

The Conductors' Podium

Illinois State Newsletter of the American Choral Directors Association



Volume V, No. 1

October, 1978

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends and Fellow ACDA'ers:

October 13th and 14th are going to be two beautiful days, both literally and professionally! Ed Thompson, our hosting director of choirs at Judson College in Elgin, assures me that the trees will be in all of their fall splendor on the weekend of our state ACDA convention. Judson College is a beautiful, peaceful and friendly campus with outstanding facilities, and we will be almost the only ones on campus that weekend. What a joy compared to our former convention hotel experiences of trying to filter **out** fortissimo guitar amplifiers squawking out "Mack the Knife" in the next hall while trying to filter **in** Palestrina motets in our own convention room.

The program couldn't be better! Some of the best choral groups in the state at all levels will be performing. William Dawson, renowned composer, conductor, lecturer and teacher will be presenting an excellent session on "Rehearsal Techniques and Literature". Our Junior High School directors and students will be offered a truly unique and rewarding experience throughout the formation of our Junior High School Festival Chorus which will present several clinic demonstrations and performances under excellent clinicians. In addition, you will be able to pick up some additional repertoire ideas at a very fine reading session of selected literature.

One final session, and the most important in relation to your career, is the Saturday morning panel/dialogue we are presenting regarding "The Future of Choral Music in Illinois." There isn't a person reading this who can't come up with at least two or three examples of decreased enrollments, financial cut-backs or eliminated music positions within his or her district or city. We want to collectively explore these problems and their solutions with responsible educational and political leaders within the state. One recent positive action that we will explore is the "Illinois Plan for Arts in General Education" which was approved by the State Board of Education at its June 8th meeting in Chicago. What will this plan do for us? More importantly, what won't it do, and what is left for us to accomplish?

We hope to be able to present a number of resolutions at this session which will give strong support to the continued expansion, **not** reduction, of choral programs throughout the state. You and I both know that it is only through a collective interest group such as ACDA that we can hope to effect any educational or legislative improvement. For this reason alone it is vital that you join us in Elgin.

If after all that, I still haven't "turned you on" or "tuned you in" to this convention there's one last and enjoyable reason to be there which will tie it all together — GEMÜTHLICHKEIT! See you there!

Sincerely,
Ted Klinka
President
ACDA Illinois Chapter

THIRD ILLINOIS AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION
Judson College, Elgin, Illinois
Herrick Chapel
October 13–14, 1978

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13

- 7:00 p.m. **CONCERT – Junior High Choral Music**, Indian Trail Junior High School, Addison
Robert McCoy, *Conductor*
- 7:30 p.m. **CONCERT – Senior High Choral Music**, Maine South High School Concert Choir, Park Ridge
Irwin Bell, *Conductor*
- 8:00 p.m. **CHORAL READING SESSION**, Distinctive Choral Literature
- 9:00 p.m. **CONCERT – Community Choral Music**, Evanston Classic Chorale, Evanston
Lee Jacobson, *Conductor*
- 9:30 p.m. **CONCERT – University Choral Music**, Illinois State University Madrigal Singers, Normal
John Ferrell, *Conductor*
- 10:00 p.m. **GEMÜTHLICHKEIT**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14

- 9:00 a.m. **CLINIC/DEMONSTRATION Vocal Development for Junior High Girls' Voice**, Junior High Festival Girls' Chorus
Kim Deal, *Clinician*, Washington Junior High School, Kenosha, Wisconsin
- 9:45 a.m. **CLINIC/DEMONSTRATION, Techniques in Dealing With the Boys' Changing Voice**, Junior High Festival
Boys' Chorus,
Robert Kopecky, *Clinician*
- 10:30 a.m. **CONCERT – College Women's Glee Club**, Wheaton Women's Glee Club, Wheaton College, Wheaton
Rex Hicks, *Conductor*
- 11:00 a.m. **PANEL DISCUSSION AND DIALOGUE**, The Future of Choral Music in Illinois
- 12:00 p.m. **ACDA LUNCHEON**, Concert – Judson College Handbell Ringers and Judson College Chamber Singers
Edward Thompson, *Conductor*
- 1:15 p.m. **CLINIC/PERFORMANCE – Junior High School Music**, Junior High School Festival Chorus
Kim Deal and Robert Kopecky, *Conductors*
- 2:00 p.m. **CLINIC/DEMONSTRATION, Rehearsal Techniques and Materials**
William Dawson, *Renowned Conductor, Composer, Lecturer and Teacher*, Tuskegee Institute, Alabama
- 3:30 p.m. **CONCERT – Church Choral Music**, Lake Forest Presbyterian Church Choir, Lake Forest
William Schnell, *Conductor*
- 4:00 p.m. **CONCERT – University Choral Music**, Millikin Choir, Millikin University, Decatur
Richard Hoffland, *Conductor*

All sessions will be held in the Herrick Chapel at Judson College, which is located just south of I-90 (Northwest Tollway) on Highway 31.

GUEST CLINICIANS

WILLIAM L. DAWSON, renowned conductor, composer, lecturer and teacher, is internationally recognized for his work with the world famous Tuskegee Choir.

As a conductor, William Dawson has made guest appearances throughout the United States and abroad, including work with many all-state choirs and leading University workshops.

Among William Dawson's many honors is the honorary doctor of music degree from the Tuskegee Institute which he received at the Institute's Diamond Jubilee in 1956. He was recently honored in 1975 by the American Choral Directors Association for "His Pioneering Leadership, Inspiration, and Service to the Choral Arts."

KIM DEAL. Mr. Deal's work at Washington Junior High School in Kenosha, Wisconsin, is acknowledged as outstanding throughout the country. His choral groups have performed for the 1971 National ACDA, the 1973 and 1976 Wisconsin Music Educators Conference, the 1975 North Central MENC Convention, and were featured at the 1978 National MENC Convention in Chicago.

ROBERT KOPECKY. Mr. Kopecky is acknowledged as one of the outstanding Junior High School conductors in the state of Illinois. His groups at Tefft Junior High School in Elgin have been considered as one of Illinois' best. In the summer of 1977, Mr. Kopecky was director of the boys' chorus at the Illinois Summer Youth Music Junior High Choral Camp.

GOING FLAT?

By Caesar Andrews Jr.

Staff Reporter of *The Wall Street Journal*

Gerald was one of the less-promising pupils in the Columbus, Ohio, elementary school, then last fall, the nine-year-old youngster took an instrumental-music class, and everything changed. "It was the start of something wonderful," his teacher says. Not only did Gerald's musical training take hold, but his work in other studies improved.

But next fall, Gerald may rejoin the ranks of the academic ne'er-do-wells, because his school has scrapped the music program.

Gerald's misfortune probably will be shared by growing numbers of youngsters. As school officials in many communities face widening budget deficits, more and more musical-education programs seem likely to be pared down or eliminated. Also spurring the cutbacks are the recent surge of tax revolts, enrollment declines that tend to reduce financing, and back-to-basics programs that neglect the arts as not basic enough.

A MAJOR TARGET

"Music is one of the major areas being cut back" when schools retrench, says Harold Arberg, director of the arts and humanities unit of the U.S. Office of Education. A similar view is voiced by Leslie B. Propp, president of the American Music Conference, a trade association of musical-instrument companies and other music groups. "Music won't disappear," Mr. Propp says, "but people are overreacting to tax cuts, and undoubtedly many parents will have to pay for private instruction."

Of course, some taxpayers believe that's just fine. "Sure I like music, but I don't think it should be supported at my expense," says Eric Flournoy, a Columbus taxpayer. "Parents who want their kids in music programs should pay for it," agrees Susan Broadman of San Francisco. "That's easier than having everyone pay high taxes."

Educators trace the first cutbacks in music curricula to the early 1970's. "When cities began adjusting to the economic crunch, one of the first areas to be reduced was education," says Robert Klotman, president of the Music Educators National Conference. "Since many boards of education viewed music and other arts as less than necessary, they were among the first to go."

REFERENDUMS REJECTED

In Downers Grove, Illinois, music students are already singing the blues. Recently, taxpayers for the third time rejected a referendum that would have bolstered school revenue. As a result, the school system ended its instrumental-music program in its 13 elementary schools at a saving of \$70,000 a year. *Voice instruction was scrapped three years ago.*

"I don't think the situation has ever been any worse," contends Arthur Wiscombe, superintendent of Downers Grove schools. A \$1 million budget deficit, which triggered the first cutbacks four years

ago, has grown to \$1.3 million. Mr. Wiscombe says the school board "is perplexed over our economic problems. We want a quality system that includes music, but we don't have the necessary money."

Downers Grove residents are trying to raise \$75,000 in donations to reinstate the lost programs, and many parents are considering a plan to pay for private lessons in after-school music classes. High school music programs haven't been curtailed yet, but "with no elementary feeder system, the situation isn't encouraging," says Alan Roselieb, band director at South High School in Downers Grove.

Some parents in Downers Grove scowl that local residents are so concerned about saving money they are forfeiting their children's education. "It's going to take something drastic — like the closing of school — to awaken them," says Arlene Proter, a Downers Grove mother with two children in the high school music program.

TROUBLE IN COLUMBUS

School closings are exactly what administrators in Columbus, Ohio, are hoping to avoid. Music is one of 75 programs being cut as part of a \$14 million money-saving plan there. Elementary schools, which had to drop their vocal-music teachers in 1970, now must slash instrumental programs. Officials say that with the third defeat of a tax increase in three years, Columbus schools may have to close this November or early December. "We are just victims of not enough money," says Daniel Baker, instrumental-music supervisor.

WASHINGTON STATE BATTLE

To be sure, not all communities are in desperate straits. In three states — Florida, South Carolina and Washington — music is considered part of basic education. But getting states to adopt such a stance has sometimes been difficult. "Including music as a basic was a hard-earned battle," says James Sjolund, supervisor of music and arts education for the State of Washington. "Last year we could have lost our entire program."

That battle really began in 1973, when Seattle's school budget was cut on one-third, and music programs were slashed drastically. By 1975, many schools were forced to drop music teachers, and several elementary school programs were terminated. Then, some educators and parents disgruntled by these and other cutbacks responded by *taking the issue to court; they demanded that the state be responsible for financing basic education, including music.* Ruling on the suit, Superior Court Judge Robert Doran ordered the state legislature not only to finance basic education but also to define it clearly.

Music was included in the resulting back-to-basics definition through community support and political know-how, Mr. Sjolund contends. Arguing that the "three R's are not enough," art groups, spearheaded by the Washington Music Educators Association, won solid support from the state's influential senate education committee. *Later, the education bill, with the music provision, was overwhelmingly approved by the state legislature.* "Music will prosper in Washington with the implementation of this legislation," Mr. Sjolund says.

from *The Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 1978

new!

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DATES TO REMEMBER

- January 26–28, 1979 — IMEA Conference, Conrad Hilton Hotel, Chicago
- February 17, 1979 — Eleventh Annual Illinois ACDA Invitational College Choir Festival, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Rex Hicks, host
- March 8–10, 1979 — ACDA National Convention, Radisson-Muehleback Hotel, Kansas City
- April 7, 1979 — Tenth Annual Illinois ACDA Invitational Community College Choral Festival, Sauk Valley College, Dixon, Max Guinnup, host

RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION

Although more Americans participate in choral music than any other art, the National Endowment for the Arts has virtually ignored our presence since its inception. From its 1978 budget of \$114,600,000 the Endowment has designated only .07% for choral music. The highest it has ever allotted was .3%. To make matters worse, the rules of the Endowment make it virtually impossible for the amateur chorus even to apply for funds. Still worse, of this year's \$78,000, 80% is spent on choral music in just four major cities: New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Los Angeles.

If you are appalled, and want your righteous indignation to be heard, write and express your views to:

Mr. Livingston Biddle, Jr. Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts
2401 E Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20506

Please insist that choral music be given a fair share (at least \$1,000,000 per year), that funds be made available to **amateur** groups, and that ACDA, which represents more than 10,000 conductors, be designated to allocate those funds. *Lay down your baton, pick up your pen, and let your tax-paying voice be heard!*

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