions, and I think I have written approximately 15 commissions for specific occasions. However, sometimes I simply like a text and set it.

When I was commissioned to write the Mass they specified that the music should be able to be performed by a church choir, school chorus, or a symphony orchestra and chorus. With such

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a commission, I do write with specific performing groups in mind. The *Four New England Pieces*, for example, was written specifically for the high school choir in our hometown, conducted by Elissa Getto. This does not mean they were restricted to high school repertoire, however. They have been sung by university and professional choirs, such as the Gregg Smith Singers.

Also, when I wrote the *Cannery Row Suite* for the Monterey Jazz Festival, I was very aware that it would be performed outdoors before a large jazz audience. The solos were written with specific singers in mind—Kurt Elling and Roberta Gambarini. However, it has since

been performed with operatic singers as soloists.

Sometimes I think in seasonal terms. For example, I have written five, fairly short Christmas pieces that Alfred is publishing this year, and I hope they will find their way into Christmas programs.

Canticles: In Praise of Mary, written on commission, was almost forgotten, then revived by a performance at Notre Dame. Now the Pacific Mozart Ensemble of Berkeley, California, is rehearsing it. They will perform it on their December program and record it in January.

Naturally, I hope that my music will be performed and I realize that some of my longer pieces require commitment and a

lot of rehearsal. But, I believe my music is accessible to any good choir willing to work. Consider *The Light in the Wilderness*. It was published by Shawnee Press with the encouragement of Ernie and Marjorie Farmer, and edited by a great choral conductor, Lara Hoggard. It is an example of a publisher and staff working successfully with a new and rather difficult, long (72 minute) choral piece with an unknown and untried choral composer. Many university choruses sang it. The number of performances was far more than I expected, and it was performed in the U.S., Australia and Europe. *The Gates of Justice*, also published by Shawnee Press, had good sales and



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An Interview with

Dave Brubeck

many performances by university and community choirs, and it's still going on today. This encourages me to think that if I have that kind of cooperation from a publisher, I can have fairly good sales without changing the way I write.

My *Four New England Pieces* have had decent sales and are available through Alfred Publishing. The *Mass To Hope!* had to go into a second printing, and is regularly performed in the U.S. and Europe. I learned of a recent performance in a church just outside of Paris.

Oddly enough, two of the so-called "difficult" pieces have been presented in conjunction with jazz festivals. The *Mass* was performed in New Orleans at an opening of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, and *The Gates of Justice* was part of the 50th anniversary of the Newport Jazz Festival. The reaction from a non-typical choral audience was wonderful. They were surprised by the music, and I was surprised by their enthusiastic reaction.

Off hand, I can't count the number of times I have performed with the

Cathedral Choir of the National Cathedral in Washington DC. This is one of the greatest church choirs in the country. But I wouldn't be surprised if a good high school or community chorus somewhere in the country has performed much of that same material. It all depends on devoted choral conductors and dedicated singers. An example of this that I can point to is a CD of my choral works that was produced by a great community chorus in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Philip Rice, music director. I am very proud of that album.

Church and school choirs all over the country perform my Mexican Christmas cantata *La Fiesta de la Posada* every year. For 12 years in a row, it was performed on the first Sunday in December at the 5th Ave. Presbyterian Church in New York.

The late Richard Westenburg, who conducted some of the Christmas programs at Fifth Ave Presbyterian in New York, also conducted his great professional choir, *Musica Sacra*, performing my music at Lincoln Center and Carnegie

Hall.

Skoog Many composers become frustrated that their more challenging works are not performed more often, or they feel that they need to lessen the difficulty level in order to be performed or heard. What message would you send to conductors/teachers of music in this regard?

Brubeck Beethoven didn't "water down" his *Ninth Symphony*. The soprano part in the chorus was considered impossible in his day. Sometimes you have to wait, and sometimes a work is completely forgotten. This is certainly true of some of the works by Charles Ives. I have had the experience of compositions lying on the shelf for 20 or 30 years after the premier, then suddenly rediscovered. *Canticles: In Praise of Mary* is a case in point. After the Notre Dame performance, there is new interest in the piece, and it is now being prepared for recording by the Pacific Mozart Ensemble.

Skoog Are you still accepting commissions? If so, how does one go about starting this process?

Brubeck The last two pieces I have written were done without commission simply because I liked the poems. Currently, I am working on a multi-media commission for orchestra with my son, Chris, as co-composer. Rather than a text for inspiration, this time it is Ansel Adams classic photographs of nature, which will be shown on a large screen over the orchestra. The music and the images together should enhance each other, and we hope we can create a beautiful experience both visually and musically. How such commissions come about remain a mystery. Somebody has an idea and approaches me, and if it strikes me as something I'd like to do, I do it.



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Table 1
A Comprehensive List of Choral Works by Dave Bruneck

Title	Publisher	Description	Voicing	Instrument
Psalms 23	Alfred		SATB	Piano
All My Hope	Alfred	from <i>To Hope! A Celebration</i>	SATB Div	Piano
Ash Wednesday	Alfred	from <i>Lenten Triptych</i>	SATB Div	Piano
Autumn In Our Town	Alfred	from <i>Four New England Pieces</i>	SATB Div	Piano
Beloved Son	Shawnee	Passion	SATB Div	Orchestra or Piano
Benediction	Alfred	from <i>Voice Of The Holy Spirit</i>	SATB	A Cappella
Bless These Ashes	Alfred	from <i>Lenten Triptych</i>	SATB	Piano
Boogie 1 AM	Alfred	Text by Langston Hughes	SATB Div	Piano
(A) Christmas Hymn	Alfred	Text by Richard Wilbur	SATB Div	A Cappella
Circles	Alfred	Text by Wendell Berry	SATB Div	Piano
(The) Commandments	Alfred		SATB Div	A Cappella
(The) Dream Keeper	Alfred	Text by Langston Hughes	SATB Div	Piano
Dream Of Freedom	Alfred	Text by Langston Hughes	SATB	Piano
Dreamer	Alfred	Text by Langston Hughes	SATB Div	Piano
Dusk	Alfred	Text by Langston Hughes	SATB Div	Piano
Earth Is Our Mother	Alfred		SATB Div Bar solo/Narr.	Piano/Opt Inst.
Easter	Alfred	from <i>Lenten Triptych</i>	SATB	Piano
Ev'ry Christmas I Hear Bells	Alfred	Text by Iola Brubeck	SATB Div	A Cappella
Festival Hall	Alfred		SATB Div	Piano
Forty Days	Shawnee	from <i>The Light In The Wilderness</i>	SATB Div	Piano
(The) Gates Of Justice	Shawnee	Oratorio	SATB Div	Chamber Orch or Piano
God's Love Made Visible	Shawnee	from <i>La Fiesta de la Posada</i>	SATB	Piano
Good Will To Women	Alfred	Text by Iola Brubeck	SATB	Piano
He Is Risen	Shawnee	from <i>Beloved Son</i>	SATB	Piano
Hear The Bells Ring	Alfred		SATB Div	Piano
Hold Fast To Dreams	Alfred	Text by Langston Hughes	SATB	Piano
How Does Your Garden Grow?	Alfred	Text by Langston Hughes	SATB Div	A Cappella
I Dream A World	Alfred	from <i>Four New England Pieces</i>	SATB	A Cappella
I Dream A World: Chorale	Alfred	Text by Langston Hughes	SATB	A Cappella
I Have A Little Shadow	Alfred	Text by Robert Louis Stevenson	SATB	A Cappella
In The Name Of The Father	Alfred	Fugue from <i>Voice Of The Holy Spirit</i>	SATB	A Cappella
In Time Of Silver Rain	Alfred	Fugue/Text by Langston Hughes	SATB	Piano
La Fiesta de la Posada	Shawnee	Christmas cantata	SATB Div	Orch or Piano/Mariachi
Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled	Shawnee	from <i>The Light In The Wilderness</i>	SATB Div	Piano
(The) Light In The Wilderness	Shawnee	Oratorio	SATB Div	Orchestra
Once When I Was Very Young	Alfred	from <i>Four New England Pieces</i>	SATB	A Cappella
Pange Lingua Variations	Alfred	Cantata	SATB Div	Piano or Brass/Perc
Psalms 120	Alfred	from <i>Joy In The Morning</i>	SATB Div	A Cappella

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Dave Brubeck

Table 1 cont.

Title	Publisher	Description	Voicing	Instrument
Psalm 30	Alfred	from <i>Joy In The Morning</i>	SATB Div	Pno or Str Bass + Timp
Psalm 121	Alfred	from <i>Joy In The Morning</i>	SATB Div	Piano
Run, Run, Run To Bethlehem	Shawnee	from <i>La Fiesta de la Posada</i>	SATB Div	Piano
Sermon On The Mount	Shawnee	from <i>Light In The Wilderness</i>	SATB Div	Piano
Sleep, Holy Infant, Sleep	Shawnee	from <i>La Fiesta de la Posada</i>	SATB Div	Piano
They All Sang Yankee Doodle	Assoc. Music		SATB Div	Piano
This Is The Day	Alfred	easy version	SATB	A Cappella
Though I Speak With The Tongues	Alfred	from <i>Voice Of The Holy Spirit</i>	SATB Div	A Cappella
To Hope! A Celebration	Alfred	Mass	SATB Div	Orchestra or Piano
To Us Is Given	Alfred	from <i>Pange Lingua Variations</i>	SATB Div	Piano
To You	Alfred	Text by Langston Hughes	SATB	Piano
Truth	Alfred	Text by Robert Penn Warren	SATB Div	A Cappella
Truth Is Fallen	Shawnee	Cantata	SATB Div	Orch/Opt Rock Band
Two Chorales	Shawnee	from <i>Beloved Son</i>	SATB	A Cappella
Two Churches	Alfred	from <i>Four New England Pieces</i>	SATB Div	Piano
Voice Of The Holy Spirit	Shawnee	Oratorio	SATB Div	Orchestra
We Three Kings	Alfred		SATB Div	A Cappella
Why We Sing At Christmas	Alfred		2 pt. Men/Women Div	Pno/Opt Sleigh Bells

Pending Choral Publications

Are You Now Or Have You Ever Been A Democrat Or A Republican?			SATB	A Cappella
Quiet As The Moon		Text by Iona Brubeck	SATB	Piano
The Wheel		Text by Wendell Berry	SATB	Piano

Skoog A few years ago I presented a conference session titled, "The Choral Works of Dave Brubeck—Difficult but Doable." Some colleagues accused me of violating "truth in advertising," because, they said, the first part was accurate, but the latter was not. Those works were not considered performable by church and school choirs, even mainstream college choirs. Is that an accurate assessment? Are they, gener-

ally speaking, rather difficult to perform?

Brubeck There are high school and college choirs that have sung my works, even the longer and more difficult pieces such as *The Gates of Justice*. The choir at the University of the Pacific, under the direction of Edward Cetto, has performed many of my pieces. *Pange Lingua Variations* is one of the larger works that I think any good university

choir could perform. *Earth is Our Mother* was commissioned by and performed by the University of Northern Michigan under the direction of Floyd Slotterback. My choral works are singable if there is enough time to rehearse.

Upon hearing some of my work, I've been pleasantly surprised that what I had once imagined and heard only in my head was now actually being sung. At other times I have felt that the choir was

Table 1 cont.

Unpublished Choral Music

Title	Description	Voicing	Instrument
As The Moon Is To The Sun		SATB	A Cappella
Bridges Of Song		SATB	Piano
Canticles Of Mary		SATB Div	Orchestra
Credo / Crucifixus	Oratorio	SATB Div	A Cappella
I See Satie		SATB	Piano
In The Name Of The Father		SATB	Orchestra
It Hath Been Told Thee	Chorale from <i>Voice of the Holy Spirit</i>	SATB Div	Piano
Lonesome and Summer Song		SATB Div	Piano/Orch
Love Flows	from <i>The Real Ambassadors</i>	SATB or TTBB Div	Piano/Orch
Power Chorale and Fugue	From <i>God to Man</i>	SATB Div	A Cappella
Praise God For Sending The Light		SATB	Piano
(The) Real Ambassador		SATB	Orchestra
Regret		SATB/Divisi	A Cappella
This Is The Day		SATB Div	A Cappella
This Is The Day	National Cathedral Version	SATB	Piano
Upon This Rock	6/8 Version	SATB Div	Chamb. Orchestra
When The Lord Is Pleased	Chorale and Fugue	SATB Div	Piano
(The) Wind		SATB Div	A Cappella
Yes, We All Have Our Cross To Bear	Text by Robert Louis Stevenson	SATB Div	A Cappella

capable of doing better if they only had had more rehearsal time. Preparation is so important. A memorable experience for me was walking into a rehearsal in Moscow and hearing the Orloff choir singing my Mass in English with such heartfelt conviction. I knew that there would be a great performance. They were prepared!

Shortly after the premier of *The Light in the Wilderness*, I toured Europe with the University of Miami chorus from Oxford, Ohio, and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. The chorus sang *The Light* and the Beethoven *Ninth Symphony*. Some of the German critics were amazed at how well they per-

formed the Beethoven, and asked how could an American chorus singing in German enunciate and sing better than a German chorus singing in their own language? The answer was devotion and rehearsal time.

Sometimes the choir will have memorized the words and the music and do not use the choral books. This is rare. As a composer, when I look up to the stage and don't see choral books in their faces, I begin to relax. I know that the singers will be watching the conductor. Consequently there will be a more perfect, nuanced performance. The *Four New England Pieces* were originally written for high school choirs.

The Langston Hughes material, except for the solos, was written specifically for a youth choir in Princeton, New Jersey. Also, *The Circle* and *The Wheel*, settings of poems by Wendell Berry, have been sung by Nancy Wade's choir at Soddy-Daisy High School in Chattanooga. There are settings of *The Wind* and *I Have a Little Shadow* by Robert Louis Stevenson written specifically for youth choirs. Excerpts from the Mass can be done by most church or school choirs as well as sections from *La Fiesta de la Posada* or the chorales from *Beloved Son*. *Benediction* is sung every Sunday at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago and was sung by the Wilton High

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School chorus. I have set several psalms published by Alfred that would be suitable for church service, and any of the Christmas pieces would be appropriate for school or church.

Skoog Since you are a renowned jazz pianist and studied composition with Darius Milhaud, would you describe these influences on you and your choral compositions? How is jazz an influence on your writing, and how much or how strongly did Milhaud affect your work in composition?

Brubeck When I was studying with Darius Milhaud, he assigned his students Bach chorales to re-harmonize and study. In our fugue assignments, we were told to write much in the style of Bach, using Bach's fundamental rules of fugue. One wonderful day Milhaud played for me one of the wildest pieces I had ever heard for a chorus. It was part of the *Medea Trilogy*, I think. Perhaps it was called *Orestes*. It's a rare recording, and I have not been able to locate it. Of course, we students were very aware of his opera *King David* that he had recently completed when I arrived at Mills. Even earlier than my study with Milhaud, I was struck by Stravinsky's *Symphony of the*

Psalms. Hearing these recordings made me want to get involved someday in writing for voices.

When I completed *The Light in the Wilderness*, Milhaud had already gone back to Paris and was teaching at the Paris Conservatory. I sent him a copy of the score. He wrote back "Very good. But why did you write the tenor part in the bass clef? "On my next pieces I changed to writing it in treble clef (most of the time), but the score of *The Light* remains as I had first written it.

Milhaud told me to never abandon my jazz background because that is what he considered the element that made a composer a more authentic American voice. Think about the most performed American composers and you have to come up with George Gershwin, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, and some colleagues of mine that have done wonderful works for chorus: Duke Ellington, Mary Lou Williams, Billy Taylor, George Shearing. Even going back to Charles Ives, one can hear the usage of jazz by an American composer. It's part of our language—it's American.

Skoog Do you have a particular approach to elements of composition that you would describe e.g., melody,

harmony, counterpoint, structure, instrumentation, music-text relationship, etc.? Or do you write essentially by artistic inspiration and leave the analysis to the theorists?

Brubeck My approach to composition is to "go with the flow." I'm essentially an improviser; so were Bach, Mozart and Beethoven. Basically, I work from the text, its mood and emotional content, and the rhythm of the words. If I can find a blank tape and a machine that works, I love to just improvise with the text in mind and see if something comes out that is worth saving. I seem to recall reading an anecdote (not corroborated) that Mozart was not so impressed with Beethoven's compositions when he first came on the scene. Mozart was rumored to have left the room unimpressed when Beethoven was playing some of his piano pieces. Later, Beethoven began improvising, and it was then that Mozart remarked, "This young man will make a great noise in the world." It was reported that young Beethoven's improvisation rather than his compositions that made an impression on Mozart. Even though this may be more fiction than fact, certainly composers of the period were expected to improvise, and anyone who could not would have been thought of in lesser regard.

My basic approach to melody is to sing the text until something seems right. Harmony grows usually from trying to sustain the emotion of the text. Structure usually grows organically as you continue composing, except when you are writing a chorale or fugue. Instrumentation—on some occasions I have used a string quartet, others a complete symphony orchestra, brass, and percussion (*Upon This Rock* needed strong instrumental support due to the performance situation in Candlestick Park, which is a huge stadium), a small chamber group to get a Native

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American sound for *Earth Is Our Mother*, sometimes piano/organ accompaniment, but my favorite is a cappella when all the inner voices can be heard clearly. Rhythm and meter are dictated by the text, its imagery and emotional content.

The text suggests the music most often, but occasionally the music suggests the text. *Lord, Lord, from "The Gates of Justice"* is an example of the latter. The music existed from an improvised minor blues, which suggested the text to Iola.

Skoog Is there an ultimate mission or purpose to your choral music? What do you hope the musicians will come away with, or the audience as they leave the concert?

Brubeck I have had people from various choruses tell me, "I've heard these words all my life, but this is the first time I've really responded to the depth of the message." I had a Jewish college student tell me after singing *The Gates of Justice*, "Now, I have a better understanding of my own religious tradition." So maybe the mission is to teach and explore our religious heritage.

I have been told by a number of people who have gone through a medical crisis that my Mass had "healing" power. In performance, there are times when audience, singers, musicians, conductor, soloists, improvisers, all become "one." There have been times I have felt that we were levitating right through the roof of the church or concert hall. This is a very rare, transcendent experience, and I can remember clearly the places it has happened: Bolshoi Hall in Moscow, Bryn Mawr Church in Pennsylvania, at St. Stephens in Vienna, and in the old Berlin Konzerthaus. This kind of joy is rare. The audience being unified in thought and spirit is the greatest gift I can receive or give.

Skoog You have heard your music performed by choirs and orchestras across

the world. Is there anything you would like to share with us about how they should be performed, or, overall, what elements are needed to "get" the choral music of Dave Brubeck?

Brubeck I have been so fortunate to have some of the greatest choral conductors with great choirs perform my music. The Gregg Smith Singers, Richard Westenburg's *Musica Sacra*, the Roger Wagner Chorale, the Orloff Choir, the National Cathedral Choir, Baltimore Choral Arts, Pacific Mozart Ensemble, and many more university and community choirs with dedicated choral conductors such as yourself. My message to conductors who do not know my work is, "Be curious. Know that others have performed these works successfully. Be willing to accept a challenge and stretch the boundaries."

Sometimes directors will take rhythmic liberties. If I had the opportunity to make a suggestion to them I would say "Treat this section like you would treat

a passage of Bach, where the rhythm is constant." Realize that if Bach were alive today he most probably would be a fantastic jazz musician, because jazz musicians are so similar to Bach in their approach to music, from using the figured bass on. One must understand that coming from a jazz tradition, I compose with that concept. The rhythm does not speed up and slow down but usually remains a constant pulse, against which there may be juxtaposed other rhythms.

Skoog Do you have thoughts on the direction of choral music in our culture—concerns, accolades, a message or charge to administrators and conductors about choral music in our time?

Brubeck To choral conductors and organists, my message would be, "I wish you knew how grateful I am that you are performing my music." I am humbled by the performances of organists that are so advanced in improvisation. I am overwhelmed when I hear a great organist

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improvise a chorale and fugue. I'm so impressed by conductors with total recall of a score that I have submitted to them, their memory of what is written better than mine. Russell Gloyd, for example, knows my scores far better than I do, and so did Richard Westenburg, Erich Kunzel, Tom Hall, and many more. I am amazed at that ability and knowledge. With dedicated choral conductors in our colleges and universities who are willing to explore beyond the traditional choral repertoire, I think the future of choral music in America is a bright one. Their work is the foundation for building a choral tradition that will rival that of England and the rest of Europe.

Brubeck O.K. Let's turn the tables

—enough from me. You are a choral director who has conducted many of my works. What recommendations would you make to fellow conductors? Where should they start? And do you think the work that is necessary for a good performance rewarding enough to be worth the effort?

Skoog Russell Gloyd (Dave's conductor) has said, "...anyone taking on Dave's choral music is in for a world of hurt... and a world of reward" (paraphrased). This is succinctly and accurately stated. As a conductor who has performed several Brubeck pieces, I would underscore that a director wishing to do the more difficult works needs to allow enough rehearsal time to do them justice. That may not sound like a glowing endorsement from someone advocating the performance of his music; but as Russell said, the reward is well worth it.

Two Churches is an intriguing small work simultaneously invoking sounds of Baptist and Presbyterian Church hymns, depicting the experience one might have walking between them on a Sunday morning. This work contains fragments of various hymn-tunes, including: *Deep River*, *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen*, and *We Shall Overcome* woven into the overall fabric of the piece. *We Three Kings* is a marvelous choral-jazz setting of that popular hymn for Epiphany that contains a walking bass line and some surprising bi-tonality for real color. One could also extrapolate a movement from a major work such as *Our Father* from the Mass, *All My Hope* also from the Mass (a Gospel tune published separately) *Sleep Holy Infant* and *God's Love Made Visible* from *La Fiesta de la Posada* (published independently), *Benediction* from *Voice of the Holy Spirit*, or *Abba, Father* and *Weep Ye Waters* from *Beloved Son*, for examples.

For someone wishing to tackle a major work of Dave's, *La Fiesta de la Posada* would be ideal for a Christmas

piece. It is accessible, rhythmic, and is written to be staged—something of real appeal for a Christmas program. *To Hope* can be done as a concert mass, and includes a variety of soloists including cantors, orchestra (brass, percussion and strings), and hand bells, and contains a few more typical Brubeckian, jazz-like or Gospel movements. *Pange Lingua Variations* is an accessible major work for most choirs, and gives the director an opportunity to teach chant while engaging the singers in Dave's creative approach to it using modern harmonic language, contrapuntal techniques and development. If you are ready to roll up your sleeves and take on one of his major works with orchestra, look to *Light in the Wilderness* or *Beloved Son*; in this conductor's opinion, two marvelous major works of our time.

"Take Five" minutes (or more), and get to know his choral music; you will soon discover this rich, deep reservoir of repertoire that will enhance your programming and vitalize your rehearsals and concerts in ways you could not imagine. Yes, you are in for some hurt, but what great rewards await you, your musicians and audiences.

Most of Dave's choral music is available through Alfred Publications and Shawnee Press. His first pieces, *The Light in the Wilderness*, *The Gates of Justice* and *La Fiesta de la Posada* are published by Shawnee Press. Other unpublished works are also available. Inside this article is a complete list of choral works available by Dave Brubeck, and how to obtain them.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Dave and Iola Brubeck, Nancy Wade (Dave's librarian) and Andrew Schultz for their contributions to this article.

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A Conversation with Amy Kaiser

By Alice Cavanaugh

Editor's note: The following interview combines phone and e-mail conversations that took place between February and November of 2008.

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to sing Handel's *Jephtha* under the baton of Amy Kaiser, one of our nation's leading professional choral conductors. The experience left me wanting to know more about her and the path that led to her remarkable career.

Amy Kaiser became the director of the Saint Louis Symphony Chorus in 1995. Her breadth of experience includes not only conducting choruses, but also orchestras and operas as well. Prior to her move to St. Louis, her career flourished in New York City, where she held multiple posts, including music Director of The Desoff Choirs and conductor of the New York Chamber Symphony's School Concert Series. She conducted for the 92nd Street Y's Schubertiade, and led full productions for the Metropolitan Opera Guild. Kaiser was frequently a



guest conductor for the Berkshire Choral Festival. She has guest conducted many orchestras in New York and across the country, and opera productions with Italy's Opera Barga, the Opera Ensemble of New York, and the Berkshire Opera. She was also a faculty member at the Manhattan School of Music and at Mannes College of Music. In 2004, she received the Smith College Medal from her alma mater in acknowledgement of her professional accomplishments.

Kaiser's exceptional career stands as an inspiration for young female conductors. Her performances have received hundreds of positive reviews in the press. In 1999, the *New York Times* listed her among a small handful of leading professional choral conductors in the United States, almost all of who were men.¹ I asked Kaiser about

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A Conversation with Amy Kaiser

the path that led her to this distinction.

Cavanaugh What is the nature of your educational background?

Kaiser As a child, I took piano lessons with a wonderful teacher, who lent me volumes of Schubert songs and opera scores when he knew I was interested. We would sight-read four hand arrangements of symphonies and I became an excellent reader at the piano. I went to Erasmus Hall High School, a huge public school in Brooklyn, and sang in the very good choir there. I also benefited from growing up in New York City, and every Saturday afternoon, I bought a standing room ticket at the Metropolitan Opera and heard many of the greatest singers.

As a music major at Smith College, I studied French, German, and Italian, as well as history, art, and literature. I sang in the Smith Glee Club and Chamber Singers and had three years of outstanding private voice lessons at Smith, followed by seven more years of vocal study in New York City. While a college student, I spent the summers singing in the chorus at Tanglewood and studying conducting at Harvard Summer School. After a year at the University of Oxford on a Fulbright grant, I was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow at Columbia University, where I received an MA in musicology. The 1968 student uprising and its accompanying questions prompted me to abandon Columbia's doctoral program.

Cavanaugh Did a specific teacher inspire you?

Kaiser I have had many wonderful teachers and learned an enormous



Photo by Gerry Love.

amount from John Nelson and Fiora Contino at the Aspen Choral Institute and George Schick of the Metropolitan Opera in New York. My true conducting mentor, however, was Iva Dee Hiatt, professor of music and director of choral activities at Smith College. She was an inspiration from the very beginning, and my work with her (at Smith, Harvard, and Tanglewood) and her belief in me made everything else possible. Among her many gifts, she was a master of rehearsal technique, and to this day I use many ideas that I learned from her.

Cavanaugh How has your background in musicology influenced you as a conductor?

Kaiser My musicology background has been invaluable for finding repertoire that is not available in commercially published editions. I've always loved spending time in a good university music library searching through scholarly editions. Some of my favorite choral programs have included great but little-known works from the collected editions of composers such as Berlioz, Josquin, di Lasso, Reger, Schütz, Senfl, and

Wert. Since I had a good knowledge of Renaissance music, I've done some interesting chamber chorus programs, such as *Music from the Court of Mantua*, with works by Rossi, Gastoldi, Wert, and Monteverdi. I've also enjoyed creating chamber choral programs including soloists and instrumentalists in unpublished songs of Dufay or Janequin for example. Once I was searching for a piece with orchestra to go on a program with works by Beethoven and Haydn, and I found Cherubini's

Chant sur la Mort de Joseph Haydn in the New York City Public Library's Research Division. The Desoff Choirs gave the American premiere of this lovely work at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center.

Cavanaugh What was your first conducting position?

Kaiser As a junior in college, I got my first job conducting the glee club of the Mary A. Burnham School, a private school for girls in Northampton, M.A. I had been the accompanist for the glee club the year before, and Iva Dee Hiatt was the conductor. When she went on sabbatical my junior year, I was given the job as a one-year replacement. We traveled to Connecticut to sing with several boys' glee clubs, and the conductors were always surprised to find a nineteen-year-old "colleague" sharing the concert!

Cavanaugh When did you decide to pursue conducting as a career? Was it always your intention to work with professional ensembles?

Kaiser When I graduated from Smith

College in 1965, I was already, at age twenty, an experienced choral conductor due to the training and the podium time I'd been given in college. However, I really wanted to be a singer, specializing in Baroque repertoire, and I studied voice privately on the side while completing my masters degree at Columbia. I made real progress, as a singer, but the "money notes" were never easy. After two years "dropping out" to teach music and physical education to five- and six-year-old children at the United Nations International School, I got a call from Smith College inviting me to audition for their junior faculty position conducting the choirs. I was thrilled to rediscover conducting, and will always be grateful to

Smith for hiring me. I worked with two eighty voice freshman choirs and one sophomore choir, which sang repertoire for women's voices, but also joined with men's groups for special musical (and social) weekends. I spent the following summer at the Aspen Choral Institute and worked on conducting technique with John Nelson. This wonderfully enriching experience, which continued for several summers at Aspen, also inspired me to work more with instrumentalists. I always expected to stay in academia—there were hardly any women with conducting careers in the professional world at that time—and after three years as a temporary instructor at Smith, I moved on to become director of choral music

at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

In my third season at Stony Brook, I did not receive tenure, and this was both the best and the worst thing that had ever happened to me. I decided that the big, bad professional world couldn't possibly be worse than academic politics, so I moved back to New York and managed to find a rent-stabilized apartment (possible in those days) and two part-time positions, at Mannes College of Music and the 92nd Street Y, that set me on the path of a "freelance conductor." At Mannes, I conducted the college chorus and taught conducting. At the 92nd Street Y, I had an adult volunteer chamber chorus and a community orchestra,

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A Conversation with Amy Kaiser

and I was music director of Jewish Opera at the Y.

Since I had worked with many excellent student instrumentalists at Stony Brook and conducted several operas with a Long Island opera company, I was able to arrive in New York City with the confidence of good experience. For the next eighteen years, I added many conducting jobs of all kinds, including The Desoff Choirs, Metropolitan Opera Guild, Manhattan School of Music, educational concerts with the New York Chamber Symphony, P.D.Q. Bach's O.K. Chorale, and preparing amateurs and professionals for every major New York orchestra, and thoroughly enjoyed the excitement of New York City's professional musical world. When, at age fifty, I decided it was time to find a single job with benefits, I was fortunate to be able to move to St. Louis as director of the Saint Louis Symphony Chorus and continue working with outstanding singers in a world-class



Amy Kaiser backstage at Powell Symphony Hall with St. Louis Symphony Music Director David Robertson.

organization.

Cavanaugh Which experiences in your early career helped you to grow the most as a conductor?

Kaiser As a college senior, I was the assistant conductor of the Smith College Glee Club and got to rehearse the group every Tuesday morning at 8 A.M. I prepared and conducted Stravinsky's

Four Russian Peasant Songs and grew tremendously from the musical challenge and the leadership responsibility at a time when I was not quite awake myself!

The Aspen Choral Institute used to have a summer session for conductors. John Nelson was the wonderful teacher, and I learned many conducting techniques that turned out to be the foundation for a lifetime of work. The opportunity to rehearse with small groups of excellent instrumentalists and receive critiques was

also invaluable.

As conductor of the Smith College Choir (sophomores), I planned an ambitious joint program with John Oliver and the M.I.T. Glee Club that included Stravinsky's *Les Noces* in English. To help make this a success, I hired the best pianists, percussionists, and soloists available; got an art student to create a huge, colorful mural for the stage backdrop; and convinced the choir to return early from their vacation for "Stravinsky Winter Camp," an intensive week of rehearsals on campus. We made little buttons advertising the concert, which we wore for a month. Not only was the musical work rewarded in a performance where time seemed to stop, but also I learned that when faced with a potentially rewarding and frightening challenge, singers will extend and commit themselves way beyond your expectations. The excitement they created overflowed into the large and enthusiastic audience.

At SUNY Stony Brook, I got the opportunity to conduct Puccini's *La Bohème* with a local opera company. This was a real challenge and even though I knew the opera thoroughly, I took a number of private lessons with Metropolitan Opera Maestro George Schick to learn how to conduct Puccini in every



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detail. The technique and confidence I gained from his expert guidance were invaluable.

Cavanaugh Do you have a different approach in the way you work with orchestras than with choirs?

Kaiser I think conducting technique that is clear and expressive for an orchestra will be equally effective for a chorus. But orchestras read many more notes much more quickly, and will incorporate markings in the parts very quickly, even in a reading. They like to communicate through gestures, making music with very little talking from the conductor (although everyone loves laughter in a rehearsal). Some all-professional choruses can also work very quickly in this way. Since I was trained as a singer, sang in choirs for years, and have studied languages, of course I feel more comfortable working with choirs.

I've also worked with a lot of orchestras over the years. For seven years I conducted my own community orchestra (the 92nd Street Y Symphonic Workshop), as well as thirty years of choral/orchestral works and operas with professional players and, most recently, work with a fabulous orchestra, the Saint Louis Symphony. I've learned a tremendous amount about how to be super clear, how to rehearse, how to mark parts, and about instruments, bowings, string techniques, and unions. Even with this experience, I will always be most comfortable and effective conducting music for voices and orchestra (chorus, opera) because that's where I feel I have the most to offer.

Cavanaugh Does your conducting approach differ when working with professionals versus amateurs?

Kaiser In working with all-professional choirs, all-volunteer, and choirs with both paid and volunteer singers, I've al-

ways tried to do the same thing, work in the same way, and make the same kind of music. Every group needs to work on something. The main differences are how long it takes to learn the music and language, how much do people retain from one rehearsal to the next, and what are people able to do easily with their voices.

Cavanaugh Is there an experience of which you are most proud?

Kaiser Although I'm always happy with a good performance, I'm especially proud of good performances in which I "went out on a limb," and persuaded a lot of people to come with me: Handel's *Saul*, Sergei Taneyev's complete *Twelve Choruses* op.27, a program of Chinese and Japanese choral music, Dallapiccola's *Canti di Prigionia* with The Dessooff Choirs, and Ligeti's *Clocks and Clouds* this past season in St. Louis. I'm also proud of daring to leave academia in 1978 and join the professional freelance world, and then of leaving New York City in 1995 for a new kind of job in St. Louis—in short, growth and survival!

Cavanaugh Have you faced challenges as a female professional conductor and have you seen changes in the role women play in the field?

Kaiser Since I went to Smith, an all women's college, and was fortunate to have Iva Dee Hiatt for a mentor, I was tremendously empowered as a young choral conductor. But the first woman I saw conduct a professional concert in a major hall was Eve Queler, and that was when I was already thirty years old! I was surprised at how moved I was to see her on the stage of Carnegie Hall. To be sure, there were some people who did not want to hire me because I was a woman, but others did, and I think the opportunities outweighed the obstacles. Now, much has changed and there

are many young American women working in all areas of conducting. Even though there are still many festivals and orchestras that have not hired even one woman conductor, the New York Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony each has a young woman assistant conductor. Of course, one is Chinese and one Korean, so American women are still at a disadvantage, but finally there are young women coming up through the ranks on the same terms as their male counterparts, and I find that very wonderful.

Cavanaugh You have succeeded many male conductors during your career. How have you approached this transition?

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A Conversation with Amy Kaiser

Kaiser I've approached it with more trepidation over the years, as I know how difficult it is and how long it takes! Succeeding any strong choral conductor, male or female, can be a challenge, but in my experience "Succeeding the Beloved Deceased Founder" is the toughest kind of transition, because that one person defined an entire group's musical experience for years and because of the sadness. I've decided that in any case, transitions take a full seven years, except in academia, where the entire student body is replaced in four. Over those seven years, some singers will leave; some will talk a lot about how things are not the same; some will be open to new ways and be very supportive; and every year, new singers will join and a new

community with new memories will be created. You can only be who you are, respect the chorus's history and work according to your own convictions; all the rest is patience.

Cavanaugh What advice would you give to young conductors today?

Kaiser It is wonderful to see talented young conductors be so passionate about choral music! I would urge young conductors to study singing and be the best singer they can be and to study languages (especially German) and not just diction. It is so important over a lifetime to know the grammar and be able to translate accurately. Seek out opportunities to work with good instrumentalists

and orchestras. Mainly, work in an area of choral conducting that makes you happy and where you feel you have the most to offer. Observe many different conductors and steal lots of ideas, but then find your own personal style.

NOTES

- 1 James Oestreich, "Will the Voices Grow Ever Quieter?; Conductors Ponder the State of Choral Music After Robert Shaw's Death," *New York Times*, April 13, 1999.



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on the Voice

Sharon Hansen, editor <sahansen@uwm.edu>

The Boy's Changing Expanding Voice: Take The High Road

by

Henry H. Leck

Author's Note: I came to the results of this article somewhat by accident. I knew that the vocal classifications so commonly referred to did not fit for my students. Like many others, I didn't know what to do with the boys in my first middle school age treble chorus of eighty-six singers because there were not enough changed voices to do balanced SATB repertoire. Since the vocal classifications that I had studied were of little or no help, I told the boys to just keep singing in their high voices. I knew their voices might tire more quickly, they wouldn't be able to sing some notes, and their voices might crack. The girls needed to know what was going on so they wouldn't be laughed at. But I wasn't experienced enough to know what else to do with them. I continued to vocalize them down across their break from their old voice to the new. Then, lo and behold, a miracle happened. I discovered that if a

boy sings from his high voice to his low range consistently and continues to sing in the old voice while developing the new, the break eventually disappears. What emerges is a voice that we do not recognize in our culture or choral writing—a three-octave voice without a break.

It was at that point in time that I realized I was doing a great service to these boys because now they had a bass or tenor voice, which was a new voice, and also had their treble voice. If you keep coming down across the break enough, it disappears. The students that leave my choir (especially the basses) can sing soprano, alto, tenor, or bass. It drew me to the conclusion that, in reality, a bass range is not the range of a man's voice at all. It is only the lower register. Nearly every male who is allowed to keep singing in his high voice is able to keep that voice. So it is not a boy's "changing" voice, it is a boy's "expanding" voice. It is not an unchanged treble voice becoming a tenor or a bass. It is an unchanged treble voice adding a lower register.

—Henry Leck

Broad Overview Of Attempts At Classification

A number of people have attempted to understand the boy's changing voice through a system of vocal classifications: Duncan McKenzie, Irving Cooper, Frederick Swanson, and John Cooksey as well as others.

In his 1956 book *Training the Boy's Changing Voice*, Duncan McKenzie¹ describes the progression of vocal change through what he calls the alto-tenor plan. This concept basically suggests that a soprano I becomes a soprano II, then an alto, then an alto-tenor, then tenor. The alto-tenor voice he describes is one that has a soprano quality but is lowered into the tenor range. McKenzie also suggests that the leading indicator of vocal change is a change in the speaking voice. Although it is true that an early sign of voice change is the loss of some upper notes, most educators would disagree with the upper pitches of the alto-tenor, or the tenor (Figure 1).

In a second set of ranges, McKenzie tries to classify bass voices according to grade (Figure 2). As we know today, boys' voices do not mature at the same

Henry H. Leck is director of choral activities at Butler University, and the founder and artistic director of the Indianapolis Children's Choir. <hleck@butler.edu>



Figure 1. McKenzie's Range Chart for the Developing Male Voice.

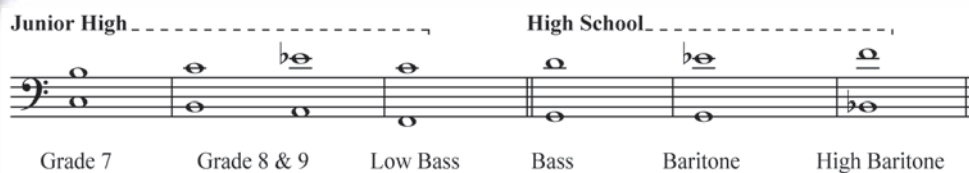


Figure 2. McKenzie's Range Chart for Boy Bases.

age. To classify according to grade is far too simplistic.

A second source of voice classifica-

tion appears in the 1973 *Teaching Junior High Music* by Irving Cooper.² Cooper was the first to coin the term *cambiata*. It is actually a counterpoint term meaning "changing note."

Cooper recognizes quite validly that boys' and girls' unchanged voices are nearly identical in range. He describes

son wrote two books titled *Music Teaching in the Junior High and Middle School* (1973) and *The Male Singing Voice—Ages Eight to Eighteen* (1977).³ In these books, Swanson recognizes that vocal change relates to puberty. He also gives great attention to register breaks and recognizes the importance of vocalizing downward.

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Photo by Howard Meharg



Figure 3. Cooper Range Chart for Junior High Voices.

the first change, then the second change, and then finally a fully changed bass voice (Figure 3). Again, today's singers would disagree with the upper registers. Surely basses sing above a middle C. It is interesting to note that when Cooper places these voice types together, (Soprano, Cambiata, and Baritone) he finds that there is a common range of only a fifth from D to A (in octaves) as shown in Figure 4. His conclusion is that junior high singers should not sing in unison.

Frederick Swan-

In addition, he recognizes the continued use of falsetto. In looking at his voice classifications, however, there is no evidence of falsetto in his ranges. And more importantly, the ranges again seem to have very low upper limits (Figure 5).

Today, many people regard John Cooksey as a leading authority on the boy's changing voice. In his publication, *Eclectic Contemporary Theory of Male Adolescent Voice Change*, John Cooksey⁴ brings the concept of vocal classification to new levels of sophistication as shown in Figure 6.

Although each of these writers has helped us to better understand the voice, it seems consistent in their analysis that once the new voice appears, the high voice is ignored. In fact, in most instances the high voice or "falsetto" does not disappear but, conversely, can give crucial assistance to the new voice. Oddly enough, the high voice becomes the foundation for the low voice. As Swanson indicated, vocalization downward across the break is extremely helpful. When done properly and consistently, the male voice can develop a very wide range without a break.



Figure 4. Cooper Tessituras for Junior High Voices.

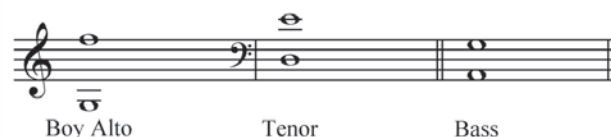
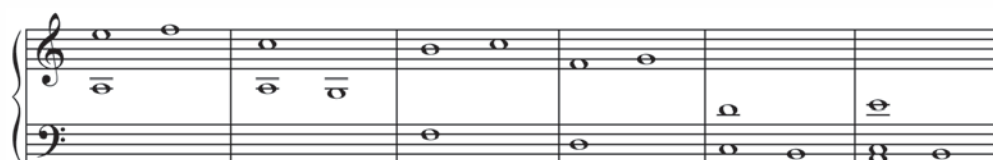


Figure 5. Swanson Ranges for Junior High Male Voices.

Difficulties With Previous Vocal Classifications

The theoretical perspective we gain from this research is interesting, but these classifications are hypothetical conditions and rarely apply to the whole voice. If we approach the voice from the

top down and actively work to maintain that upper singing range, these classifications are insufficient because they do not take the falsetto voice into account. These theories basically exclude the high voice and perpetuate the myth that once the voice changes the high voice



Stage 1 Boy Soprano 1-2 years	Stage 2 Midvoice 1 3-9 months	Stage 3, 3A Midvoice 2 3-12 months	Stage 4 New Baritone 1-2 years	Stage 5 "Settled" Baritone
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Figure 6. Cooksey Adolescent Male Voice Ranges.

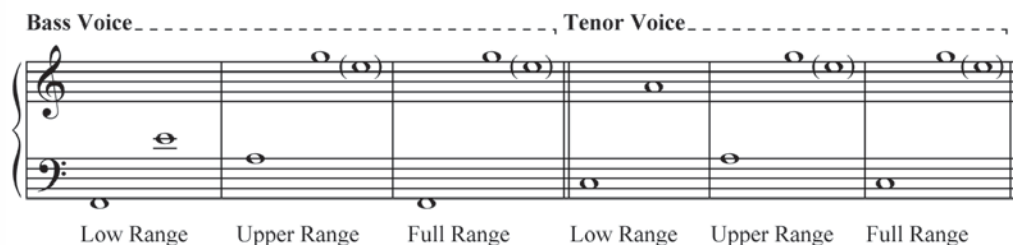


Figure 7. Typical Range Classification of Leck Students.

disappears. Figure 7 shows the range classification I have observed.

Experience shows that boys' voices expand while changing if they continue to sing in their high voice and vocalize from the top down across the break while developing their lower range. The range expands as the low range develops. The lower range for boys who will be basses often is F to e¹. For those who will be tenors, it often is c to a¹. Astoundingly, the range of the high voice for both developing tenors and basses can be to g², almost three octaves. Sometimes there are boys who can't hit that high g² but most of them sing e² easily.

Analysis

The changing of the boy's voice is an important topic affecting boy singers and choral directors who work with the adolescent singer. There tends to be a great deal of perplexity in dealing with the boy's changing voice due to its unpredictability, individual differences, and continuous change. Many teachers have used repertoire purported to be appropriate for boys only to find the range too wide or the pitch too low for the boys in their group, or the boys' part may linger on their break. Some have found solutions only to have a boy's voice change unexpectedly. Some

find strategies that worked last year are not appropriate for their present group because of individual differences. In fact, many middle school choir teachers become frustrated and confused because they have to deal with the unpredictability of boys' voices. All middle school teachers love to have boys in their choir, but they may not know what to do with them. In order to succeed, teachers need to understand how the boys may be feeling, where they sing comfortably, and exercise patience. Awareness, of both what is happening physiologically and what to expect, empowers teachers to help boys accept and understand themselves during the process. Boys need to have an idea of how long it may take and when it may happen. Although it was once questioned whether boys should continue singing through the adjustment period, it is now generally concluded that not only should boys sing, but this is the time they need to sing the most. It is essential to have goals to guide them, and strategies that boys can use to keep on singing. They need vocalises to use and repertoire to perform. Teachers also need to understand vocal production for the boy's changing voice, what voice part to have them sing, and how to avoid problems and vocal strain.

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Experience has shown that boys who stop singing when their voices begin to change may actually lose the ability to manage their voice in later years. Until recently, the upper voice has been virtually ignored in the choral setting. However, if boys continue using their high notes, they will still have a high voice when their voice settles in.

The goal is to be able to use the full high voice mixed with the chest voice. Because terms are used differently by different people to mean different things, let us clarify terms for the purpose of this discussion. In this article “high” and “falsetto” voice are used the same.

Voice Terms	
High	Low
Falsetto	Chest
Head	Tenor
Upper	or Bass

Although technically incorrect, the common label for a man's treble range is “Falsetto”. The “high” voice that is the soprano range when a boy's voice starts to

change thus becomes the “head” voice or “falsetto”. So when we say “head” voice or “falsetto” we mean the same thing, the “upper” voice of the man. It is the treble voice that the boy had when he was young. The lower “chest” voice is what is commonly called the tenor or bass. It's very important that boys start at the top and carry that down, through the break, making a nice transition.

Unless there is vocal damage, you can teach boys to sing from the top down using their head voice. With light singing, they will learn to match pitches easily and shape the vowels well—provided they use good posture and breath sup-

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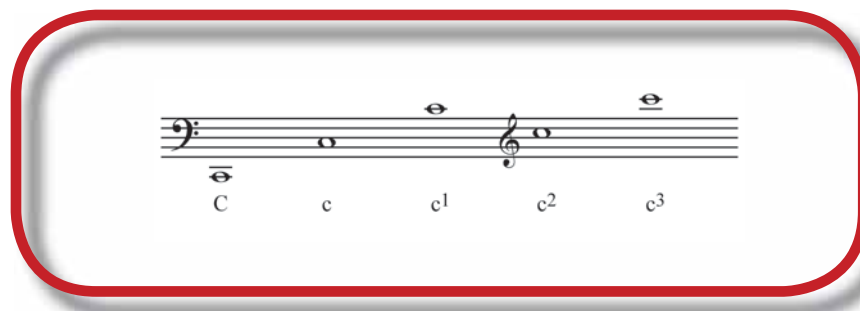
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port. If you encourage your singers to rely on their high voice while their new voice is developing, young men emerge singing beautifully with a resonant, well placed tone and a wide-ranged voice without a break.

Though many boys are reluctant to use the high voice because they perceive it as unmanly, it is the foundation of vocal production for the boy's changing voice. It is best to nurture this voice within an environment of effective vocal training and musical knowledge. An unchanged voice that is damaged from poor vocal use or an unchanged voice that does not match pitch very well will continue to face the same difficulties once the pro-

Table 1
Vocal Ranges from *Choral Journal* Guidelines



cess of vocal maturation begins. On the other hand, a singer who has good vocal instruction and a healthy grasp of musical and vocal concepts is likely to make the transition toward becoming a tenor or baritone with relatively little difficulty.

Boys should understand that the unchanged voice is essential to the development of the new voice. It is normally not helpful to emphasize labels such as soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass to unchanged and changing voices if we want to consider the whole voice. Once the voice has fully changed, the male voice may be classified as a tenor or bass depending on the character or the range of the voice.

slowly. Appearance does not always predict the pitch of the voice, when or how it will change, how long the adjustment will take, or if it will be tenor, baritone, or bass. The voice change occurs in the larynx where the folds are lengthening and thickening.

The way the voice changes is directly related to the speed and the manner in which the larynx is growing. It all relates to the change in length of the vocal folds (called vocal mutation). Each boy will experience voice change in his own unique manner. The male voice change is different for tenors than for basses. The voices of those who are becoming tenors tend to change with less interruption and less trauma. Usually the period of adjustment is much more severe and dramatic for a bass. For future basses, it can happen very quickly or take a long time. But it will take many variations and many adjustments before it "settles in" to a consistent range for either voice type. The high voice normally will not disappear once the voice changes.

Boys' voices may start to change as early as the sixth grade or as late as the eleventh or twelfth. Some may start during the summer between the seventh and eighth grades, and some between the ninth and tenth. (And some the week before your Christmas concert.) Some are still going through the experience as late as their junior year in college.

Boys with unchanged voices (de-

Identifying Changing Voices

When discussing specific pitches, the pitch designations in Table 1 (taken from *Choral Journal* style guidelines) may be helpful.

A boy's outward appearance does not necessarily indicate what is happening to his voice. Individuals grow at various rates with each aspect of their physical body changing and growing differently. For example, seventh and eighth grade boys, even high school students, are many different heights even if the pitch of their speaking voices is similar. Tall boys can have higher voices while shorter ones have lower voices and vice versa. A voice may change rapidly or

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pending on age) will normally sing mainly in the treble staff. Some may sing up to a B or a C or a C# above the treble staff. Normally, the lowest note will be G (g) below middle C and the highest up to G (g²) above treble staff. They will often have nearly a two-octave range or more. When notes emerge below a G (g) it could be an indication of an impending voice change. A boy's voice is beginning to change when some lower notes appear and he begins to experience some strain in the upper range. When certain top notes start to disappear during this time of adjustment, the voice may be unpredictable. It may squeak, crack, or become inaudible on certain notes. He

may experience vocal fatigue during rehearsal as his range adjusts to the physical changes in the larynx.

If a seventh grader speaks in a low voice and sings in a treble chorus, he might notice that he has some new notes and starts to experience the voice change. He may find it frustrating when he cannot sing certain high notes in choir and he has to skip past them. He may have to switch sections because the part he is singing is right on his break. When a voice starts to change, we often think it is best to have him sing alto because he has a few of the high notes. But, in fact, the alto part may lie right on his break. Therefore, it might be a more

suitable solution to have him sing mezzo soprano while his new voice is emerging. It is important for the choral director to enable the boys to find a part that is comfortable to sing. Boys with limited reading or singing experience may only be able to sing either the melody or transpose it to the lower octave without assistance.

Boys may identify themselves as tenors or baritones when they start to notice some voice change and some lower notes appear; sometimes even down to the bass clef B second line or the bass clef C second space. Their range may include the entire treble staff and a portion of the bass staff, result-



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ing in a range of over two octaves. It is not uncommon for the voice to have a temporary "hole" in the middle. This usually occurs around middle C or on their break. The bottom of a baritone's range can reach down to the bottom of the bass clef while their high voice can go up to the top of the treble clef staff. Basses have an even wider range—often more than three octaves.

When changes become infrequent, boys know their voices are settling in. They may have lost notes in the higher range that have actually returned. They might not have the highest notes they had before, but they develop a nice head voice and a pleasant lower voice.

It is important to use a boy's high voice while his voice is changing and sing descending exercises down across the register break. One can start on a higher note such as C (c²) in the falsetto or head voice and bring that down into the lower range. Some male singers have no difficulty singing down through the break. They can sing lightly, carrying the head voice down gently as low as possible, floating into the lower register. Others will take longer. When this can be achieved successfully, an ascending glissando can be developed. Even in university level teaching, it is helpful for tenors, baritones, and basses to access their light head voice regularly. This approach, of course, is not an attempt to make baritones and basses into tenors, but rather to keep the light head voice connected to the traditional register. When done correctly, the male voice will move through the mutation and will result in a beautiful instrument with wide range, flexibility, resonance, and splulness of tone.

against them. The baritone part is too low for tenors but too high for basses. Boys who will become basses will have low notes as well as high notes in the treble staff, but might have a hole in their voice between the two staves varying between A (a) in bass to G (g¹) in treble. This is exactly where the baritone of SAB music resides.

Furthermore, if the arranger tries to accommodate the baritone by making the part lower, it becomes too low for the boy who will be a tenor. It is even worse because as boys' voices start to change, they need as much help as they can get. They are accustomed to singing the melody. Now they are confronted with a bass part that is often written a major sixth down. They are then asked to sing in the upper part of their register that is the hardest place for them to sing. What makes the common SAB arrangement even more difficult is that the girls who are not going through voice change are usually given the melody, the easiest part. The altos are given the harmony, with which they already have experience singing. Boys are given a part that they cannot hear because it is in the upper most part of their range; consequently, they often will drift down to the melody an octave lower.

Some publishers try to accommodate the boys changing voice by having a part with *cambiata* so a piece may be SACB. The music that has been crafted to accommodate a *cambiata* is often not very musically fulfilling and is somewhat contrived.

A better option is to seek out simpler music (for example two- or three-part treble) and be flexible in adapting parts in those arrangements to accommodate ranges that are comfortable for each singer. Wouldn't it make sense to ask the boys to sing a simple melody instead of asking them to sing a part that is down a sixth? Baritones may sing a melody an octave down, an *ostinato*, or an alto part,

Repertoire

Choosing effective literature is pedagogically essential and very important to maintaining interest and enthusiasm. It should be appealing to the singers, bring out the natural beauty of the voice, represent a variety of periods and styles, and provide viable options for all voice parts. It is a special challenge to find literature that will interest the whole choir and still include changing voices. In middle school/junior high choirs, the usual enrollment is predominantly girls. When you have a choir with few tenors and basses, it is not possible to do SATB repertoire because there are not enough boys. Often junior high teachers will say, "I don't have enough boys to sing SATB so we can use SAB." This is probably the worst choice for those boys because the compromise works

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or, for that matter, can occasionally sing in their high voices.

The conductor can arrange the music to meet the needs of the singers. This is easier with a two-part piece than a four-part piece. A creative teacher can mold a two- or three-part piece to fit the most comfortable range of their singers. Where can a new bass sing most comfortably? If still using his high voice, he can sing in the treble staff. If using his new voice he sings from low D (d) up to G (g) in bass. That is his comfortable range. Most boys have difficulty singing across the break from D (d¹) to F (f¹) and this is exactly where SAB music

often puts the baritone part. Singing on the break causes their chins to go up and puts strain on their voices. Most boys have not had enough training to facilitate singing on their break, so they jump down to sing a monotone and do not match the pitch that is needed.

When we write a part for new basses, we should put it in the center of the bass clef staff. The tenor thrives on the lower part of the treble staff. It is primarily the baritones that have trouble. The solution is to find a two- or three-part treble piece and have them sing in their high voice and have them jump down almost an octave to sing in their

low voice if it becomes uncomfortable.

Trust

What we really want to do is build confidence. When kids sing a melody, they are more confident because they feel assured. When you have adolescent singers, assign their most comfortable range and find music that allows them to sing in that range. Teachers often ask, "Are you a tenor or a bass?" Then they predict that the boys will sing those traditional adult male ranges. We need to vocalize them, find where they sing the most comfortably and find music that



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fits their ranges. Changing voices need as much encouragement as they can get. They need easy parts or the melody.

In one disastrous episode, a seventh grade choir teacher put a group of girls on one side and called them sopranos and another group of girls on the other side and called them altos. All twenty-five boys were called baritones and put in the center. This resulted in tone clusters because many boys were unable to sing the pitches. The boys took no pride in the sounds they were making and acted out with major discipline problems. Though it is perplexing to decide what part they should sing, it is critical not to pigeonhole singers.

You must know every boy's voice. You may have some of everything. For changing voices, labeling is very dangerous. A boy does not want to be called a soprano or alto. It is better not to buy an SSA piece but a three-part treble and assign them to sing part 1, part 2, or part 3. Maybe a boy is not a tenor yet, but he wants to be. Therefore, it is important to know all the voices and be able to adjust the music so that they are singing comfortably. If a baritone has a big hole in the middle of his voice, the teacher should know that it is a temporary condition. The vocal folds have not yet attained the coordination to transition gracefully from one register to another, but they

can do this with experience. The best experiences to give them are descending sighs on the schwa (ə) vowel. For a while they will have a clunk on the way down, but they will gradually work through it to develop the coordination needed to sing smoothly throughout their range.

Find music with a comfortable range and level of difficulty for each boy. Remember not to exclude his high voice. Many teachers, and consequently many boys, think they only have tenor or bass notes when, in fact, most boys can retain a good portion of their upper range (commonly called *false alto*). It is the boy's experience with this range that will

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help train his new voice. There is less tension in their voices singing high than if they sing an E natural in the baritone voice with their chins in the air. Design a part for the boys. Adapt the music to suit their capabilities. Leave out certain notes. Acknowledge that they may have to omit certain notes for a period of time.

Most boys are hesitant to sing in a social setting if there is the slightest amount of distrust. Their personal esteem is at risk so they must know and trust the director and their fellow choristers. Be open about the fact that boys' voices change. It is a fact of life. It is important to nurture the boys through the changing process in an atmosphere of trust. Everyone in the group (including the girls in a mixed choir) should know exactly what is going on. In essence, the vocal folds within the larynx are lengthening and thickening. Because of this substantial change, the coordination of these folds must go through a period of adjustment. For some boys, it will take a long time. For others it is barely noticeable. The process can be dealt with smoothly if they know it is perfectly normal, know what to expect, and know you are there to guide them. Have older boys demonstrate and discuss the process so they know it is very common. All members of the ensemble must be aware that the boys' voices will tire sooner if they sing exclusively in their higher voice. The boys should understand that they will probably not sing every note in any given rehearsal. They learn how to manage their fatigue factor. They also learn that their voice is going to crack occasionally, that it is sometimes unpredictable, and there will sometimes be tension in the voice.

Maintain good communication with the boys to ensure that they feel a part of the choir. Let them know that you are available to discuss what is going on with their voices. Vocalize boys individually on

a regular basis to determine what notes they can sing comfortably. Keep track of the changes in writing, and keep each boy aware of his own specific range characteristics. The individual contact will foster a friendly relationship with the students.

Female choral directors can affect a boy's impression of how he is being asked to sing. Most boys are reluctant to sing in their high voice for a female instructor. Many directors have separate choirs for boys and girls for this reason. Some boys may not feel like men if they sing high, especially if they look to singers who sing predominantly in their lower voice. So it is a sociological problem that we must overcome. If a young boy has never heard a man sing in his high voice, he may think he is being asked to sing like a girl. This teaching challenge has a simple solution. Give the boys a role model who can use his high voice well. Either invite a male guest or use a video tape of a male singer. Make sure to choose people the boys will really look up to, such as the principal, soccer coach, captain of the high school football team, etc. We are surrounded with great male singing role models, if we just look for them. When boys are ill at ease, you can find a local singer to work with the boys and vocalize with them. They can view *The Boy's Changing Voice: Take the High Road*,⁵ so that they can see other boys, like themselves, who can sing this way without surrendering their masculinity.

Vocalises

While using this approach, be mindful that not all boys sing comfortably in their high voice. Eighth grade boys who are uncomfortable singing in high voice need the option of singing tenor or bass. This must be made available to them by writing a part for them or by moving them to a mixed chorus. However, boys should continue to use their high voices

even if only in vocalises or periodically on regular occasions. Though the high voice is the foundation, singing only in the high voice can sometimes cause eventual problems such as a thin, straight tone or extra tension. But when boys are given the opportunity to sing with a mix of high and low registers and plenty of descending vocalization, the results are healthy and productive.

A healthy approach for choirs with changing voices is to sing treble regularly but not to exclude low voices when singing. In many children's choirs in America, the boys sing treble twice a week, but they use their low voices regularly. They need to use their low voices and vocalize down to their lower range in treble choir. They can use the lower range in their church choir, temple choir, or school choir. Though the foundation of the voice is from the top down, keep them in a comfortable range to avoid strain. If it is too tiring, they simply should not sing the high notes in repertoire that has F# (f#2), G (g²), or A (a²).

Vocalises support the transition from the unchanged to the changed voice.⁶ Vocalises that descend and employ some movement with the body are more helpful, those with a narrow tessitura of a fifth or a third are easier, and descending patterns are easier than ascending ones. It is advantageous for these singers to start high above the break and come down across the break. Vocalises should be fun and employ movement to keep the voice relaxed and avoid strain in the mouth and neck. Vocalises that employ a feeling of mo-

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tion and a feeling of the beat help to solidify musicianship. There should be no tension in the neck, chin, or jaw as they are descending across that break. One can start on high C (c²) in the falsetto or head voice and bring that down into the lower range. Some male singers have no difficulty singing down through the break. They can sing lightly, carrying the head voice down gently as low as possible, floating into the lower register. When done correctly, the male voice will move through the mutation and will result in a beautiful instrument with wide range, flexibility, resonance, and suppleness of tone.

Sing a glissando on “ah” from high to low without a bump in the middle. It takes a while to develop. (Take your hand and follow the voice as it goes down.) It is not unusual to hear a clunk or two in the middle. Lighten up and bring your head voice down as much as possible.

The hard thing is to go from the bottom and back up again. (Follow your voice with your hand as you glissando from low to high.) Keep your chin down and relaxed. It’s a lot harder to go up than to come down (Figure 8).

Advantages/Results

What are the advantages to this approach? One advantage is a beautiful sound, a truly beautiful sound. It can add enormously to the artistry and choral accomplishment of your ensemble. A middle school choir can create a wonderful sound while singing full arrangements—not just parallel octaves. Secondly, the boy’s voice has a chance to fully develop in the lower register without creating all sorts of new strains and problems. So we use the old voice and let the new voice settle in. Thirdly, and this is very important, the boy will develop a voice without a break. If the boy

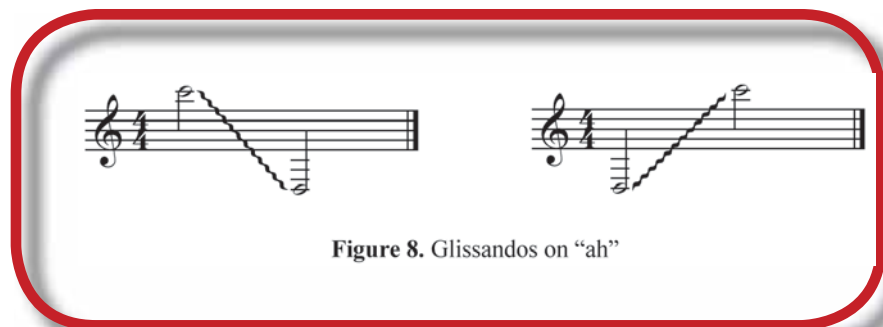


Figure 8. Glissandos on “ah”

is coming from the top down over the break, the break will disappear. What a gift to give a boy! He can sing in the mid-range up to an E (e), F# (f), G (g), A (a), B (b), and just keep going up. Fourth, the boy will take pride in singing beautifully. Boys who sing in their high voices often feel a great sense of loss or separation when that register disappears from their singing experience. But now boys do not need to feel that loss. They can take pride in singing with other sections of the choir. Do you need altos? They’ll sing alto. If you say, “Any guys want to sing soprano?” Their hands go up. They take pride in it because they think it is really cool to sing higher than a girl.

Without question this approach to teaching and understanding the Boy’s Expanding Voice has certain disadvantages. There are the challenges of assuring the boys it is okay to sing high. The boys’ voices may tire sooner, and for a while, they will certainly experience a certain level of unpredictability. But the advantages simply outweigh those disadvantages. The sound of the upper male voice is beautiful. Adolescent boys can develop a new pride in singing beautifully and without strain. This approach can add enormously to the artistry and accomplishment of our choral ensembles. The male singer is capable of developing a whole voice from the top down that is wide in range, versatile,

rich and varied in color. Just imagine the impact this approach could have on the artistry of our choral ensembles and our concept of choral writing. Perhaps the conventional idea of SA (women) TB (men) is ready for change.

NOTES

- ¹ Duncan McKenzie, *Training the Boy’s Changing Voice*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1956.
- ² Irving Cooper and Karl Kuersteiner, *Teaching Junior High School Music*, 2nd ed. Conway, AR: Cambiata Press, 1973.
- ³ Frederick J. Swanson, *The Male Changing Voice Ages Eight to Eighteen*. Cedar Rapids, IA: Laurance Press, 1977.
- ⁴ John Cooksey, *Working with the Adolescent Voice*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1992.
- ⁵ Henry Leck, *The Boy’s Changing Voice: Take the High Road*, Video, Hal Leonard, 2001.
- ⁶ Vocal examples of this information concerning the unchanged voice appear in the video: *Henry Leck, Vocal Techniques for the Young Singer*, Indianapolis Children’s Choir, 1995.



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REPERTOIRE STANDARDS

<Nancy Cox, editor <nrcox@swbell.net>

Vocal Jazz

Kirk Marcy, National Chair

Through the Eyes of a Ten-Year-Old: Taking a Look at Elementary Vocal Jazz

by

Natalie Wilson

As a parent, would you be surprised if your elementary child came home and asked if you have some jazz CDs or to tune in the jazz radio station? Better yet, how about being asked to attend a summer jazz festival? These questions—and more—have been asked of parents over the past six years by my elementary vocal jazz students in grades 2–6. When children might speak of the music they enjoy, one would seldom expect it to be jazz, yet it is a natural fit for most children. As a choral educator, this author has found jazz to be a great connection with children to a larger review of music and the

world around them.

The teaching potential for jazz education fully encompasses every element of music. To be a good jazz musician, one must know and understand the rules of music-making. As an elementary vocal jazz educator, it is okay to say “you need to know the musical rules, but you are allowed to break them.” Immediately they are excited! “In order to do that, however, you must know how to make the appropriate changes.” Therein is education.

Jazz vocalists will also use the concept of tone to imitate instruments in their performance. Students are encouraged to “sing this phrase like a saxophone” or “use a stronger edge like a trumpet.” This avoids use of words such as “warmer” or “brighter.” Students also need to understand resonance and dynamics because this will help their young voices project properly over the rhythm section. An often-used reminder in our classroom is “there is a huge difference between singing and screaming.”

Good Choral Tone

Good choral tone is an absolute necessity. The job of a choral educator is to teach students to sing with proper choral technique. They must learn and use good posture and tone production.

Pitch

By using good tone and establishing a strong sense of pitch, young jazz students will be more successful creating stylistic nuances such as bending the note and still reaching the tonal center.

Natalie Wilson is currently a K–5 music educator with a vocal jazz program in Camas, Washington. As a twenty-five-year vocal jazz director, she has presented various vocal jazz sessions and group performances at ACDA, WMEA, and IAJE conferences.

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Warm-up exercises in the form of the blues scale and blues riffs—short, repeated musical phrases—helps to establish a relationship with this style of music. Students must have a great sense of pitch to prepare them for the upper level jazz chords with tension and dissonance.

Listening

Through listening, students are able to hear, describe, and imitate different instrumental sounds. Students should be encouraged to 'just listen' when examples are played in class. Guide their listening to the bass, the background vocals, the drum pattern, etc. Directors should choose a variety of examples to play, including, but not limited to a

voice with big band, voice(s) with a rhythm trio, instrumental only, and vocal ensembles. By using listening examples in class, jazz students learn the way this music began—through the aural tradition. They should be encouraged to imitate and practice stylistic nuances they hear such as accents, shakes, falls, dynamic contrasts, pitch bending, and timing within phrases such as compression and expansion. These stylistic traits embody the spirit of jazz music.

Analysis

Perhaps one would consider analysis as an upper level skill. However, elementary music students are great at analyzing a jazz tune. When asked what did you hear? What did you notice? Students are willing to guess—even if it may be wrong. They can identify the form, the range of pitches, and the speed of notes. Many notice the relationship between instruments and vocalists. They notice dynamics or repeated patterns. Some are able to hear stylistic differences in 1920s jazz versus 1990s jazz. Suddenly the music education we provide comes out of their mouths to demonstrate all we want them to learn.

Sense of Time

With any quality vocal ensemble, a sense of time is extremely important. We know that younger children need more practice to develop a good sense of time. For many, it is innate, and yet some must really work on it. Many singers have a bad reputation for keeping time, especially when there are instrumentalists around. Vocalists must learn to feel the inner pulse in the music, to keep a steady beat within a variety of *tempi*, and to sing together. Even with a rhythm section of piano, bass, and drums, students must rely solely upon them-

selves to keep good time. Jazz students must also learn to have a good sense of time because the director typically does not stand in front of them and conduct.

Rhythmic Accuracy

Rhythmic accuracy follows closely with a sense of time. Entrances and exits must be clean and together. Since jazz uses a lot of syncopation, it is extremely important to be aware of the inner pulse and the concept of the off-beat. So, not only are young children learning to keep a steady beat, they are also learning to keep a steady and accurate off-beat as well. This author is often impressed with the ease in learning form through teaching jazz. All students learn the AABA form in an elementary music curriculum. The K-5 students also learn the 12-bar blues form where they sing the chord roots, play on Orff instruments, and use it for the foundation of improvisation. The jazz standards are great examples of both forms. Through listening to jazz standards in class, students learn to identify the form easily in the music they like to hear of all genres.

Performance Techniques and Etiquette

Students also learn performance techniques and etiquette. They are encouraged to show with their bodies and faces appropriate ways to move with the music. Because the music moves them from within, they find it easy to show their excitement and involvement. When students learn this at a young age, they are not as inhibited to allow the music to flow through them visually. Students work with the elements of technology through the use of a sound system. Soloists learn appropriate microphone technique and how to present themselves properly in front of

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Improvisation

Of course, improvisation is the defining element of jazz which absolutely terrifies most of us. Simply stated, improvisation is spontaneous creativity. This is when the concept of breaking the rules really plays a role. Soloists are given permission to take a basic melody and change it based upon the musical rules they have learned. It is this freedom of expression that is uncomfortable for many people. Jazz allows the performer to create, as opposed to regurgitate. The concept of improvisation is what

allows the jazz art form to continually evolve. In essence, jazz musicians help guide the direction of the art form through time with their personal interpretations and experimentations within the music.

A well-rounded choral education is one that emphasizes all of the above musical elements as well as cultural music and music history. We choral educators often challenge ourselves with a variety of multi-cultural songs. We use them to teach new languages, to expand the musical horizons of our students tonally and rhythmically, to learn something new for ourselves, to bring our world closer to us, and many other

reasons. Our programming should also include our own cultural music—American jazz. Through many discussions with colleagues, the reasons are valid: “I don’t know how to teach jazz.” “The rhythm section (accompaniment) scares me.” “Where would I find good literature?” One must realize that these same comments could be made in regard to any other cultural music. Use the same habits to seek assistance in providing this opportunity for your ensembles. Listen to jazz, attend a summer jazz festival, call a colleague who is experienced and/or ask questions.

The challenge to each of us is to explore our cultural music and music

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history with our students. If we, as choral educators, are willing to take a look at vocal jazz through the eyes of ten-year-old, we will learn to appreciate it and to feel the music in our souls.

Community Choirs

W. Robert Johnson, National Chair

A Time Of Reckoning

In the beginning, there were community choirs. But few knew where they were or how many there were. We are all aware of the good ones, the exceptional ones. But who is aware of today's average community choir? Who of us knows the community choir that says, "Everyone come and be a part of the singing." The choir that performs *Messiah* every December because the audience, and the singers, feel comfortable with the music; the choir that embodies the spirit of community?

If asked, any state R&S Chair for Community Choirs could probably name a few, particularly their own, but does that person know where the rest of them are? One state chair, when asked, said, "There are probably some

choirs in the north of the state, but I don't go there, so I can't tell you for sure whether there are any." When this writer was appointed to his present position, he was charged, among other things, to provide leadership to ACDA members who are directors of community choirs. It is extremely difficult to lead constituents when you don't know who or where they are. A decision was reached early in this writer's tenure to try and find as many community choirs as possible. The driving forces behind this concept include:

- Community choirs are "graying!" The average age of community choir members is increasing. Forty years ago, community choirs were full of young singers, fresh out of school and anxious to continue the great choral experiences they had in high school and college. More recently, those same singers are still there, and having great choral experiences, but as those singers retire, they are not replaced by younger singers. How many big community choruses are there in which the average age is 50? In compiling data for the Registry, it is amazing to see how many choruses there are, and which are considered to be senior choruses.
- Although many high school and collegiate choral directors help their graduating singers find a chorus in which to sing, this writer knows of no concerted effort for helping graduating singers find singing places. It may be a truism, but there isn't a choral director anywhere (with the possible exception of Bobby McFerrin), who can stand up in front of a set of empty risers and make choral music. Choral directors have a unique situation: they need singers to create a

chorus. Prospective singers need to know where the choruses are.

- There is no central reference point for community choirs nationwide. Chorus America has a listing of community choirs, but it is restricted to those choruses that are registered members. Barbershop Harmony (formerly SPEBSQSA) and Sweet Adelines have listings as do the GALA Choruses, but each of those is a listing of their member choruses. ChoralNet has a larger listing, but it is one where the chorus must sign up for the listing. The concept for the ACDA Registry is to first register all the community choirs that can be identified. Then publish on the ACDA Web site those choirs that have an ACDA connection, creating an incentive for community choir directors to join the organization, but inevitably publish the names, locations, and contact data for all of the community choruses in the Registry. In other words, ACDA membership would no longer be a pre-condition for publication.

If one looks at Table 1, it becomes fairly obvious that this is an ongoing process. As of November 1, 2008, there were 2,914 community choirs registered—1,177 published online, because they have an ACDA connection, and 1,737 registered but not published because an ACDA connection could not be established. As an example, the ongoing update process had reached, at that date, the state of Illinois. Some of the Illinois choirs already listed online were registered by directors at conventions, but more of them were added to the Registry as a result of searching the Web. On November 1, the Registry had 39 Illinois choirs: 26 listed online and 13 registered but not listed. An



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Table 1
ACDA Registry of Community Choirs as of November 1, 2008

	# of Choirs Displayed	# of Choirs Not Displayed	Total # of Choirs	
Central Division				
Illinois	26	13	39	
Indiana	10	3	13	
Michigan	50	5	55	
Ohio	30	23	53	
Central Totals	116	44	160	
Eastern Division				
Connecticut	34	77	111	
Delaware	9	20	29	
Maine	24	8	32	
Maryland/DC	42	33	75	
Massachusetts	37	28	65	
New Hampshire	19	29	48	
New Jersey	41	61	102	
New York	82	72	154	
Pennsylvania	60	60	120	
Rhode Island	3	32	35	
Vermont	11	14	25	
Eastern Totals	362	434	796	
North Central Division				
Iowa	15	4	19	
Minnesota	25	17	42	
Nebraska	13	15	28	
North Dakota	6	4	10	
South Dakota	1	6	7	
Wisconsin	49	161	210	
North Central Totals	109	207	316	
Northwestern Division				
Alaska	7	13	20	
Idaho	7	38	45	
Montana	3	0	3	



Table 1 continued

Oregon	25	5	30	
Washington	56	91	147	
Wyoming	1	0	1	
Northwestern Totals	99	147	246	
Southern Division				
Alabama	14	36	50	
Florida	42	98	140	
Georgia	36	54	90	
Kentucky	16	20	36	
Louisiana	6	5	11	
Mississippi	1	1	2	
North Carolina	22	2	24	
South Carolina	8	4	12	
Tennessee	11	4	15	
Virginia	17	28	45	
West Virginia	6	2	8	
Southern Totals	179	254	433	
Southwestern Division				
Arkansas	10	43	53	
Colorado	36	71	107	
Kansas	9	0	9	
Missouri	30	6	36	
New Mexico	8	5	13	
Oklahoma	13	4	17	
Texas	22	14	36	
Southwestern Totals	128	143	271	
Western Division				
Arizona	27	46	73	
California	139	406	545	
Hawaii	9	26	35	
Nevada	4	3	7	
Utah	7	27	34	
Western Totals	186	508	694	
Grand Totals	1179	1737	2916	

online search on that date, however, came up with the names of 150 more Illinois choirs. Each of those choirs was checked to determine their contact data, the name of their director, and their contact data, and whether that director was a current ACDA member or not, a time-consuming process. If there was an ACDA connection, then an e-mail went to the director seeking confirmation or correction of the information derived from the online search. If there was no ACDA connection, then the available information was retained in the unpublished portion of the Registry in the hope that a connection might develop down the road.

The director may have responded

to the e-mail query. Many of them don't for whatever reason. But whether he/she responded or not, if they were an ACDA member, their community choir is currently listed online so that there are as many options as possible for singers to find a chorus.

In the end, though, a curious dichotomy arises. Even though we are the American Choral Directors Association, for community choirs, it's all about the singers. Where will the new ones come from? When can the front-row soprano with the very large vibrato retire to a well-earned front row seat in the audience? What incentives will be effective in recruiting that younger demographic (post-school; pre-35 year-old) to the

chorus? How, once they've been recruited, do you retain them?

It is too early to gauge the effectiveness of the Registry. Too many school directors aren't aware of it. This particular column is one way to raise the awareness level. Not only should high school and college directors be aware of this resource; community choir directors need to take advantage of it and register their community choirs. The more choirs registered, the more opportunities there will be for singers to find a choir in their neighborhood.



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KNOWING YOUR ACDA WEB SITE

by Shane Sanderson, ACDA Web site Manager

ACDA Utilizes Current Technologies by Joining Online Communities

In 2009, the American Choral Directors Association celebrates its 50th anniversary, a milestone that sees the organization leaving an era in which technology was considered a luxury and entering one where it is a necessity. Innovations in the technologies available today have created a society in which networking is an every-day occurrence and for which myriad creative and expressive venues exist. As ACDA enters its second fifty years, it has adopted a vision for its future, a core value of which is the use of technologies and communication for the benefits of its members.

To further this initiative, ACDA has joined the online networking trend by creating spaces on two popular online communities, Facebook™ and YouTube™. These two resources represent a wealth of networking potential with two very distinct uses: instant communication among a large community of members, and the sharing of choral performances with a worldwide audience.

Facebook

- The Facebook™ online community offers members the ability to network with large groups of individuals and provides for the almost instantaneous sharing of ideas in an informal setting. Users create their own individual accounts, and can, in turn, become members of larger communities such as the National ACDA group. As a group member, a user can post messages viewable by the entire group, advertise coming events for their ensembles, and even upload images and videos to share with others.
- From within their own accounts, members can select a group of people with whom to connect (known as friends), and can group those individuals according to various criteria, giving them the ability to send messages to all their connections or to a select few. Instantaneous conversation is also available,

in the form of a chat module, which is available when two “friends” are online simultaneously.

Youtube

- The YouTube™ community offers an entirely different way to share information, and is being utilized by ACDA to share the choral art with the worldwide-Web. The ACDA YouTube channel was recently granted non-profit status, which allows ACDA to brand itself with banners and other unique content. An added benefit of YouTube is the ability to offer special members-only content for all current ACDA members. Examples of this content include video excerpts that correspond to interactive Choral Journal articles and recordings of recent national and division Conference performances.

- Another way in which the ACDA YouTube Channel will be utilized is in providing members and non-members a preview of the various ensembles featured at coming conferences, the use of which has the potential of becoming a tool for attracting greater conference attendance. Plans are also being made to allow for the submission of excellent performances by choral groups of all types as a showcase for the thriving choral art in America. Members, who create their own YouTube account and subscribe to the National ACDA channel, <http://www.youtube.com/user/NationalACDA>, will receive instant updates as each new video is posted.

- To view the ACDA Facebook group, users can navigate to <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2205012258>. If one wishes to join the ACDA group, a person will need to have a personal Facebook account, which can be cre-

ated for free by registering at <http://www.facebook.com>. Once an account has been established, Facebook members can navigate to the link above and join by clicking the “Join this group” link located below the ACDA logo in the upper right corner of the Web page.

- To view the ACDA YouTube channel, users can navigate to <http://www.youtube.com/user/NationalACDA>. Viewers are not required to have a YouTube account to access any of the videos. Those who do have a YouTube account, however, can subscribe to the National ACDA channel and receive automatic updates each time new video content is added. Viewers can also rate and send comments about individual videos or contact ACDA through our channel to request or offer suggestions for future video content.

In The Future

As ACDA continues its forward momentum into its next 50 years, members can expect to see even further use of technologies that will aid its membership. Members have the opportunity to (1) have the capability to purchase conference performances as mp3 file downloads; (2) avail themselves of the offer of free downloads of interest session materials; (3) engage in the searchable index of all previous Choral Journal articles with PDF downloads; and (4) be able to benefit from future technological trends. We invite all our members to join this initiative by becoming members of our Facebook and YouTube online communities, and use them to help further the choral art in America.





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In the Next Issue

The June/July issue of the *Choral Journal* will feature the following articles "Villa-Lobos Música Sacra" by Jill Burleson, "ACDA International Archives for Choral Music: Past, Present, and Future" by Marvin Latimer and Christina Prucha, "Dona Nobis Pacem: Vaughan Williams's Federalist Manifesto" by Scott Hochstetler, and "An Interview with Robert Page" by Mark Munson.

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Choral Music in the Junior High/Middle School

Janeal Krehbiel, editor <janealk@sunflower.com>

I Believe ...

by

Robert J. Ward

Every week, I attend a church service during which we say a creed—a historical statement of what the Church has stood for through the centuries. Recently, I wondered what credo we would write and agree upon to reflect the Church in contemporary society. This, of course, led me to muse on what credo guides those of us in contemporary music education. I, for one, still cling to Bennett Reimer's book *A Philosophy Of Music Education*.

I first encountered this book in the summer of 1982—and it had then been in print for twelve years. I still have my original copy and twenty-six years later I am guided by Professor Reimer's words. Two sentences in particular still speak to me: "If music education in the present era could be characterized by a single, overriding purpose, one would have to say that this field is trying to become aesthetic education." And: "If the job of music education is to help all children understand the nature of the art of

music, so they can share the insights into reality which music contains, the music teacher must himself understand the nature of music and must teach in a way which is true to this nature."¹

As college professors we often ask young teachers to write their philosophy of music education. I had to complete this task when I was an undergraduate and I notice that some public-school applications still require it. Though not a philosopher, I think that such a philosophy or credo need not be carved in granite. Basic elements of truth must underscore a pattern of behavior that is

reflective of contemporary culture and increased understanding of how humans learn, assimilate, and evolve.

I wrote my original statement of philosophy in 1979 (too bad it has long since disappeared). As I embark on a sixth decade of life, and a third decade of teaching, what is my current credo? And, more importantly: Is what I believe congruent with how students and colleagues perceive me? What follows is my attempt to articulate what I believe and how I put those beliefs into practice.

Robert Ward is associate director of choral studies at The Ohio State University. <ward.539@osu.edu>

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Choral Music in the Junior High/Middle School

Rehearsal Philosophy

In a rehearsal, imagination meets text and notation. Singers bring to a rehearsal their natural curiosity, their capacity to laugh and play, and their innate desire for learning. In my choral ensembles, I try to create for the singers an environment in which their ideas and talents are nurtured and challenged to take flight. It is my responsibility to establish an atmosphere where group effort is rewarded, where individual growth is celebrated, and where singers sense the security and value of the teaching process. Rehearsals must provide both

musical and emotional challenges, and those challenges must always be paired with the assurance that mistakes are not failures, but rather a natural part of learning. And when an ensemble reaches a sought-after plateau, it is important to point out to the singers that each plateau also functions as a threshold of new horizons. Finally, I strive to instill the awareness that the goal of teaching and learning music is not the final performance, but rather enjoying the individual and corporate discoveries as they present themselves in the rehearsal process.

Rehearsal Strategy

The first thing a conductor must do in rehearsal is to establish a secure learning environment for the singers. To achieve this, the singers must come to trust the process, and they do this by sensing that the conductor has a plan, and that the conductor is prepared and qualified to execute that plan. In music, the quality performance we seek is a direct result of the educational process we create. At no time should process be sacrificed for product—to do so sets up the singers for failure. Throughout the process, singers must be able to perceive a pattern or sequence, in which every new step is a logical extension of something previously learned. Teaching in this manner guarantees that the singers experience a modicum of success at every stage of the learning process. Lesson plans must be creatively extracted from the literature to be performed in order that, as the process unfolds, the singers understand how the whole is put together. Successful rehearsals must also provide a balance between learning repertoire and providing singers the skills they need in order to learn and read music on their own. Teaching and learning in this way empowers the singers to think as musicians, gives them the confidence they need to perform publicly, and encourages them to have a life-long involvement with music.



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NOTES

¹ Reimer, Bennett, *A Philosophy of Music Education*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970, pages 2 and 9.





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Compact Disc Reviews

<Lawrence Schenbeck, editor <lschenbe@spelman.edu>

Handel: *Messiah*
Dunedin Consort and Players
John Butt, conductor
Linn Records CKD 285
(SACD; 2007; 140' 05")

Bach: *St. Matthew Passion*
Dunedin Consort and Players
John Butt, conductor
Linn Records CKD 318
(SACD; 2008; 120' 41")

In his liner notes for *Messiah*, John Butt asks the question, "why the Dublin version?" Which raises the question, "why another recording of any version?" In recording the 1742 Dublin version (the first of all *Messiah* performances), Butt offers us insight not only into Handel's working methodology, but also into alternative movements which may be of use to the choir director interested in performing something familiar, yet not, from this most enduring of works.



In a gentle nod to Richard Taruskin, Butt notes that recording the Dublin version does not necessarily mean "we are presenting the work in its 'best' or indeed in its entirely 'original' form." All this reminds us that there can be no definitive version of *Messiah*. Handel always tailored his performances to the forces at hand. Realizing that his Dublin soloists were not of London caliber, he simplified, deleted, and arranged movements to suit the situation. The Dublin orchestra consisted only of strings, two trumpets, timpani, and harpsichord

(Handel had his organ transported to Ireland for the performances). He didn't ask that oboes be hired, but worked with the forces at hand. We might take a broader lesson from his example, when next confronted by an "urtext" score demanding, say, offstage ophicleides or pairs of serpents.

For Dublin, Handel also:

- presented *Rejoice, greatly* as a full da capo aria in 12/8;
- arranged a lyrical alto aria in each Part (*He shall feed His flock* transposed to F; *He was despised; If God be for us* transposed to C minor) for the noted "Mrs. Cibber";
- replaced *How beautiful are the feet* with a duet for two altos and chorus (*Break forth into joy*). (The resulting movement is a piece more church choirs should explore);
- shortened *The trumpet shall sound; O death, where is thy sting; and Why do the nations;*
- replaced *But who may abide; Thou art gone up on high; and Thou shalt break them* with recitatives;
- put in four extra measures in the ritornello to *Ev'ry valley* and enlarged the *Pifa*; and
- set "in-cor-rup-ti-ble" in *The Trumpet Shall Sound* as "in-cor-rup-ti-ble"!

Butt's sound world is ascetically pristine. All lines are clearly heard and seem to have been polished to a uniform brilliance. The Dunedin Consort and Players offer a hearty, clean performance of limited emotional and dynamic range. On the whole, the chorus sings very well. Diction is nicely articulated, although not necessarily consistent: the *Hallelujah Chorus* starts with a crisp King



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of *Kings* that devolves into 'ing of 'ings in later iterations. Yet the trill at *For the Lord God* is simply delicious—don't we all wish our choirs could do that?

The soloists are somewhat uneven. Soprano Susan Hamilton offers a lovely boy-soprano sound with little in the way of emotional involvement. Alto Clare Wilkinson delivers a more nuanced performance, as does bass Matthew Brook. Still, one wishes there was a more consistent expressive core to the proceedings.

Butt's tempi generally allow the music to breathe and grow. *Rejoice, greatly* is, however, marred by too jaunty a tempo; the resulting music—especially

when it sprints headlong into the 4/4 B section—feels rushed, with no affinity for that section's contrasting emotional weight. Other movements fare better: the *Amen* has a wonderfully elegiac feel to it. The orchestra is actually the star of this performance. They play with stylish vigor, using an approach that balances elegance with dramatic tension.

It takes a few hearings to appreciate John Butt's one-voice-per-part recording of the *Matthew Passion*. A listener anticipating a wall of voices in *Kommt, ihr Töchter* may be disappointed. What



Butt does give us a more translucent wall, full of chinks and crannies. *Kommt, ihr Töchter* presents eight different voices that do not always match vowels or timbre. Perhaps Butt is attempting to create a world in which the individuals present at the Passion speak—not in the overarching crash of a mob but through single voices that emerge from it. With this approach, some of the choruses, such as *Herr, bin ich?* and the chorales, work magically. Other choruses, such as *Kommt, ihr Töchter, Sind Blitze, sind Donner*, and *Wir setzen uns mit Tränen nieder*, lose dramatic weight.

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significantly, the last performance of the Passion during Bach's lifetime. The major change is the substitution of harpsichord for organ in the second orchestra. (Unfortunately, it's all but impossible to hear the harpsichord in this recording.) A viola da gamba is added to orchestra two for *Mein Jesus schweigt/Geduld*.

As a whole, the soloists sing with beauty and a genuine understanding of the drama. Both Nicholas Mulroy as the Evangelist and Matthew Brook as Jesus offer especially sensitive performances. The orchestra plays with a great range of color and a gentle touch. As always with Linn, the recording itself is immaculate.

Richard A.A. Larraga
Dedham, Massachusetts

Spotless Rose: Hymns to the Virgin Mary
Phoenix Chorale
Charles Bruffy, conductor
Chandos CHSA 5066 (2008; 54' 20")

Alexander Tikhonovich Grechaninov:
Passion Week, Op. 58
Phoenix Bach Choir, Kansas City Chorale
Charles Bruffy, conductor
Chandos CHSA 5044 (2007; 73' 45")

We have come to expect excellence from the Phoenix Bach Choir (now known as the Phoenix Chorale) and the Kansas City Chorale. Their last collaborative effort, *Eternal Rest*, aptly demonstrated their ability to maintain a gorgeous tone despite the challenges of contemporary repertoire. Charles Bruffy, who directs both ensembles, continues to awe listeners with two more albums, *Spotless Rose* (2008) and *Passion Week* (2007).

Spotless Rose is a compilation of Mar-

ian texts set by contemporary composers. The first track on the album, *Splendid Jewel* by Stephen Paulus, is built on parallel fifths that evoke fourteenth-century harmonies. The motet moves to new, sweet harmonies that include thirds and sixths to highlight the text "there is none more beautiful." In *Three Latin Motets* by British composer Cecilia McDowall, chant melodies sink into rapturous harmonies. Especially notable is the second motet "Ave, Maria, gratia plena." Composed for women only, the occasional pointed dissonances resolve as the melody moves downward, reminiscent of early Renaissance polyphony.

Electa, a four-movement work by Kansas City's Jean Belmont Ford, is perhaps the most adventurous programming on *Spotless Rose*. Lengthy solo sections travel down unexpected paths, leaving harmonies to settle in unexpected places. A drumbeat begins the haunting "De Profundis" for men's voices. The tone is whispered and anxious, closing with drumbeats that lead directly to "Asperges me, Domine" for women's voices. A soprano solo, the voice of Mary, cries out with the words of the Nicene Creed "I believe..." Solo voices from the choir respond starkly, reiterating the statements. From this emerges the lovely "Ave, dulcissima Maria," opening with a choral unison that fans to rich, expansive harmonies. A drumbeat begins to pulse under the dance of the soprano solo as she sings "Magnificat anima mea." In the minor doxology that ends the movement, the choir repeats their final words of each phrase, creating an echo that, according to the liner notes, is meant "to bridge the centuries from the earlier events in *Electa*—when Mary was being chosen—through the era of liturgical chant, to the present, reaffirming the timeless and permanent importance of



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the act of faith."

The other selections on the CD (Britten's *A Hymn to the Virgin*, Howells' *A Spotless Rose*, Javier Busto's *Two Marian Pieces*, and Willan's *Three Marian Motets*) are familiar to most choral enthusiasts. These recordings stand out for their lush, perfectly balanced tone, from the onset of each phrase through its climax to its thoughtful denouement. Sound engineer John Newton and recording producer Blanton Alspaugh temper highs and lows so that everything resides in beauty.

As excellent as *Spotless Rose* is, it does not compare with the emotional impact of the CD *Passion Week*. From the opening "Alleluia," we are transported to a place of great mysticism where incense and light pour into our sacred space.

Russian choral master Alexander Grechaninov (1864–1956) was recognized for his affinity for vocal writing and most widely known for his four settings of the *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* and other service music. For *Passion Week*, composed in 1911, Grechaninov chose thirteen hymns from the liturgical week preceding Easter. He fully utilized the

palette of the unaccompanied chorus to depict the struggles between light and dark, suffering and glory. The Eastern Orthodox chants are cloaked in rich, warm harmonies.

In this recording, the harmonies surge ahead and then taper gently to create beautifully woven phrases. The two featured choirs sing with a free, supported tone in which individual voices never obtrude. Vibrato, especially in female voices, is always controlled. Dynamics emerge organically from the music, never feeling "technical" or forced. "The Wise Thief" is a perfect example of this, with its widely-spaced chords that are exquisitely balanced and tuned within the context of long-arching phrases.

"In Thy Kingdom," featuring mezzo-soprano Caroline Markham, is a highlight of the recording. With a simple incipit, she invokes each of the Beatitudes, and the choir responds "Remember us, O Lord." Markham's full, round voice is accompanied by a bass drone that lends

an air of mystery to her words.

Also notable is "Let My Prayer Be Set Forth," in which the women form a cherubic halo around tenor Paul Davidson's plea. His plaintive tone gently reflects our human frailty. Powerfully evocative, the tenth prayer "The Lord is God" pulses unrelentingly, in stark contrast to the textual image of the dead body of Jesus being wrapped in linen by Joseph.

The only previous recording of *Passion Week* (Russian State Symphonic Cappella, Chandos 9303) does not demonstrate the same attention to phrasing and balance that Bruffy's interpretation does. The Phoenix Bach Choir and Kansas City Chorale manage to be rhythmically aligned without a metronomic pulse. Melodies have time to breathe expansively and harmonies have time to settle peacefully.

With this CD, the Phoenix Chorale and Kansas City Chorale have introduced repertoire that should become part of the greater choral canon. *Passion Week* may be too much for most choirs to tackle, but the work is easily excerpted. Although some thematic connections would be missed—as in the Alleluia that reappears in "Now the Powers of Heaven"—each hymn remains stunning, with perfect beginning, middle, and end. Nor is there any compelling liturgical reason to perform these texts together rather than separately. (To that end, Musica Russica sells each of the hymns as a separate octavo.)

To use this CD strictly as a means for learning repertoire, however, is to ignore its powerful performative impact. With every selection, this recording reminds us anew of the human voice's ability to pull us toward meditation and marvel.

Jean-Marie Kent
Seattle, Washington



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Carlo Gesualdo:
Quarto Libro de Madrigali
 La Venexiana
 Claudio Cavina, director
 Glossa B00004YLB6 (2006; 67' 22")

Carlo Gesualdo (c.1561–1613), Prince of Venosa and Count of Conza, was a man of passion. As he matured as a composer, Gesualdo's joys and uncertainties became effective as an expressive power in his music. His fourth book of madrigals (1596) forms a bridge from the lighter style of his earlier works to his increasingly chromatic later period. Highly influenced by his brief tenure in Ferrara, this fourth book employs an

adventurous use of chromaticism and heightened awareness of poetic text, both previously alien to his works.

La Venexiana's precise intonation and skillful attention to text allow Gesualdo's madrigals to come to life. Each track boasts a myriad of tone colors. While at times overwhelming, these vocal shadings lead the listener from line to line with profound understanding. In turn, the text is used to determine tempo, articulation, dynamics and timbre. The emphasis given to the poetry breathes new life into Gesualdo's timeless manuscripts.

Stefano Russomanno's comprehen-

sive CD notes do not omit the well-known history of Gesualdo's turbulent love life. In 1590, he murdered his first wife and her lover, having surprised them "in flagrante delicto di flagrante peccato." A second marriage, to the niece of the Duke of Ferrara, encouraged Gesualdo's move there in 1594, as did the high level of music-making at the Duke's court. While in Ferrara, Gesualdo heard the famous *Concerto delle Donne* and developed a friendly relationship with their director Luzzasco Luzzaschi. As testament to their friendship, Luzzaschi dedicated his own fourth book of madrigals to Gesualdo.

The ease and beauty of La Venexiana's sound makes it difficult to discern



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highlights in this recording. One need not listen past the first track, *Luci serene e chiare*, to realize that this is great singing. From the start, their attention to and playfulness with the poetry is heard in the juxtaposition of "eyes bright and clear" with "you inflame me." Their quick, almost cinematic transitions from one scene to another are extraordinary. Such drastic and immediate transformations in timbre, balance and register can be found throughout the recording. Always respecting the poetry, La Venexiana contrast reverence and disregard, beauty and fear in a masterful way. This group adheres admirably to performance practice while adding a youthful, vibrant

passion that sets this recording apart.

This disc also contains two selections from Gesualdo's second book of madrigals (1594) and one from the fifth (1611). The selections from the second book, both for solo voice with lute accompaniment, are simply breathtaking. The disc is split in half by a tumultuous piece for harpsichord, *Canzon Francese del Principe*, which lends further insight into Gesualdo's compositional style. In this work, the influence of Luzzaschi's ornamental lines is clearly heard. The stylistic contrast in these madrigals gives insight into Gesualdo's evolving style.

La Venexiana creates great beauty with this recording. Attention to the

subtleties of verse places them among the best early music groups performing today, while shedding new light on Gesualdo. This disk is a great teacher in the nuance of text, from which we all could learn: each word is tasted in the mouth and felt in the heart. In short, a must-own. Early-music lovers, you are in for a treat!

Matthew Smyth
Norman, Oklahoma

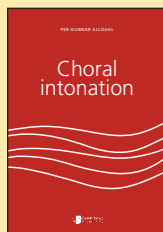
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Johannes Ockeghem:
Missa Cuiusvis Toni
 Ensemble Musica Nova
 Lucien Kandel, director
 Aeon AECD 0753 (2008; 2 discs)

Johannes Ockeghem (c.1420–1497), with Guillaume Dufay and Josquin Desprez, was one of the most influential and well-respected composers of the early Renaissance. The premier chaplain under three French kings, Ockeghem was also known for his fine bass voice. His compositional output was relatively small (numerous motets, several mass settings, and perhaps two dozen secular chansons), which makes his indelible mark on music history all the more remarkable.

This two-disc set contains the *Missa Cuiusvis Toni* (“Mass sung in all the keys”) and the motet *Intemerata Dei Mater*, making a sumptuous feast of early Renaissance choral work. It easily demonstrates why Ockeghem is held in such high esteem by those who know his music. In the liner notes, Gerard Geay writes:

At a time when composers vied with one another in virtuosity, this Mass became an unsurpassable model cited as an example in most of the important treatises such as Glarean’s *Dodecachordon*.... In the history of Western music, it occupies a place alongside Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Musical Offering* and *Art of Fugue*.

The disc lists four settings: Messe en re, Messe en fa, Messe en mi, and Messe en sol. There exists, in fact, only one notated setting of this mass. Today, if a choir were to sing a piece in D major and then in E major, F major, and finally G major, the piece would only change in tessitura and the associated timbral shadings; all the half steps and whole steps would

remain the same in each version. In this mass setting, the performers are invited to sing the work in four different modal contexts, rather like singing a modern work first in a major key, then in all three parallel minor keys. And even that would not completely recreate the effect of the modal alterations recorded here.

To give the listener the same point of reference for each version of the mass, Lucien Kandel and Ensemble Musica Nova decided to start each setting on the same note: D. Thus, the *Missa Cuiusvis Toni* is sung first in D Dorian, then D Phrygian, D Lydian, and D Mixolydian. The first challenge, and there are numerous challenges here, is to determine where all the semitones from each of the four different modes should be placed in the single score. Some of the other challenges included making decisions about text underlay—something that Renaissance singers were quite proficient at, but in which modern singers have no experience; making choices regarding *musica ficta* after painstakingly singing through each of the four versions of the mass and then deciding on alterations; and finally, making the artistic decisions that allow the singers to express four versions of this text in a way

that makes each of these mass settings seem quite different from each other. (Personal note: I didn’t know “these” works and had no clue to their construction; when I listened to the cd for the first time, I thought each of the four mass settings was a completely separate composition, so great and subtle was the performance.)

One of my most surprising discoveries was that, though each setting is understandably about the same length, the Messe en fa is more than a minute and a half longer than the other settings. A closer look at the individual timings shows that the Kyrie of that mass accounts for most of the extra time. Perhaps the singers found that when the mass setting was transcribed into that particular mode, the music needed more breathing room.

The eight singers of Ensemble Musica Nova, under the direction of Lucien Kandel (also one of the altos here) are marvelous. The basses in particular have a tremendous color and a wonderful range (the speakers practically rumble and roll). But all are superb, and their ensemble singing is first rate. There is a delightful restraint in the sopranos, but it’s the clarity and energy with which they sing these beautifully arching phrases that stands out. The group’s mission—“to spread the riches of the polyphonic



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and monodic musical repertoires of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, both secular and sacred”—is not just a noble goal, it's their continuing achievement. They have recorded the complete motets of Guillaume Machaut and the hymns and motets of Guillaume Dufay. Both recordings have received numerous accolades.

High-school singers should at least learn and sing the original Kyrie from the mass and then try to determine how the alterations into another mode would work. Any fine college choir and certainly any Collegium Musicum should have no trouble negotiating this delicious polyphony. Nevertheless, programming all four masses would be a great challenge, and given the tremendous amount of work that Ensemble Musica Nova did to achieve this milestone, a live performance of all four versions may not soon come to light.

So, only one solution: go buy this recording, sit down, and listen to this

astounding musical achievement. Revel in the beauty, simplicity and glory of the *Missa Cuiusvis Toni*.

Rich Brunner
North Hollywood, California

Tormis
Holst Singers
Stephen Layton, conductor
Hyperion CDA67601 (2008; 71' 50")

Under Stephen Layton's direction, The Holst Singers have quickly solidified their position as one of Great Britain's leading amateur choirs. True to their name, the group's early recordings focused on the central core of British partsongs. However, more recently, they have branched out to explore works of composers outside the central British tradition: Pärt, Schnittke, Tavener and Grechaninov.

Their new disk, simply titled *Tormis*, continues this exploration.

Along with Arvo Pärt, Veljo Tormis (b. 1930) is one of Estonia's two most important and influential living composers. Whereas Pärt is probably the more widely known internationally, Tormis is by far the more beloved in their native land. This is due in part to the fact that Tormis continues to reside in Estonia. There is, however, another distinctive difference separating the two. Whereas Pärt draws his inspiration from liturgical tradition, Tormis finds his roots in the earthy folk tradition of his native land. The result is that while Pärt's music is noted for its floating, hauntingly ethereal quality, the music of Tormis makes use of striking dissonance and primeval, pulsating rhythms. Although he began his career as a traditionally Soviet composer, Tormis solidified his artistic identity in 1972 with the publication of his manifesto *Folk Song and Us*. During the 1960s, the composer had become interested in *regilaul*, Estonia's ancient runic folk-songs. Although he ceased composing in 2000, Tormis still remains a passionate advocate of the Estonian folk-music revival.

The Holst Singers' new CD provides a compelling overview of the composer's output. The *Two Songs to Words by Ernst Enno*, with which the disk begins, bookend Tormis' career, the first having been written when Tormis was just 18, the second in 1998, two years before his retirement. As Meurig Bowen explains in the liner notes, the remaining songs on the disk can be divided into two large-scale categories: those written before the mid-1960's, which are fundamentally original compositions, and those that were written after the mid-1960's, which are arrangements of folk material.

The two original compositions here are *Three Songs from the Epic "Kalev's Son"* and *Autumn Landscapes*. The first of the *Three Songs* was composed in 1954, the other two in 1960. Tormis drew

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his text for all three from Kreutzwald's epic nineteenth-century national legend the *Kalevipoeg*. *Autumn Landscapes* is a collection of seven settings of texts by Viivi Luik.

The remaining five works on the disk are based on folk materials. The *Three Estonian Game Songs*, composed in 1972, find their inspiration in three *regilaul* melodies. The five-movement *Livonian Heritage* is drawn from Tormis' *Unustatud Rahvad* ("Forgotten People"), a 51-song cycle of works that resulted from a fascination with the small populations of Finno-Ugric peoples he encountered in several visits to northwest

Latvia, Votia, and Izhoria. The Ingrian song *Singing Aboard Ship* describes the singing of young farmers conscripted to fight as sailors and the weeping of their sweethearts, left behind. *Four Estonian Lullabies* are simple four-part settings of traditional songs. In contrast, *Childhood Memory* is a rich, highly dramatic depiction of children's herding calls based on the calls of the singer Aino Tamm and the composer Miina Härma.

Programming on this disk takes advantage of these groupings, providing a satisfying contrast by alternating between "folk" and "original." Those accustomed to the high level of performance

on previous Holst Singers recordings will not be disappointed; the performances here are beautiful and precise. Layton and the Holsts navigate the unfamiliar terrain of the Estonian language and some extremely demanding scores with ease and grace. Result? Yet another disc that collectors will consider essential.

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exploring the world of choral music

Lyn Schenbeck, editor <lyn.schenbeck@cowetaschools.org>

Kyrie

Will Schmid

Four part any combination, piano, guitar,
bass, world music drums

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If you have ever taken any of the World Music Drumming classes from Will Schmid, you have some idea of the style and character of this piece of music. Will Schmid, a past president of MENC and professor emeritus of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, has also written the Hal Leonard best-selling guitar method as well as other books about a cross cultural curriculum and an eight-volume choral textbook. He has given workshops in World-Music Drumming events across the United States, Australia, Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Europe.

Kyrie uses the traditional text of a *Kyrie*, i.e., *Kyrie Eleison*, *Christe Eleison*. The melody is written in a minor mode with a narrow easy range for all voices. The melody is in ABA form, *Kyrie Eleison* (A), *Christe Eleison* (B), *Kyrie Eleison* (A). In the first announcement of the melody, the composer indicates that it can be sung by any combination of soprano and alto, solo voices, or the whole choir. It is sung in unison by the chosen voices. After a brief interlude, the melody appears in four part harmony although the composer indicates that



it works as well in three part omitting part 4 if necessary. The parts are well written with easy voice leading. The accompaniment is reminiscent of guitarist playing chords or broken chords and is not difficult to play. Parts for the guitarist as well as for a bass are included as are rhythm patterns for suggested drums and percussion. The chords for guitar are easy ones, even for the beginning guitarist, and include only five chords: Em, A, G, D and Am.

This piece would work very well for a young middle school choir, a small high school choir, a church choir that has a "praise band," or an adult church choir. Ranges are excellent and pitches would be easily learned. The extra instruments would add interest to the piece and a young ensemble could learn the parts for drums, guitar, and bass with a little practice. A Show-Trax CD is also available from the publisher.

Carolee R. Curtright
Lincoln, Nebraska

Man of Sorrows

Arr., Gary E. Parks

SATB

GIA Publications, Inc.

#G-6857

\$1.30

<www.giamusic.com>

This well-crafted brief piece (just 35mm.) was adapted from Georg Goltermann's (1824–98) organ piece,

"Prelude" (Op. 64, No. 2) and poses few challenges for the mature church choir, with the possible exception of writing in the low range in all the voice parts. The soprano part never rises above c² while the bass part requires several low Fs. The text, from Isaiah 53, suggests a character appropriate for the Lenten season, or for Holy Week. This piece is highly recommended for the mature church choir.

John Buehler
Baldwin City, KS

You Are the Music

Dan Forrest

SSAATB, soprano solo, piano, horn in F
Hinshaw Music

HMC2171

\$1.90

<www.hinshawmusic.com>

Readers of this journal will recognize Dan Forrest as the composer of *Seleh*, the 2005 Raymond Brock Competition Contest winner. In *Seleh*, Forrest establishes an atmospheric, sometimes almost mystic quality, achieved through extended suspensions of harmonic rhythm and melodic motion. The work introduced Forrest to many choral directors, and perhaps defined his style to some, simply due to its widespread and deserved popularity.

You Are the Music combines Forrest's talent for lyricism with the type of choral writing more frequently associated with

the compositions of contemporaries such as David Dickau. A setting of Amy Lowell's poem "Listening" (from her collection, *A Dome of Many-Colored Glass*), *You Are the Music* expresses the sentiment that a song is simply a door which opens to the musical soul awaiting inside all of us. The work opens with a simple horn call, after which an unaccompanied soprano solo introduces the main theme. The choir and piano act as respondents to these gestures, as they harmonize and extend the main theme with added-sixth and added-ninth chords in this first section of the work.

A *piu mosso* initiates the middle section of the work, which explores new melodic material through more intense exchanges, often utilizing *divisi*. Although this piece is published as an SSAATB

composition, this reviewer believes that "SATB with *divisi*" would be a more accurate descriptor. The women's *divisi* are incidental, lasting for no more than three consecutive pitches in any section. Although *divisi* occurs in the men's parts less frequently, one does need to note an exception in mm. 52–54, which is an actual (albeit short) passage of TTBB writing. To the choral director seeking to establish the suitability of this work for a particular ensemble, the B section, and in particular, this moment for the men, will define that choice. Forrest follows this section with a unison statement of the initial theme, and concludes the work as it began, with soprano and horn soli.

You Are the Music received the first prize award in the 2006 Vanguard Voices Choral Composition Contest (Emerg-

ing Composers category). It is a good choice for standard high school and college ensembles seeking to include an accessible and well-written piece on our favorite subject, music.

Paul Laprade
Rockford, Illinois
National R&S Chair for
Two-Year Colleges

Kalinka
arr. Vadim Prohorov
SAB *divisi*
Musica Russica Inc.
FS009sab \$2.90
<www.musicrussica.com>

Arguably the best known of all Russian songs, *Kalinka* has always been an exciting choice for a concert closer. (It is often cited as an original Russian folksong, but its composition in the mid-19th century by folklorist and composer Ivan Larionov makes it of more recent vintage, a fine example of a popular song becoming adopted as folksong. This edition itself labels the tune as a folksong.) In Vadim Prohorov's original SATB arrangement of this famous tune, many contrasts—lyrical B sections interspersed between sometimes tense and dramatic returns of the refrain, melodies moving from one voice to another, and variations in texture from four to eight parts, also made it a popular choice among conductors who enjoy opportunities to explore timbral changes in choral performance. This new arrangement by Prohorov retains most of the attractive characteristics of his original SATB setting while providing a flexible and accessible arrangement for both smaller choirs and those with fewer male voices. Contrasts in texture are accom-



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plished largely through the use of *divisi*. The refrain contains simple *divisi* in both men's and women's voices, alternating between a homophonic setting of the melody and one in which the men and altos unite to imitate the strumming of a stringed instrument (perhaps a balalaika) against the soprano tune. The contrasting, slightly more harmonically-complex B sections employ alto *divisi* to create a four-part texture. In all cases, conductors of smaller choirs will find it simple to judiciously reassign segments of the alto 1 and soprano 2 *divisi* to a single part, if need be, without compromising the musical effect and intent of Prohorov's fine decisions. Middle school choirs may even consider this arrangement, as the male voice part is largely within the *cambiata* voice range. The only higher-ranging passage for male voice, mm. 36–42, explores the *tessitura* from a–e¹, but this melody can easily and stylistically be carried by a single, solo voice, should the male voices collectively find it challenging.

As with most works in the *Musica Russica* catalog, a pronunciation guide for the Russian text is available from the publisher not only in the form of a transliteration but also as a recording. It would have been helpful to include an IPA rendering alongside the translation, although some of the text's linguistic colors may admittedly be lost to a non-native speaker without the use of a narrow IPA transcription or of close attention to the subtleties of the spoken language. The harmonic and rhythmic character of this setting, as well as the conservative vocal demands of each voice part, should guarantee its popularity among SAB choirs at all levels.

Paul Laprade
Rockford, Illinois
National R&S Chair for
Two-Year Colleges

As I Went with Tom to Tywyn
(Wrth Fynd Efo Deio I Dywyn)
arr. Nigel E. Jones
Unison Treble Voices, piano
Boosey & Hawkes
(Hal Leonard Corporation, agent)
M-051-47595-7

Choirs looking to add a Celtic accent to their concert programs will enjoy performing Nigel Jones' arrangement of the traditional Welsh folksong *As I Went with Tom to Tywyn* (Wrth Fynd Efo Deio I Dywyn). Set in strophic form, the song tells of a journey from a mountain village in north Wales to the seaside town of Tywyn. Each of the five stanzas describes the sights that the travelers encounter along the way and the excitement of the travelers as they walk. The piece can be performed in English or in Welsh; a pronunciation guide is included in the accompanying notes to the piece.

The piece presents few vocal challenges; the range is moderate (a ninth)

and the rhythms are straightforward. Choristers will be challenged to employ clear diction in order to communicate the story effectively and to exploit the contrasts in tempo and dynamics that define each individual verse. The piano part requires a player of intermediate to advanced ability. The accompaniment assists in telling the story as much as the voices do.

As I Went with Tom to Tywyn can be programmed as part of a set such as *Music of the British Isles*, or with other pieces that are travel-oriented. I recommend that choirs perform the piece in Welsh in order to get the full effect of the piece.

Steven Grives
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