



# S.C.V.A. NEWS

Southern California Vocal Association January, 2015

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Rodger Guerrero

It's a New Year, and hopefully it will be a joyous and successful one for all of us. I don't know about you, but for me there is always a sense of possibility, of hope, of potential when January comes around. I firmly believe that it is feasible to alter one's course in midstream. I firmly believe that with sufficient reflection, positive, meaningful change can occur. I firmly believe that you can teach an old dog new tricks. And after nearly thirty years in the choral field, I'm quite experienced (re: old).

As a choral educator, there are three important questions I ask of myself each January, prior to the resumption of school. Asking them is the easy part. Answering them honestly...well, that's a completely different and difficult process. Here they are, accompanied by their significance in the choral rehearsal:

### **I. Has the quality of the learning experience of each student I teach functioned separately from their collective achievement?**

This is that old "Product" vs. "Process question. Of course, the quality of the concerts and festival performances is important to everyone – students included. However, learning is not a linear process. Similarly, rehearsals should not be exclusively intended to attain concert goals. Our singers have distinct worlds and experiential circles. Only they know how their circles function and are tangential to the choral educational world in which we interact with them. The information we present to them within our world may or may not transform what they know and have experienced. The only way to find out is to constantly ask them about it. If we spend entire rehearsals talking at our students, we will never receive accurate responses from them about what they have learned and how it relates to their circles of knowledge and experience.

### **II. Have the students I teach been able to forge their own meaning from the musical information and experiences I have shared with them?**

As a choral educator, I know that students garner much less meaning from my lectures than they do from process-founded, problem-based, investigative, and experientially constructed activities. The choir exponentially improves as a whole when each individual singer latches onto consistent, conceptual musical understanding. I must therefore structure their learning as a series of opportunities. Telling them what to do isn't enough. Showing them what to do is marginally better. Asking them what they think should be done is incredibly effective. Refining or revising their suggestions by presenting contradictions, asking more questions, offering additional information, or encouraging them to research...well that's the way it should be done.

### **III. How can I apply this Constructivist Educational Approach to the choral rehearsal?**

I must always seek and value the students' point of view. They must lead rehearsal discussions about sound, literature, textual meaning, musical expression, singer positioning, scheduling, social activities, the learning process, and more. I must listen to and apply their observations as equally-invested listeners. I must encourage them to creatively use technology during rehearsals as fact-finders. They must become enthusiastic about exploring and sharing rehearsal review via email and other online discussion outlets. The activities I design in every rehearsal must challenge the suppositions they bring from their experiential circles. Rehearsals are less meaningful when they are conductor-centered. I must therefore learn about and validate the students' previous experiences in order to gain their trust before I challenge them. I must pose problems of emerging relevance for them, and this means continual shifting. Concert repertoire must therefore be designed and altered for their benefit (something I must personally address for the next two weeks as I tackle their post-HW Winter Concert email reflections). Most importantly, I must continue to enthusiastically interact with the students when they return from Winter Break, each and every day.

So: what new tricks will you try this year? Let me know. I would love to learn from you!

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# Junior High Honor Choir Auditions are right around the corner!

*Molly Peters, VP-Junior High Honor Choir*

Auditions for Junior High Honor Choir are scheduled for two Saturdays in 2015: January 18<sup>th</sup> and January 25<sup>th</sup>. We have audition sites in various locations around Southern California, so there is definitely one close to you and your students! These wonderful site hosts are opening up their schools to you and your students (6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade) so that they have the opportunity to participate in the honor choir. And it is going to be really



special this year: Mr. Michael Hayden is our guest conductor and he is wonderful! Your younger singers will really enjoy working with him. The application deadline is January 12<sup>th</sup>. I realize that many of us will just be getting back to school at that time, so time is of the essence!

## **Audition Requirements**

See SCVA Website at [scvachoral.org](http://scvachoral.org)

## **Regional Audition Dates** (various sites)

### **Saturday, January 17:**

Desert Hot Springs High School, Desert Hot Springs (host: Michael Bukraba)

Lincoln Middle School, Santa Monica (host: Vanessa Counte)

Travis Ranch Middle School, Yorba Linda (host: Jessica Schlenz)

### **Saturday, January 24:**

Mesa Robles Middle School, Hacienda Heights (host: Amanda Benavides)

Valley High School, Santa Ana (host: Karen Bluel)

Vanguard University, Costa Mesa (host: James Melton)

## **Regional Rehearsal Sites and Times**

### **Saturday, March 14, Saturday, 9am - 1pm**

Lincoln Middle School (Santa Monica)

### **Saturday, March 21, 9am - 1pm:**

Mesa Robles Middle School (Hacienda Heights)

## **Final Rehearsal and Performance**

**Location:** Santa Monica High School, Santa Monica

**Date:** Saturday, April 25

Rehearsal sessions will be from 10:00am to 6:00pm

Concert is at 6:00pm

**Ticket Cost:** \$5.00 general admission (available at the door)

**Guest Clinician:** Mr. Michael Hayden

## SCVA High School Honor Choir

*Crystal Stone, VP II – High School Honor Choirs*

**Congratulations to the Southern California Regional Honor Choirs 2014!** Congratulations to our Honor Choir students and conductors for performing such a superb concert of high caliber choral literature! It was truly an inspiring event for audience, directors and singers alike. This year we had 530 high school students audition from the Southern California region. 276 students were chosen based on scores that ranged from 61-100 depending on voice section. We had 82 high schools represented within the three Honor Choirs this year.

The 2014 Southern California Regional Honor Choirs were guided and inspired by our three esteemed conductors: Arlie Langager, John Tebay and Geoffrey Paul Boers. Our pianists, Jill Brenner, Joseph Schubert and Sara Shakliyan, were brilliant at the keyboard. The students were engaged throughout rehearsal, inspired to create music of quality and meaning and were challenged to grow in their musical ability because of our leaders. One of the greatest benefits of the Honor Choir experience is when participating students return to their high school rehearsals with a renewed spirit and share the knowledge and tricks that they have learned from their expert conductors. It is the gift that keeps on giving!

**Thank you to all who made this year's Honor Choir experience successful!** Thank you to those directors and parents who volunteered during the 2014 honor choir weekend. We sincerely could not have done it without you! From ticket sales to registration to coffee runs to clean-up to supervising students, the weekend was ultimately successful because of your willingness to support our organization and students. THANK YOU!

The hugest thank you must be said to Karen Garrett who headed up this event along with me. It takes countless hours to organize and present this outstanding concert. The preparation begins months before the concert weekend and Karen's diligence and organization made this mountain of a job seem much more manageable. Honor choir weekend would not logistically be possible without the help of Jeffe Huls who hosts the event at Santa Monica High School. From securing the facilities to problem solving any sudden issues, Jeffe's energy towards making the weekend a success was greatly appreciated. A special thank you to our choir hosts: Tina Peterson, Bethany Encina and John Sargent. Thanks also to our webmaster Mark Freedkin for working his technical magic to make all of our lives easier. Thank you to the SCVA Board for being there whenever needed. Your support is invaluable. Lastly, thank you to the choral directors who prepared their singers for auditions and for the concert. Thank you for believing in what our organization provides and for providing your students with an amazing experience.

From the Women's Choir's resounding *Hosanna* concert opener to the powerful *Sinner Please* sung by the Men's Choir to the Mixed Choir's culminating closer *It Takes a Whole Village*, one thing is clear: choral music is alive and well in Southern California!

**We listen!** Over the years, directors have made suggestions to improve the Honor Choir process and we have listened. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome as we continually strive to improve the Honor Choir experience for students, directors and audience. E-mail suggestions to: [cstone@powayusd.com](mailto:cstone@powayusd.com)

## Festival Participation: Resolutions for a New Year

*Nancy Ludwig and Melva Morrison, Festival VPs*

Recently, I've been reflecting upon my early years as an educator and how much differently I approach my students now than I did all those years ago. Many things about my teaching have changed, hopefully for the better. However, as much as I have evolved as an educator and choral director, one thing never seems to change: FESTIVALS CAN BE SCARY!!!!



Am I wrong? How many of us as directors fill out that paperwork every year with trepidation? Questioning whether or not our groups will be ready, if we will pick the right repertoire, if the judges will treat our students fairly, if our singers will even turn in the permission slip, etc. How many of us become simply too overwhelmed by these obstacles and decide not to attend any festival at all? Let's be honest, some years are just more difficult than others and it just doesn't make sense to attend a festival. But if we let too much time go by this becomes the norm, and we find it much more comfortable back in the choir 'womb.' Very much like our New Year's Resolution to start working out more regularly, it is very difficult to change behavior that we are used to. (Guilty as charged!)

But the fact of the matter is that festivals are just as good for us as they are for our students. They force us out of the "womb" and into the blinding light. Festivals give us a fresh set of expert ears, enabling us to take the next step with our ensembles. It is good for our students to see their teachers willing to take constructive criticism and put it to use in rehearsal. From our examples they become more willing to take musical risks with each other and with us as their directors. I would like to encourage those of you who have stayed away from festivals to take a leap of faith in this New Year. Resolve to be that courageous director once again and sign up for a festival! Choose the level that is right for you and your students, and go for it! Your students will thank you.

*"Courage is resistance to fear, master of fear - not absence of fear. Except a creature be part coward it is not a compliment to say it is brave." -Mark Twain*

**The following festivals are still available as of 12/25/14:**

### Junior High/Middle School Festivals

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Host</b>
Thurs	3/19	11:00am	Venice HS	Los Angeles	Open	Open	Wendy Sarnoff
Tues	3/24	9:00am	Menifee Valley MS	Menifee	Open	Open	Tom Oliver
Tues	3/24	12:00pm	Menifee Valley MS	Menifee	Open	Open	Tom Oliver
Thurs	4/02	10:00am	Las Flores MS	Las Flores	Open	Open	Elena Benefield
Tues	4/14	9:00am	James L. Day MS	Temecula	Open	Open	Patricia Halic
Tues	4/14	1:00pm	James L. Day MS	Temecula	Open	Open	Patricia Halic
Tues	4/21	10:00am	Las Flores MS	Las Flores	Open	Open	Elena Benefield
Thurs	5/07	10:00am	Oak MS	Los Alamitos	Open	Open	Rachelle Randeem
Fri	5/08	10:00am	Oak MS	Los Alamitos	Open	Open	Rachelle Randeem
Fri	5/08	11:00am	Manhattan Beach MS	Manhattan Beach	Adv	Open	Heather Gold
Fri	5/08	1:00pm	Ramirez Intermediate School	Eastvale	Novice	Clinic	Kyle Betts
Wed	5/13	10:00am	Bernardo Yorba MS	Yorba Linda	Open	Open	Linda Nason
Fri	5/15	1:00pm	Seegerstrom HS	Santa Ana	Open	Open	Greg Ellis
Thurs	5/21	10:00am	William and Jane Bristol Civic Auditorium	Bellflower	Open	Open	Jae Shu

## High School Festivals

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Host</i>
Mon	3/02	3:30pm	Del Norte HS	San Diego	Open	Open	Keith Sattely
Thurs	3/05	9:00am	Chaparral HS	Temecula	Open	Open	Rob Hodo
Wed	3/11	10:00am	Bloomington HS	Bloomington	Open	Open	Ryan Duckworth
Wed	3/11	2:00pm	Montebello HS	Montebello	Open	Open	Jessie Flasschoen
Wed	3/11	7:00pm	Montebello HS	Montebello	Adv	Open	Jessie Flasschoen
Thurs	3/19	6:30 PM	Venice HS	Los Angeles	Open	Open	Wendy Sarnoff
Fri	3/20	10:00am	Segerstrom HS	Santa Ana	Adv	Chamber	Grace Han
Tues	3/24	9:00am	Fallbrook HS	Fallbrook	Open	Open	Heather Smith
Tues	3/24	7:30 pm	Harvard-Westlake School <b>SIGHTREADING</b>	Studio City	Adv	Chamber	Rodger Guerrero
Thurs	3/26	4:00pm	Golden Valley HS	Santa Clarita	Open	Open	Kerry Riccio Agüero
Tues	3/31	10:00am	Baldwin Park PAC	Baldwin Park	Novice	Open	Suzanne Brookey
Tues	3/31	3:30pm	Baldwin Park PAC	Baldwin Park	Adv	Chamber	Suzanne Brookey
Wed	4/01	9:30am	Beckman HS <b>SIGHTREADING</b>	Irvine	Adv	Mixed	Nancy Stuck
Wed	4/01	10:00am	Rosemead HS	Rosemead	Open	Open	Ruth Gray
Wed	4/01	1:00pm	Beckman HS	Irvine	Open	Open	Nancy Stuck
Wed	4/01	4:00pm	Rosemead HS	Rosemead	Open	Open	Ruth Gray
Thurs	4/02	10:00am	Placentia-Yorba Linda USD PAC	Placentia	Open	Women's	Michael Fenton
Thurs	4/02	1:00pm	Placentia-Yorba Linda USD PAC	Placentia	Open	Mixed	Michael Fenton
Thurs	4/02	5:00pm	Walnut HS	Walnut	Open	Open	Elizabeth Lopez
Tues	4/07	6:00pm	Knight HS	Palmdale	Open	Open	Suzanne McGarraugh
Wed	4/08	9:00am	CSUSB Recital Hall	San Bernadino	Adv	Open	John Russell
Wed	4/08	10:00am	Jarupa Hills HS	Fontana	Open	Open	Darrin Schuck
Thurs	4/09	10:00am	Fontana HS	Fontana	Open	Open	Jennifer Esquivel
Thurs	4/09	10:00am	Beaumont HS	Beaumont	Novice	Open	John Fieldhouse
Fri	4/10	10:00am	Arlington HS	Riverside	Open	Open	Kelli Dower
Tues	4/14	10:00am	Segerstrom HS	Santa Ana	Open	Women's	Grace Han
Tues	4/14	7:00pm	Eastlake HS	Chula Vista	Open	Open	Joseph DeMers
Wed	4/15	10:00am	Segerstrom HS	Santa Ana	Open	Men's	Grace Han
Thurs	4/16	10:00am	Segertsrom HS	Santa Ana	Open	Mixed	Grace Han
Fri	4/17	9:00am	Jarupa Valley HS	Mira Loma	Open	Women's	Melva Morrison
Fri	4/17	12:30pm	Jarupa Valley HS	Mira Loma	Open	Open	Melva Morrison
Tues	4/21	6:00pm	Mark Keppel HS	Alhambra	Open	Open	Tony Azeltine
Wed	4/22	9:30am	Murrieta Mesa HS	Murrieta	Open	Clinic	Jeffrey Kopasz
Wed	4/22	10:00am	Westridge School	Pasadena	Open	Open	Paul Stephenson
Wed	4/22	1:00pm	Murrieta Mesa HS <b>SIGHTREADING</b>	Murrieta	Adv	Clinic	Jeffrey Kopasz
Tues	4/28	9:30am	Marshall Fundamental School	Pasadena	Open	Open	David Pitts
Tues	4/28	7:00pm	Thacher School	Ojai	Open	Open	Bill Wagner
Thurs	4/30	2:00pm	El Monte HS	El Monte	Open	Open	Joel Whisler
Mon	5/18	7:00pm	West HS	Torrance	Open	Open	Kathleen Jensen
Thurs	5/21	1:00pm	William and Jane Bristol Auditorium	Bellflower	Open	Open	Carolyn Kelley

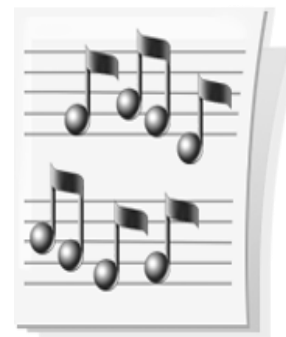
- The deadline to register for a festival is March 1, 2015.
- The cost per choir for each regular festival is \$100, and festivals with sight-singing are \$130. You may access the online registration form at <http://www.scvachoral.org/festivals.php>.
- Questions? Contact Nancy Ludwig or Melva Morrison. You may also visit the FAQ page at: [http://www.scvachoral.org/festival\\_faq.html](http://www.scvachoral.org/festival_faq.html).

## Will and Means

*Karen Garrett, VPI Honor Choir*

*“Nothing is impossible; there are ways that lead to everything, and if we had sufficient will we should always have sufficient means. It is often merely for an excuse that we say things are impossible.”*

.....Francois de La Rochefoucauld



In September, Jennifer Stanley, Executive Vice President for SCVA, published the results of a survey given to our membership regarding the possible addition of sight-reading in the SCVA Choral Festivals. The survey results indicated that a majority of our membership had the “will” to have sight-reading as an added component to some of our spring Choral Festivals. In an effort to be responsive to membership we have added five festivals with a sight-reading component in 2015.

It has never been more exciting to be a part of SCVA. After survey results indicated that though a majority of directors have the WILL to include sight-reading as an added component to some Festivals, many are looking for the MEANS. The **Festival Sight-Reading Level Rubric** ([www.scvachoral.org/festivals/rubric](http://www.scvachoral.org/festivals/rubric) of levels 1-6) tells us exactly what musicianship skills the choir will need to be successful at each level of Festival sight reading. Remember you choose the level – start at level one and sing unison this year. It’s getting started that is important, not the level! There are a number of sight reading courses currently in print that will get your choirs on the way to the desired level.

- 1) The Jensen Sight Singing Course by David Bauguess is very well sequenced and methodical. I love the suggested aural preparation prior to each level. Level 3 in the Festival Level Rubric will correspond approximately with Level 5 in the Jensen Vol. 1 book (with some extra rhythm prep needed). Vol 2 will introduce the chromaticism for level 6 of the Festival Level Rubric. Available at [www.jwpepper.com](http://www.jwpepper.com) - \$3.95 for student copy.
- 2) The Masterworks Press “Let’s Get Started & “Easy Rhythm Series” is only \$40 for a set of reproducible masters. These sheets are in all choral voicings (Unison-4 part) and will prepare you well for harmony singing. MWP has a series for any level you might wish to prepare from beginning to advanced. Since MWP prepared the Festival Level Rubric and has composed sight reading examples for festivals for years, you can go to their website and purchase past festival sight-reading examples. [www.masterworkspress.com](http://www.masterworkspress.com).
- 3) Sight –Singing for SSA by Joyce Eilers and Emily Crocker: This booklet will take you all the way from level 1-6 on the Festival Level Rubric. From step-wise motion quarter notes to chromatics and sixteenth notes. Fast paced but accessible for your women’s choir. Available at [www.jwpepper.com](http://www.jwpepper.com) - \$3.50 student copy.

With both will and means we can change the lives of our choral students. They can be both knowledgeable and independent choral musicians, a gift that will give them music for a lifetime.



## SCVA SHOW CHOIR SPECTACULAR

*Patty Breitag, VP – Show Choirs*

*Sweat, Tears, and Jazz Hands* – how very true. I recently had a chance to purchase this book published in 2011 by Hal Leonard Books. There is a quote on the first page that says: “In short, a show choir is a mash-up between a standard choir, a dance team, and a drama club, which competes with similar groups throughout the country.” This is the tell-all book about how show choir has become what it is today and the influences that got it here. There are some great pictures and personal narrative. In addition, there are many references to California show choir schools, and especially the National championship show choir schools like Burbank, John Burroughs and Los Alamitos. More importantly, the book shows how show choir has continued to metamorphose over the years. California, along with many mid-western states has contributed to the success of show choir over the years including the show choir “themed” show ideas that have taken the show choir world by storm. But can we actually define show choir? Not really, because there are truly many concepts of what it should or could be. Nevertheless, students love the competitive spirit, the costumes and the work ethic that it takes to reach the show choir stage.

Since I’m a baseball aficionado, I can compare show choir to baseball: All schools start like baseball in the spring – every team has an equal chance of winning the pennant! There will be new costume colors, more inventive props, more technology and lighting designs and show ideas that we would never expect to see and experience. But so what? We all strive to go for that first place trophy and to support each others’ efforts to get there!

There is no show choir after high school! When it is over (there are few colleges that have show choir), it is over. But our students will leave high school with amazing memories and a lifetime of friends. Please consider the SCVA Show Choir Spectacular in 2015. Rancho Mirage High School has again agreed to host this event. Saturday, May 2 is the date, so sign up on the SCVA webpage.

### **Divisions will include the following:**

- High School Novice Women
- High School Intermediate Women
- High School Advanced Women
- High School Novice Mixed
- High School Intermediate Mixed
- High School Advanced Mixed
- High School Men’s Open

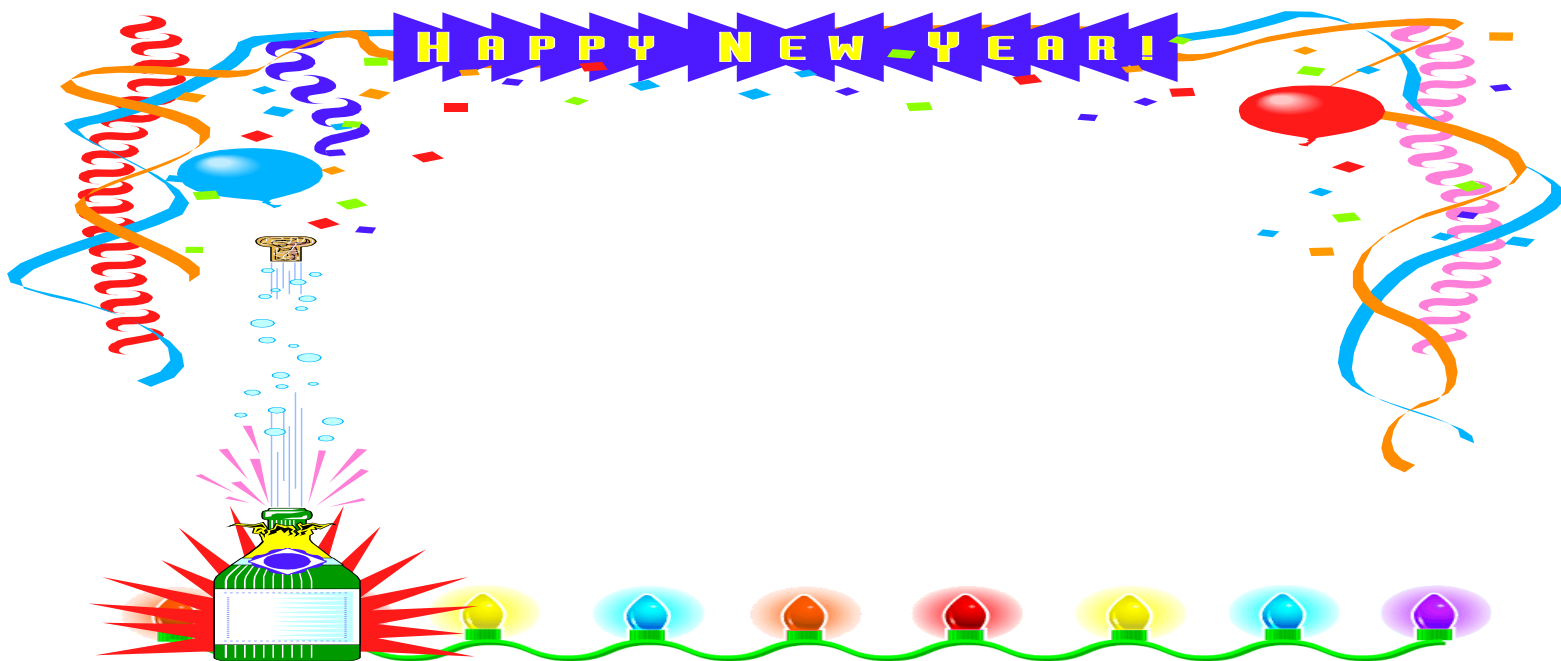
**\*If there is any interest in a Middle School/Junior High Division, please let me know.**

## Southern California Vocal Association

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### IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

SCVA Festival Registration Continues	Deadline March 1, 2015
Junior High Honor Choir Application Deadline	January 12, 2015
Junior High Honor Choir Auditions	January 17, 2015
	January 24, 2015
Diva Day	February 7, 2015
Young Men's Harmony Festival	February 21, 2015
ACDA National Conference	February 25 – 28, 2015
SCVA Vocal Jazz Festival	March 13, 2015
Junior High Honor Choir Regional Rehearsal	March 14, 2015
Junior High Honor Choir Regional Rehearsal	March 21, 2015
California All-State High School Honor Choirs	March 26 - 28, 2015
Junior High Honor Choir Rehearsal & Concert	April 25, 2015
Show Choir Spectacular	May 2, 2015