

ANTIPHON

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of the AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

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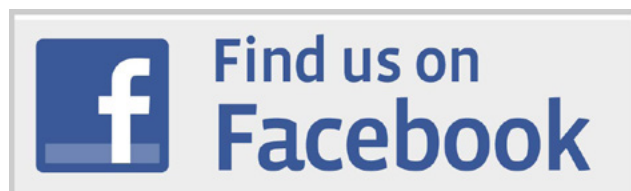
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From the President:



Ryan Holder, DMA
AzACDA President
president@azacda.org

Dear AzACDA Friends and Colleagues;

I am both humbled and honored to serve as your AzACDA state president for 2017-2019. It is my hope to build upon the past successes of the previous state presidents, including **Dr. Elizabeth Schauer** and **Greg Hebert**, both of whom I am forever grateful for their guidance and support.

In January 2016, the membership of ACDA voted to reorganize the structure of the **Repertoire & Resources Committee** (formerly Repertoire and Standards) in an effort to more accurately reflect what they do: provides support, vision, and resources for every major area of choral work and play an important role in serving their respective choral genres and promote excellence in literature and performance standards.

It is my belief and managerial style to try and find the best people available and let them do their jobs, and it is with that idea in mind that I proudly want to introduce the other members of the 2017-2019 AzACDA Board.

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I want to publically thank all of these people for generously sharing their time and talents with the rest of us for the betterment of choral art in Arizona.

So often in our careers we feel like we are on an island, isolated and alone from others who share our passion for choral music and the desire to instill that same passion in our students and singers. I want you to know that you are not alone and that if there is anything that AzACDA can do to assist you please do not hesitate to reach out to us. ☰

Sincerely,



Ryan Holder, DMA
Northern Arizona University
President, Arizona Choral Directors Association

FROM THE EDITOR



Caleb Nihira
Antiphon Editor
antiphon@azacda.org

From the Editor

Dear Arizona Choral Musicians,

At the most recent meeting of the AzACDA board, we decided to do a test-run of the Antiphon in hard print. This decision was made based on statistics that I was exposed to at the editor/web administrator's meeting at the national ACDA conference back in March. Given our modern obsession with all things digital, it may seem surprising that the statistics reveal more members read their state and national journals when they are in hard print. For this Fall 2017 issue, our plan is to provide our readers with both a hard copy, which will be mailed to you, and a digital copy, which you will find on the website at its usual address: www.azacda.org/antiphon.

We welcome your feedback on this topic. Please feel free to send your thoughts regarding hard copy versus digital copy of the Antiphon to antiphon@azacda.org.

Please enjoy this issue of the Antiphon! As usual, we strive to provide material for all of our constituents and their various areas of expertise.

Good luck on the remainder of the semester as we head into the holiday season! ☰

Sincerely,



Caleb Nihira
Antiphon editor

AN EXPLANATION OF DEFINITIONS AND OPINIONS ON EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN THE MUSIC CLASSROOM



*Christian Giddings
Doctoral Student
The University of
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Written by Christian Giddings

Most teachers agree that effective classroom management is of great importance in order to maintain a classroom that is safe and that promotes student learning. Classroom management is unique in music, requiring differences in pacing, maintenance of student behavior, and constant on-task focus. The goal for many teachers, of all disciplines, is to maximize student learning in their classrooms. Discovering and understanding the keys to effective classroom management is essential to a student's learning process, and therefore requires a more in-depth look into various styles, approaches, and opinions regarding what makes a teacher effective in their classroom. The focus of this article will be to explore various definitions and opinions on classroom management in an attempt to synthesize effective behavior management traits for the music classroom.

We must first define classroom management to know what can be accomplished by it. Harry K. Wong gives his definition of classroom management as "all of the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time and materials so that instruction in content and student learning can take place" (Wong, 35). The concept that one must be able to organize a student's time and space requires more insight than what is written on a lesson plan. A teacher may have a great lesson plan, but if he or she is not aware of their students and the space they have to work with, a well-intentioned lesson plan can easily go awry – particular in a music classroom.

Educators Virginia Richardson and Catherine Fallona directly relate classroom management to "manner" in teaching. Manner is referred to as "a teacher's virtuous conduct or traits of character as played out or revealed within a classroom context" (Richardson & Fallona, 709). No two teachers are alike, and even when employing the same strategies they can yield very different results based on their personalities and manner in the classroom. The personality of a teacher in a classroom plays a larger role in their effectiveness than does a particular strategy.

When attempting to define classroom management, one must note the differences between "classroom management" and "behavior management." Glenn Buck states that "discipline, in its truest sense, describes a system made up of preventive and intervention strategies designed to manage rather than control student behavior" (Buck, 37). He proposes that "*effective classroom management* is proactive in its use, while *behavior management* is reactive in its use." When referring to behavior management, one looks for a specific behavior to be modified. In a classroom setting, if you are reacting to a student's disruptive behavior you are not employing classroom management, but behavior management. Classroom management, as understood by Buck, is a series of steps and strategies used in order to ensure that disruptive behavior does not manifest at all. An ideal classroom setting is one that proactively eliminates undesirable behavior by enabling the positive effects of students, rather than seeking to alter disruptive ones.

While the attempt to eliminate any and all disruptive behaviors in a classroom setting is ideal, we know this is almost never the case. Simply defining classroom and behavior management does not describe what behaviors, on the teacher's behalf, can be applied to ensure an environment with limited or no disruptions. Highlighting specific behaviors can help to identify what the majority of music teachers agree upon as effective classroom management behaviors.

In 1986, C. M Edwards examined effective teacher behaviors, and then grouped 100 different performance indicators of effective teachers under twelve general categories (Sandness, 9). The twelve categories are as follows: **Management of student behavior, classroom routine, essential techniques of instruction, provisions for individual learning, lesson plans and objective for learners, evaluation of student progress, critical thinking and problem solving, teacher-student rapport, student motivation, student participation in learning activities, reports and routine duties, and school and community relations** (Sandness, 9).

In 1985, M. Brand provided us with several of these points, only with further explanations. Brand feels that an effective music teacher is one who **paces their lessons well, demonstrates high energy and enthusiasm, frequent use of eye contact and physical gestures, and varies facial expression and speaking voice** (Brand, 14).

Brand's list of behaviors offers more specific traits helpful in music. Brand stresses good eye contact in order to maintain behavior in your music classroom, a tool not as effective in other subjects. When in an English class the assignment might be to read a certain number of pages, therefore maintaining eye contact would be an incredibly ineffective way to ensure the management of that particular classroom. Brand also stresses the importance of maintaining a high level of energy and enthusiasm. While this might be important to the lecture component of an English class, it isn't a main priority while a student is testing, reading, or writing. In music, even the assessments require energy from the teacher. The main difference from other subjects is that music is a performance art and you cannot perform well with a lack of energy on the part of the performer, even less so with a lack of energy on the part of the conductor. Brand's concept of classroom management relies a great deal on one's ability to maintain a positive classroom environment.

Cornelia Yarbrough examined the effect of the conductor's behaviors on performances, attentiveness, and attitude of students in mixed choruses and compiled a list of behaviors that shares many of the same behaviors as Brand's list. Yarbrough uses the term "high magnitude teacher" to describe a person who exhibits the following characteristics: **Consistent eye contact, closeness** (frequently leans or walks toward chorus or particular section), **volume and modulation of voice** (voice reflects "enthusiasm and vitality"), **gestures** (varies size of conducting patters to indicate phrases, dynamics), **facial expressions** (face reflects sharp contrasts between approval/disapproval), and **rehearsal pace** (rapid and exciting) (Yarbrough, 134-135).

Yarbrough dives a bit deeper with her list by providing examples after each behavior. The most important overall theme is the stress of non-verbal communication and its importance in maintaining good classroom management. Yarbrough states that use of the conducting pattern is effective in the management of your ensemble, but why? The more you can train your ensemble to react to the *non-verbal* cues you give in a rehearsal, the easier it is to eliminate the need to talk, thus a student's ability to "tune you out" diminishes. She also stresses the importance of facial expression because it can reveal "sharp contrasts" between desirable and undesirable behaviors. We must take into account that any and all behaviors, both on the part of the teacher and the students are a choice; therefore, in order to change any undesirable behaviors we must look at the reasons a particular student made the choice to behave in that manner.

This goes hand in hand with understanding the difference between classroom management and behavior management as defined earlier. Behavior management negates the idea that students make informed decisions to behave a certain way, because it only allows you to treat behaviors in a retroactive manner; the only choice you as the teacher have once a behavior has occurred is punishment. Punishment is one of the most inefficient means to change an undesirable behavior. It is much easier to demonstrate the correct way to act than it is to punish the wrong way to act, much like it is easier to demonstrate the correct way to make a sound than to fix poor technique that is already established. Yarbrough has identified effective ways to prevent disruptive behaviors proactively, with the use of facial expression, proximity, gestures, and other non-verbal behaviors that allow room for correct behaviors to take place, rather than just punishing incorrect behaviors.

Alongside many lists of effective behaviors, one must also allow for the incorporation and development of a teacher's own personal style when it comes to maintaining effective classroom management. Virginia Richardson and Catherine Fallona conducted a case study of two music teachers whose management styles were very different, but still very effective (Sandness, 11). This study incorporated not only specific behaviors for classroom management but both teachers' philosophy

of education, classroom manner, and moral and intellectual goals for their students (Richardson, Fallona, 705). This study yielded different results by providing a list of “virtues” from each teacher that each thought was needed in order to be an effective music educator. The first teacher listed seven virtues: **friendliness** (showing care and respect for children and accepting responsibility for them), **wit** (having tact and joking/ having fun with student in a tasteful way), **truthfulness** (being honest, having integrity, and seeking the truth), **mildness** (having a good temper), **temperance** (keeping the expression of feeling and actions under the control of reason), **justice** (fairness in the application of both rules and norms to individual children), and **practical wisdom** (reflective experience that enable a professional to know what to do, when and why) (Richardson, Fallona, 707).

Two additional traits that are hugely important to maintaining a positive classroom environment are **mildness** and **temperance**. It is incredibly important to make sure that you keep clear and concise control of your emotions. A teacher, in order to maintain the respect of his or her students, must never take out his or her own negative emotions on students. The goal of a classroom is to build an environment of trust and safety, and that cannot be done if students are constantly berated at the brunt of their teacher’s raw emotions.

The second teacher from the study provided a much shorter list of virtues, but one that was very similar to that of the first teacher. The second teacher listed **friendliness**, **truthfulness**, **honor**, and **justice** as the traits needed for successful classroom management (Richardson, Fallona, 710).

Richardson and Fallona reported from the study that “classroom management-and particularly effective classroom management-is interwoven with the goals and beliefs of the teacher, and with his or her manner” (Richardson, Fallona, 724). Though the two teachers had different traits they considered to be important, and were different in their stylistic approaches, Richardson and Fallona concluded that

“the relationship between student and teacher is at the heart of teaching, and, thus, at the heart of organizing and managing the classroom environment...teacher education students must be provided with opportunities to think about what their beliefs and attributes suggest with regard to who they will be as teachers, how they will interact with students, and how they will construct the classroom environment” (Richardson and Fallona, 725).

This statement bears the strongest point one can make regarding effective classroom management and effective teaching in general. The overall premise for what constitutes effective classroom management is one’s ability to build bonds and understand their students as people. The importance of positive student rapport is the foundation of good classroom management. There are many traits, behaviors, and models to follow, but they all eventually filter back to the same basic premise: “the relationship between student and teacher is at the heart of teaching” (Richardson and Fallona, 725).

Music presents several unique challenges regarding classroom management, such as larger than normal class sizes, performance expectations of music teachers, and content specific skills such as conducting and mastery of multiple instruments. With these unique challenges comes the need to seek more and more effective management approaches to ensure that one’s classroom provides the best environment for student learning. Effective classroom management can be boiled down to two main concepts: teachers who understand the difference between classroom management being proactive and behavior management being reactive, and teachers who understand that “the relationship between student and teacher is at the heart of teaching” (Richardson and Fallona, 725). These two concepts are essential in the development of a good foundation of classroom management in the music classroom.

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Not Just An “Easy A”: Standards-Based Grades in the Choral Classroom



Written by Julia Higgins

*Julia Higgins
AzACDA Repertoire
and Resources for
Middle School/Jr. High
Choirs*

*Esperero Canyon Middle
School, Tucson, AZ*

Hello AzACDA! I am excited to be the new R & R Chairperson for Middle School/Junior High Choirs. For those of you who may not know me, I have been teaching choir at Esperero Canyon Middle School in Tucson for the past 14 years and I also worked for many years as an Associate Conductor for the Tucson Girls Chorus. I sing soprano with True Concord Voices & Orchestra and direct contemporary music at Northminster Presbyterian Church. I am passionate about helping young people become capable, confident musicians!

Like many music educators, I sang and played in choirs and bands all through junior high, high school, and college. When I went through school, most ensemble grades were “A’s” based on participation and showing up for concerts. In my first few years of teaching choir myself, participation and effort made up the majority of my students’ grades. For a while, I even tried doing daily participation points but I found it difficult to keep accurate records for all of my students. However, since switching to a standards-based grading system, assessing students on their musical skills and knowledge instead of the often vague “participation” or “effort,” I have not only seen an increase in my students’ level of musicianship, but also an increase in student, parent, and administration recognition that choir is a real class where actual learning is taking place! I am now a firm believer in the value of standards-based grading in the school choir setting.

I am not at a 1-to-1 school for technology, but I am lucky to have frequent access to a class-set of laptops (I share with the band director) and students are also allowed to BYOD (bring your own device) to class. I use Google Classroom to manage collecting most assignments, but students also have the option to turn things in on paper for most written assignments if they have trouble accessing technology.

My district uses rubric scoring instead of traditional letter grades. For most students, the goal is to achieve a level “3” which is Proficient. Students also have the opportunity to retake most assessments until they reach proficiency.

1. Minimally proficient (below expectations) - these students can not currently demonstrate understanding of the content or skill.
2. Partially proficient (approaching expectations) - these students can demonstrate basic skills, but likely need support in order to be successful.
3. Proficient (meets expectations) - these students produce work that demonstrates mastery of the skills and content for their grade level.
4. Highly proficient (exceeds expectations) - these students show an advanced level of understanding and went above and beyond what was taught in class.

My district recently revised our Fine Arts curriculum to align with the National Core Arts Standards which focus on four main areas: **Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting**. I was fortunate to be able to help write our middle school choir curriculum for our district. Here are some ways that I incorporated the National standards to teach and assess my students using standard-based grading:

CREATING.

Classwork & Instructional Strategies: Whatever my students are learning in music theory or

practicing in sight-singing lessons, there will likely be dictation and/or a short compositional component connected to it. We do dictation (both rhythmic and simple melodic dictation) because I think it is a foundational skill for composing. We use dry erase boards or staff paper to dictate short examples (1-2 measures to start). We will do lots of examples in class before there is one “for a grade.”

Resources: www.noteflight.com is awesome for student composing! My students use the free version, but there is also a subscription service “Noteflight Learn” that has additional features for schools and educators. It is web-based music notation software (kind of a simplified, beginner-friendly version of *Finale*) where students can create scores and then either “share” it with another Noteflight user or export it as a PDF to print or submit to me on Google Classroom.

Example Assessment (Beginning Choir): After learning about whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests in 4/4 time, students wrote a 16 measure “rap” and entered notes (just rhythms) and lyrics in Noteflight. Students who met the requirements of the assignment earned a “3” rubric score and students who used more complex rhythms than what we learned in class and/or recorded themselves performing their rap, could earn up to a “4” for this assessment.

PERFORMING - Rehearse, Evaluate, & Refine.

Classwork & Instructional Strategies: We have frequent, sequential sight-singing practice as a whole class and in small groups. We also do a lot of echo singing and solfege games (such as “Forbidden Pattern”). We transfer those skills to learn portions of our concert repertoire on solfege or count-singing. Each choir learns 3-5 songs per quarter that we are constantly refining during rehearsal with increasing attention to musical detail.

Resources: We use “Sing at First Sight” as our primary sight-singing method, in combination with SmartMusic and www.sightsingingfactory.com. www.musictheory.net is great for assessing music theory skills as well. High quality choral instruction is largely dependent on choosing a wide variety of appropriate choral literature since our repertoire also serves as our main “textbook.”

“... since switching to a standards-based grading system, assessing students on their musical skills and knowledge instead of the often vague “participation” or “effort,” I have not only seen an increase in my students’ level of musicianship, but also an increase in student, parent, and administration recognition that choir is a real class where actual learning is taking place!”

Example Assessments: Singing Tests - yes, my students have individual singing tests! Yes, it’s part of their grade! Yes, some students are resistant at first, but now it’s just part of the norm of our class and I try to find that balance between low-pressure and taking it seriously. Most singing tests are recorded. Students take turns recording themselves in a practice room during rehearsal or I listen to students individually while the rest of the class is working on another assignment. There are several different types of singing tests in my class. I try to do at least 1 or 2 of these per quarter:

1. Singing a scale or interval sequence. All of my beginning choir students sing a major scale (ascending and descending) on solfege for their first singing test of the year.
2. Singing a prepared example on solfege (not actually sight singing because we prepare it in advance) but something similar to what we’ve been sight singing in class.
3. Part checks on an excerpt from the repertoire. These are usually done during class with the whole choir, but each student records their voice by holding their device (their cell phone or a school tablet) close to their mouth while everyone is singing and then send me their recording.

Written Theory Tests - Online or on paper. The goal here is mastery, so students are encouraged to retake theory tests until they get it.

PERFORMING- Present.

Classwork & Instructional Strategies: This is what most choir directors already do all the time—prepare our groups for performance! We work on posture, breathing, vowels, tone quality, resonance, dynamics, expression, following a conductor’s gesture, blend, and balance so that we can grow as musicians and present the best performance possible.

Resources: Daily, structured vocal warm-ups that encourage and teach healthy vocal technique. We do age and ability-level appropriate repertoire in a variety of styles.

Assessments: Yes, I do still give concert grades, because I still find value in it. My students perform in an evening concert once per quarter that is worth 30% of their grade. Students are expected to show up on time, wear the correct attire, demonstrate appropriate performance etiquette on stage, and demonstrate appropriate audience etiquette while watching the other choirs perform. We also have other performances that are graded throughout the year: an adjudicated choral festival, a school assembly performance, and in-class recitals and/or solo & ensemble festival (ALL of my choir students prepare & perform either a solo, duet, or small ensemble in the spring).

RESPONDING.

Classwork & Instructional Strategies: We listen, discuss, and evaluate various recordings or videos of choral music. During the rehearsal process, my choirs will discuss how different expressive qualities (phrasing, dynamics, articulation, tone quality, etc.) affect a musical performance.


Resources: YouTube for videos and Spotify or iTunes for audio recordings.

Example Assessment: I posted YouTube links on Google Classroom to 2 different videos of other choirs performing a song we were preparing for our concert. Students had to write a paragraph comparing, contrasting, and evaluating the 2 performances.

CONNECTING.

Classwork & Instructional Strategies: Class discussions about the meaning, historical and cultural context of the songs we are performing. I may ask students why they think I chose a particular piece or how it might be relevant to us as performers or to our audience.

Example Assessment: We did a concert with the theme of "Bravery." My students had to choose a song (that wasn't already programmed on the concert) that they thought would fit the concert theme and share it with the class.

If you have any questions about any of these strategies or resources or how all of this works in my classroom, I would love to hear from you! jhiggins@cfsd16.org 



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Commissioning for the School and Church Ensemble



*Timothy Michael Powell
Oglethorpe University
in Atlanta, GA*

Written by Timothy Michael Powell

Submitted by Adam Stich

Scottsdale Community College

It is my pleasure to contribute to Arizona's ACDA newsletter for the first time as a guest writer. I'm in the midst of finishing up a commission for Arizona ProMusica's upcoming concert season, and this prompted some thoughts about how choral programs can take part in this very rewarding commissioning process. As part of ACDA's ongoing efforts to promote the composition and performance of new music, I want to encourage Arizona's choral directors to consider partnering with a composer to commission and premiere a new choral piece. I don't have to remind you all, but choral music is a thriving, participatory, culturally significant art form. And yet, if we do not continually renew our wineskins, we are ever in danger of becoming a "museum" instead of a forum for new art. We are in the midst of a revolution in terms of printed music. The international trend toward digital downloads and the rising costs of printed music are threatening the livelihoods of composers and publishers alike. Unless we, who fund the marketplace for choral music, take intentional steps to initiate and subsidize the process of new compositions, we may see this fount of musical blessing dry up.

The process of commissioning and premiering new choral music may seem very intimidating at first. I remember hearing a high school choir premiere a piece on my first attendance at a national ACDA convention and wondering how in the heck a high school, college, or community program ever got lucky enough to work directly with a composer. Of course, my impression of the composers may have also been inflated. Surely these lofty artists would never deign to leave Parnassus to walk among mortals, let alone work with a local choir! Imagine my surprise when later that same day, I actually got to speak to Morten Lauridsen at a publisher's booth, and found out he's much more approachable and human than I originally gave him credit for. Now, many years and multiple composer/conductor run-ins later, I have had the opportunity to be a part of a number of premieres and collaborations with published composers, to become a commissioned composer myself, and the secret is... it is not that hard!

Often, the process of commission and premiere can be a wonderful collaboration between composers and singers, resulting in high-level critical thinking, ensemble participation in the creative process, and that special "something" that comes when a choir is truly self-motivated to succeed. The easiest way to get started working with a composer is to *ask*. In this modern age of Facebook and email, it is quite easy to find contact information for a composer. Usually, it's right there on their website. Additionally, one of the greatest benefits of being an active ACDA member is the opportunity to rub shoulders with choral "celebrities" at ACDA state, divisional, and national conferences. Obviously, the creative process takes time, so you need to think a couple of years ahead, but composers are always interested in new things, and the worst they can say is "no."

There are so many choral composers out there who are looking for commissions or the chance to have their piece showcased by quality choirs. The biggest trick is to get to know them. A couple of sure-fire networking strategies are to approach them at conventions, send them emails with questions about their music, send them recordings of their pieces after concerts, and tag them on Facebook when you talk about a great rehearsal. Do this enough, and they begin to remember who you are! As a personal example, I ran into Larry Shackley at the Dallas ACDA convention a few years ago. He is frequently published, and serves on the editorial board of *Lorenz*. I've known him

for years, cultivating our relationship using some of the aforementioned techniques, and I always make a point to say hello at ACDA. In passing, we discussed my plans to apply for the Jacksonville ACDA convention. I asked, "If we get selected, would you be interested in writing a piece for us?" He said, "I'd love to."

A little-known secret is that publishers love to have a premiere at a convention, because it almost always guarantees purchases. That is a perfect way to encourage your favorite composer to write something for you to premiere. In this case, Larry began working on some ideas, we got selected for the convention, he approached the publisher with the news that his piece would be premiered at the convention, they offered to publish the work sight unseen, we began rehearsing, and a collaboration was born that resulted in a world premiere in Jacksonville of Larry Shackley's *Transfiguration Hymn*. All I had to do was ask.

Even if you are not going to a big convention event, there are composers lurking around your area, often at local colleges or churches or even one of your colleagues, who may be willing to work with your choir. In Georgia, we are fortunate enough to have David Neches teaching in one of our districts. He is published by a number of companies. A few years ago, we ran into each other at a district event and we chatted about all things choral. Our conversation ended with me extending an invitation to him to work with my choir. David came in to my women's choir rehearsal every two or three weeks and let my girls sing through passages of one of his new, unpublished and unperformed works. He would change notes or rhythms here or there as a way to experiment in a "live" setting and my students got to ask him questions about why he made certain decisions. Those normally very reticent students began to ask some deep, perceptive questions, which is an example of high-level critical thinking (that makes the boss happy!). When he finished the music, he allowed us to sing his piece in concert as a world premiere. What a great way for my 8th grade girls to experience the creative process and work directly with a composer! To belabor the point, I also got to check off some impressive educational standards-based requirements in my annual assessment related to improvisation and composition.

Some composers, particularly the full-time guys and gals, are usually booked quite far in advance with commissions. They are still very approachable, but are unable to work cheaply anymore. The average rate of commission is between \$300-\$500 per *minute* of music, may fluctuate depending on the level of orchestration and how busy the composer is, and usually requires a minimum price. One great way to promote the performance of quality choral music by recognized and published composers is to partner with other area directors to co-commission a work. Three or four programs could fund \$500 each and create an opportunity for a great premiere for a local choir festival. Add a local or regional arts grant and you could bring the composer in for the rehearsals and performance. Another example is using the existing festival structures that are already in place. For instance, in our district, we began adding \$1 to every honor chorus registration so that we might commission a piece every four years to premiere at our District Honor Chorus, giving most participants the opportunity to participate in a premiere at least once during their high school careers.

If you are a composer yourself, there is another creative way to promote the commission and premiere of new choral music: *do your own!* Provided that you do not take the practice to extremes, it is certainly permissible to write, rehearse, and premiere a new work with your choir each year. As ACDA members, we must take our cues from the most successful of our colleagues, and it is quite common to see folks like Brad Holmes, René Clausen, or Francisco Núñez perform their own works in concert. One of the benefits of this practice is that you learn very quickly what works and what does not work for the voice (*no, an [i] vowel is not the best thing to give a soprano who is trying to sing a high Ab!*). Additionally, you have a great recording made under your supervision, which is a benefit when approaching publishers about publishing your work.

I hope that this discussion prompts some of you to consider commissioning and premiering a new choral piece in the near future. If you have any questions about the process, feel free to email me at powelltimothy@hotmail.com. I am, of course, always available to write a piece for your choir!

Timothy Michael Powell is a composer, conductor, and music educator. He serves as the Director of Choral Activities at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, GA and is the GA ACDA State Repertoire and Resources Chair for Music in Worship. His Sacred Choral Reviews column appears twice a year in the Choral Journal as part of the Focus on Sacred Music. 



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Conductor Perspectives



An Interview with Charles Bruffy

Artistic Director, Phoenix Chorale and Kansas City Chorale

Director of Music, Rolling Hills Presbyterian Church

Written by Caleb Nihira
AzACDA Antiphon Editor
antiphon@azacda.org

Editor's Note: The following interview took place in late September over a telephone call to Charles Bruffy's farm outside of Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. Bruffy conducted his final concert series with the Phoenix Chorale on Oct. 27-29, 2017.

NIHIRA: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for the Antiphon. Will you please summarize your experience and education and describe how this musical journey of yours began?

BRUFFY: I started piano lessons when I was four, with my feet still dangling off the bench. My family moved quite a bit—Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, St. Louis, South Dakota, then back to St. Joseph, Missouri. I always loved animals and thought I wanted to be a veterinarian. My undergraduate degree had 235 hours and a minor in biochemistry. I had that “look yourself in the mirror” conversation and realized that I was facing my want not my passion. It was music that was my passion. I finished a degree in music education with emphasis in piano and voice then I moved to Kansas City to start a master's degree in voice. While I was doing that, I got a call from the Kansas City Chorale to ask if I would sub for their tenor soloist. I took the gig on a Friday and filled in on the concert on Sunday. That was my introduction to the Kansas City Chorale.

The next year they asked me to be the associate conductor. At the time, the Kansas City Chorale was bringing up John Goldsmith. I did all the rehearsals and he did the programming. He would come up on Friday and do the Sunday concert. In 1988, Goldsmith decided he wasn't going to come to Kansas City any longer. The chorale basically folded, though the singers wanted to continue and they asked me if I wanted to continue conducting them.

In 1994, we made our first recording on Nimbus Records. We kept working and made five recordings on Nimbus. In 1999, I got call from the Phoenix Chorale. They were looking for a new conductor and asked if I would come do a concert. I thought it was just going to be me conducting one concert but they were, in fact, looking at me for the position. I did a series of concerts with them and then they offered me the job. I said that I didn't feel like I could tear my spirit in half between the two choirs. Eighteen years later, I'm still doing the Phoenix Chorale. I evolved both as a person and as a conductor-musician. We continued to record and the Grammys came. We try to make the most illuminated art we can. It's very gratifying that people like and affirm our work.



I had the opportunity to sing with the Robert Shaw Chorale from 1992 until his death in 1999. And it really exploded my head. I didn't know you could listen like that. I didn't know that you could pay attention to detail like he did. I didn't know you could require of singers what he was able to. I'm very grateful that he shared with his singers the way he did and that I was in a place that I could really hear him. I've really taken and integrated his ideas, but wear them as my own.

NIHIRA: What is your approach to score study and internalizing the music, and the source of inspiration for your interpretations?

BRUFFY: The most important thing for me is the word. I spend a lot of time on the text and try to realize the drama of the text. I try to figure out how the composer's harmonies and structures further the meaning of the words. I actually think about how a noun sounds, how an adjective sounds, and how a conjunction sounds. And how that partners with the metric structure and the movement of the music and the movement of the sound. Because of my early interest in science, I spent a lot of time in the lab looking through a microscope and how tiny adjustments of the lens allow you to look at different areas of a single cell. I kind of look at sound in the same way. Specifically about text, we work very hard on finding ways of making the words understood and using every single word as an onomatopoeia.

NIHIRA: What is your process for auditioning the singers? What are you looking and listening for?

BRUFFY: My audition process is pretty straight-forward. They bring in two songs of contrasting style, one in a foreign language. We vocalize them to explore range and colors, then I usually go back to one of the prepared songs and ask them to sing it with a different voice just to see their flexibility. It's important to me that the instrument has more than just an on-off switch but that it be malleable and colorful and capable of inflection, both of dynamic and color. Most importantly, will they fit into our family?

NIHIRA: What did you learn from Robert Shaw, Eph Ely, and other giants in the field?

BRUFFY: Every singer and every teacher that I've ever had have left a thumbprint on me. Whether it be that they let me get by without presenting my best or whether they required the best from me. When you reflect back on your experience, you realize you learned almost as much from what you didn't pursue and what you didn't invest in as much as the things in which you excelled. The learning comes from yourself. Learning is in the personal evolution and the expansion of one's artistry and vulnerability. Weston Noble's big word was vulnerability and that's what I've tried to become. When standing in front of the choir, you recognize that those people owe you nothing. But yet, the conductor must come willing to share their insides. I share with young conductors all the time to try to get their insides on the outside and allow the singers to see their heart.

"Because of my early interest in science, I spent a lot of time in the lab looking through a microscope and how tiny adjustments of the lens allow you to look at different areas of a single cell. I kind of look at sound in the same way."

NIHIRA: What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far?

BRUFFY: Pride is not really part of my vocabulary... what I am most pleased about... is that I've worked really hard on who I am. I've had a lot of people help me. And by that, I mean how I think about things, how I talk about things and how I see things. I've had the opportunity to conduct some really stellar concerts: I conducted the Verdi Requiem at the Sydney Opera House, the Kansas Chorale sang in South Korea, at the Library of Congress, and for numerous regional and national ACDA conventions. The thing I'm most pleased about with my choirs is that we found a way for the individuals to require and reveal more of themselves than they thought possible.

NIHIRA: How do you balance work life and personal life?

BRUFFY: I have a lot of people that help me. It had been a life-long dream to have my own farm with my own horses. So, on December 23, 2014, I bought a farm. And I wish someone would have slapped me and said, “do you realize what this is going to mean?” I had no idea the amount of work that was required on a farm! The workload is pretty heavy duty. I’ve had a church job for 25 years and we have a good routine there. The church

“Every singer and every teacher that I’ve ever had have left a thumbprint on me. Whether it be that they let me get by without presenting my best or whether they required the best from me. When you reflect back on your experience, you realize you learned almost as much from what you didn’t pursue and what you didn’t invest in as much as the things in which you excelled.”

has been very generous to me. One year I missed a total of twenty-two Sundays going back and forth between other jobs. The way I handle it is that I really love everything I do—getting to work with the singers, being on the farm with the horses, planning the programs to find new and interesting music, and new ways of presenting old music. I admit I don’t have much of a social life. I’m the poster child for “I can’t I have rehearsal.” I pretty much know nothing about pop culture, what’s on TV or in the theatres. One of the things that’s really nice when you are a musician is you have music in your head all the time. I very rarely have the radio on in the car because I’m always doing music or thinking about doing it. I think that’s one thing that both makes me crazy and keeps me sane.

NIHIRA: What do you want your legacy to be?

BRUFFY: I want my tombstone to say, “He tried really hard and gave it his best.” As we all evolve, our best becomes different from day to day. So, I guess I give myself a little grace, but I try to give the best that I know I have.

NIHIRA: What changes, if any, have you observed in the professional choral world since beginning your time with the Kansas City/Phoenix Chorales?

BRUFFY: That’s kind of a hot button with me. One thing about these fly-in choirs, while they sing at the highest level, they lose something in the sound. Both in Kansas City and Phoenix every single singer lives in that community, so they bring their lives and their experiences to the rehearsal. There is a real sense of community. Every single singer knows the existence of their neighbors. We are always part of the collective joys and grief. In Phoenix, we are getting ready to sing at the memorial of one of our long-time singers. We have generations of singers getting together to come and honor this singer. There is something untenable yet audible in the sounds that are created from people who are aware of each other and who love one another.

“Do your work. Be prepared for opportunities when they present themselves. Look beyond the page. Don’t ever make artistic decisions based on ease of execution. Allow yourself to have fun and do your work on your own muse and your own heart.”

Another thing that has changed over the years, there seems to be a lessening of the importance of reading. One of my biggest disappointments with higher education is that schools are graduating people with degrees in voice and conducting who can’t read. If you can’t read, I can’t higher you. Moreover, if you can’t read, how do you know if someone is singing the wrong note. There is more of an emphasis on the academics but we fall short in training artists.

NIHIRA: What advice do you have for young choral conductors just beginning their careers?

BRUFFY: Do your work. Be prepared for opportunities when they present themselves. Look beyond the page. Don’t ever make artistic decisions based on ease of execution. Allow yourself to have fun and do your work on your own muse and your own heart. If your audience comes to the end of your concert, being impressed by the calisthenics of how you sang, but having felt nothing without being stirred or provoked, it didn’t work.

To learn more about Charles Bruffy and the Phoenix Chorale, please visit www.phoenixchorale.org. 





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CHORAL REVIEWS

Choral Reviews for Show Choirs



Written by Kirk Douglas
AzACDA Repertoire and Resources Chair
for Show Choirs

Boulder Creek High School, Anthem, AZ

"A Musical" from Something Rotten

Word and Music by Wayne & Karey Kirkpatrick

Arranged by Roger Emerson

SATB and piano

Hal Leonard 00158665

This zany, brainy vaudeville-inspired spoof on musical theatre was written for the opening of the musical *Something Rotten*. It is a hysterical presentation that ties in historical context of how musicals came about while integrating some of the familiar hits heard on Broadway today. This setting could easily work to set the tone for a Broadway Review Concert and/or it could be intertwined throughout the concert or it could work also as a stand-alone piece. It offers spoken narrations with rhythmic and melodic combinations in which teaches students the importance of recitative and how to relate speech singing to syllabic stress. Where most musical theatre selections sit rather high in the Bass registration, this is a brilliantly voiced number in all 4 parts, allowing for healthy singing in the musical theatre genre. The highlight for most will most likely be the kick line segment that happens at the climax. This piece truly is energetic through-out leaving the audience craving more.

I'll Make a Man Out of You

Music by Michael Wilder

Arranged by Roger Emerson

TTB and piano

Hal Leonard 00155266

Written to feature your men's choir or section, this song will definitely satisfy the likes of your men and audience the same. This song comes from the 1998 Disney film, *Mulan*. It is written with a percussive interlude that could feature your school's drumline (which could also work as a recruiting tool for men.) Throughout the piece, you will hear pentatonic scalar passages. There are several solo opportunities and call-and-response passages if you would like to feature soloist or small groups within your ensemble. The song does present quite a bit of repetition, so cuts in the song may be necessary when adding choreography or movement. There is a portion of the song that is a *cappella* and allows the men to really work the audience. This song guarantees to become a staple in your

men's repertoire and works to build comradery and show the men how to cut loose.

Out Here On My Own

Music by Michael Gore

Arranged by Mac Huff

SATB and piano

Hal Leonard 00158554

"Out Here on My Own" is a ballad that was written for the film version of *Fame* in 1980. This beautiful number is a perfect setting to finalize a concert or even a school year. This song is very eloquently layered beginning with a solo that will be developed into a duet and later into a trio. You can feature a select group of students as the song begins to swell into a feature for the men, showcasing them while accompanied by the women's tight three-part harmony. The song presents its climatic element with a unison forte following the beautiful harmonies that were once sung but later presents 6 part texture. The song uses dynamics throughout the piece to provide extremely dramatic features that perfectly identify this song as a closer. You won't want to miss out on this gem!

Choral Reviews for Multicultural & Ethnic Music



Written by Nick Halonen
AzACDA Repertoire and Standards Chair
for Multicultural & Ethnic Music

Trevor G. Browne High School, Phoenix, AZ

O Saya

A. R. Rahman, arr. Ethan Sperry

Earthsongs #S-407

SATB and percussion

The theme of *O Saya* depicts the horrible living conditions in the slums of India. It uses nonsense syllables in the form of wailing. The piece can be interpreted to acknowledge poverty in the world and to empower global and societal change. Although this composition is labeled SATB, it is best described as two-part in double chorus form. *O Saya* is quite simple to teach. Beginning choirs can attain immediate success. However, choirs of all levels will find satisfaction singing this piece. This piece may serve as a processional for a single choir or can act as a concert's grand opening with combined choirs.

Wangol

Traditional Haitian Folk Song arr. Sten Källman
Walton Music #WW1511
SATB and percussion (large conga, small drum,
piece of iron)

This traditional Creole melody is well-known throughout Haiti and takes the audience on a profound emotional journey from the angst of betrayal to exuberant hope for the future. This is a wonderful piece for intermediate to advanced choirs. Singers love this piece and are inspired intrinsically by its emotion and raw energy. It is best performed with a bright, focused, and supported tone that offers brilliant contrast to a performance set. This works well as a closer for a set or concert.

Choral Reviews for Middle School/Junior High School



*Written by Julia Higgins
AzACDA Repertoire and Standards Chair for
Middle School/Junior High School Choirs
Esperero Canyon Middle School, Tucson, AZ*

My Hero, My Darling (Mo Ghile Mear)
Seán Clárach MacDomhnaill, Arr. by Cristi Cary Miller
SSA with piano and violin
Hal Leonard 00156240

"Mo Ghile Mear" is a beautiful old Irish ballad written for Bonnie Prince Charlie, the "dashing darling." This SSA arrangement features a beautiful violin part and vocal solo and duet opportunities at both the beginning and conclusion of the song. There are only 8 measures (repeated several times throughout) of Irish text for your singers to master and an IPA pronunciation guide is included, although the verses are sung in English. The low range for the alto part only goes down to a Bb and the altos have the melody the majority of the time. This is a lovely piece for developing legato singing and phrasing.

Bella Ciao

Traditional Italian, Arr. by Jerry Estes
3-part mixed with piano
Heritage Music Press 15/1699H

This passionate Italian partisan song originated during the Italian civil war, later became a resistance anthem during World War II, and is now sung worldwide as a song representing freedom. This arrangement is done in Italian and all three parts get a chance to sing the melody at various points. There

are plenty of teaching moments here with minor mode, key and tempo changes, Italian language and text stress, and historical context.

Cherokee Rose

By James E. Green
2 or 3 part with C instrument and percussion
Walton Music 10304769

This song tells the mournful story of the "Trail of Tears" and the legend of the Cherokee Rose which grows wherever a Native American Cherokee mother's tears have fallen. There are multiple voicing options, so you can do what works best with your choir. The text is in Cherokee, so you and your students will have to take some time to learn the language. I performed this song in 3 parts with 8th graders and had students play the percussion parts. This song provides a wonderful opportunity to teach history, sing a language that many students may not have sung before, and incorporate percussion. Each vocal part is also quite independent, so it's a great song to encourage students to count!

Choral Reviews for Boy Choirs



*Written by Albert Lee
AzACDA Repertoire and Resources Chair
for Boy Choirs
Phoenix Boys Choir, Akimel A-al Middle
School, Phoenix, AZ*

Laudate Pueri Dominum
Michael Haydn
Edited by Henry Leck
SSA, piano or chamber orchestra
Hal Leonard 08596737

Like his older brother, Franz Joseph Haydn, Michael Haydn has written beautiful sacred works for choirs. The choir starts the music singing the text, "Alleluia" in unaccompanied Gregorian chant style. After the first few measures, the melodic brilliance of Haydn's writing comes in with instrumental accompaniment to support the singers as they sing the text of "Laudate Pueri Dominum." Both fugal writing and homophonic harmonies are present in this work, making it both a challenge and joy to master the literature. For seasoned boy's choirs, this work will exemplify the boy's pure resonance in their voices and the soprano 1's range which goes up to an A5.

Little David, Play on Your Harp

Arr. Rollo Dilworth

2-Part, piano

Hal Leonard 08749819

This song features the classic bible story of "David and Goliath," making it a familiar story for children to connect with. Rollo Dilworth's arrangement of this is more gospel in style. Articulations are specifically placed in the melody to achieve a certain buoyancy and vibrancy. Contrasting dynamics are placed throughout the score to keep the piece energized for the audience and performers alike. The singers will need to recognize sixteenth notes, dotted eighths with sixteenths, and syncopation to achieve rhythmic precision. It is worth noting the 2-part arrangement corresponds to the soprano and alto parts in the SATB version. This allows for collaborative possibilities for treble and mixed choirs. A great arrangement that is joyful and energetic for boy's choirs, children's choirs, and church choirs.

The Tailor of Gloucester

Arr. Cyndee Giebler

2-part, piano

Colla Voce 21-20545

This accessible arrangement is recommended for any youth choir. The text features a story about a tailor, a mouse, and several other animals. In addition to a fun story, the musical writing of the melody allows young singers to develop healthy singing habits such as singing intervals without "sliding." The song also allows practice in reading combinations of sixteenth and eighth-note patterns. The tessitura and key allow for boys to develop appropriate vocal tone while singing in their higher register. As the song progresses, the music develops into two different melodies sung at the same time for singers to practice two-part harmonies.

Choral Reviews for Women's Choirs



*Written by Danya Tiller
AzACDA Repertoire and Resources Chair
for Women's Choirs*

*Artistic Director, Phoenix Girls Chorus,
Phoenix, AZ*

Salve Regina

Javier Busto

SSAA acapella

Walton Music WTC 1013


This lovely setting of a traditional sacred Latin text is appropriate in programming for fall or holiday concerts, or can be a part of a sacred classical cathedral concert. This piece combines the lush harmonic landscape we know from Bustos' other works and expressive, chant-like text. The opening and closing moments unfold with sustained, cloud-like dissonance. The unmetered chanting undulates freely, allowing for nimble expression, interrupted by repeated chords that contract and release, creating tranquil moments in the midst of the passionate chanting. The SSA parts split and join frequently, sometimes into 5 parts, and require a keen ear for intricate chord balance and tuning.

Nova, Nova, Ave fit ex Eva

Williametta Spencer

SSA, acapella

National Music Publishers WHC014

Fifteenth-century English and Latin texts are blended in this energetic setting suitable for Advent services and holiday concerts. Though accessible, this piece is challenging to tune and balance. Intense dissonance and frequent octaves, fourths and fifths lend to the excitement of the piece, but require careful rehearsal and skilled listening for successful performance. This setting provides a welcome contrast among the huge repertoire of "slow and beautiful" or "cute and fun" music available for treble voices. An optional hand-drum lends an even more primal flavor to this lively, brief work. Repeats can be added to slightly lengthen it for programming purposes as well, and the addition of chimes or bells may add even more depth to the performance. 



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Left: Friday, August 25, 2017 vs. the SF Giants—Guest Director: Greg Hebert, St. Thomas the Apostle

Above: Saturday, September 23, 2017 vs. the Marlins—Guest Director: Tom Bookhout, Phoenix Symphony Chorus

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Allesha Whitwood
Andie Chung
Beth Christensen
Melanie Openshaw
Jennifer McNeal

John Snyder
Wendy Umbrianna

Wilson Elementary School
Summit Academy K-6
Littleton Fine Arts Academy
Odyssey Institute Jr High
Safford Middle School
Esperero Canyon Middle School
Mesquite Jr High School
Cactus Canyon Jr High
Boulder Creek Elementary
Stapley Jr High
Arizona Conservatory
for Arts and Academics
Franklin Jr High School
Santan Jr High

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA HIGH SCHOOL HONOR CHOIR



Students from all over southern Arizona gathered on the campus of the University of Arizona on Oct. 20-21 to participate in the high school honor choir under the direction of Dr. Elizabeth Schauer.

ONE VOICE ARIZONA



Students performing "Lift Every Voice" with the Honor Choir at the University of Arizona. Jeff Vanderlee conducting.

2017 ACDA STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

The Northern Arizona University student chapter of American Choral Directors Association hosted the 2017 Student Symposium on the NAU campus in Flagstaff on October 13-14. Dr. Robert Istad from California State University Fullerton was the headliner. Other presenters included Dr. Elizabeth Schauer from University of Arizona, Dr. Edith Copley and Dr. Ryan Holder from Northern Arizona University, Andrea Squires from Desert Canyon Middle School, Dr. Sharon Hansen from University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee (Emerita), and Kim Ritzer from Green Valley High School in Las Vegas. This event included sessions similar to those at the state, regional, and national levels. Some of the sessions included an Undergraduate Conducting Masterclass, a Reading Session, Inspiring Tools for Score Study, Developing Your Musical Imagination, How to Manage a Choral Program, Grad School 101, Voice Placement: Discovering Where I Belong, Practical Ideas for Teaching Young People to Sight Sing, the Laban Conducting Technique and many others.



Dr. Robert Istad leads his session on developing your musical imagination.



Dr. Edith Copley speaking to a group of attendees.



Students actively participating in the symposium.



Dr. Robert Istad and Christina Swanson of NAU in a conducting masterclass.

2017 AzACDA Summer Conference



Top left: Dr. Anne Hamre leads a session on conducting techniques.

Top right: Dr. Tom Shelton leading his session titled, "Conducting from the Inside Out"

Middle left: Dr. Edith Copley giving Julia Higgins a private conducting lesson.

Bottom: Participants in Judy Durocher's session on vocal pedagogy in the choral rehearsal.





Top left: The Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus doing their traditional lasso tricks.



Top right: The first AzACDA Summer Conference Beer Choir lead by Dr. Ryan Holder and assisted by Greg Hebert and Jason Raetz.

Middle right: Students from NAU singing "This Land is Your Land" from the final All-Conference Sing.



Bottom: The final bows from the combined festival chorus of the International Boys and Men's Choral Festival.



BOOK DESIGN & PRODUCTION

