



# S.C.V.A. NEWS

Southern California Vocal Association November, 2014

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Rodger Guerrero*

Are you like me in that you have to constantly remind yourself to refrain from talking too much during rehearsals? Do we enjoy the dulcet tones of our speaking voices so much or have we just developed longtime bad habits? Today I rehearsed four different choirs. Throughout the day, I began to notice that it took me longer to explain musical concepts to the singers than it took for them to actually achieve them! The more they achieved, the more I spoke about new concepts. The endless circle eventually caused a **talking-to-singing ratio of about 2:1**. Thus I was speaking for 30 of the 45-minute rehearsals. Those poor, unfortunate singers! They certainly did not join a choral ensemble in order to spend the majority of their precious learning time listening to me lecture!

There are a number of well-established tricks of the trade that effectively alleviate the dreaded "Over-Talking Disease." First, use a stopwatch throughout rehearsals in order to time your talking-to-singing. Inform your singers of your determination to train yourself to establish a **1:2 (or more!) talking-to-singing ratio** during choral rehearsals. Tell them that you value their musical development so much that you are making every effort to give them as much singing time as possible. Then, leave one of your trusted singers in charge of the stopwatch. Do this and you will win their trust and respect forever. It might color your rehearsal with much needed levity in addition to the resultant verbal brevity.

However, if the above-described method is too public for you, use your smart phone or iPad or video camera to film your rehearsals. Take time to sit down, compile talking-to-singing data, and analyze where you might make strategic teaching changes in order to alter the ratio. While this technique is time extensive, it can teach many other valuable lessons (conducting gesture, conductor-singer communication, etc.). In addition, it will provide you with helpful visual and aural information regarding the actual performance and rehearsal technique of your students.

We choral educators must continually ask ourselves, "**Can we convey concepts or corrections to our singers without talking?**" Would demonstration work more effectively? Can we more efficiently express our thoughts by means of our conducting gesture? Would it be most imaginative and economical if the students were to audiate while we "silently" conducted them? Should they conduct with us as they audiate? In his book, **Chorus Confidential**, Dr. William Dehning (perhaps the most expeditious and resourceful tactician ever) presents an entire chapter about rehearsal technique. In it he lists twelve **Profane Commandments for the Sacred Process: Rehearsing**. The fourth states: **Thou shalt talk only when necessary. Your title is "conductor." So conduct. If you think you want to talk about the "cloud-like buoyancy" of a rhythm, try singing it for them – or show it. You should "speak the language of the baton" so fluently that you could conduct a rehearsal with laryngitis. If you have tried both of the above without results, then you may try "cloud-like buoyancy."**

When we talk, we must make every effort to talk **with** and **not to** our singers. We should involve them in each discussion, questioning, prodding, and encouraging them at every possible moment. Wilbert McKeachie's **Teaching Tips** offers that studies clearly indicate that "**discussion methods are far superior to lectures in student retention of information, transfer of knowledge to new situations, development of problem solving, and in motivation for further learning**" (McKeachie, pp. 55-56).

So friends, let's keep the talking to a minimum and let our singers have a voice in every discussion. Let's keep them singing as much as possible because that's what they come to choir to do. Isn't **singing** what we want them to do for their entire lives?

## Fall In-Service

Mark Henson, Past President



An enthusiastic group of veteran choral directors, new teachers, retirees, and college music students gathered last Friday for our annual Fall In-Service. It was a wonderful day of learning, sharing, and celebrating choral music and teaching.

Desiree LaVertu from Occidental College and Joe Modica from University of Redlands were captivating in their presentations about warm-ups, choral tone, repertoire selection, conducting techniques, and more. Dr. Modica's Bel Canto Choir demonstrated a variety of examples of choral tone while Dr. Modica shared his thoughts regarding the appropriateness or inappropriateness of each type of tone, and suggested conducting gestures to elicit the desired tone from our choirs. Also addressed was the very important need to take time to CARE FOR OURSELVES in the midst of everything we are expected to do! Many thanks to Sam DeRenzis of JW Pepper for preparing the music packets for the choral reading session, and to Dr. Hyunju Hwang for accompanying. Titles presented will soon be available on the SCVA website.

Participants also enjoyed an exceptional presentation by Jennifer Stanley, Karen Garrett, and Dr. Leland Vail about the history, philosophy, and policies of SCVA festivals. A productive and informative question and answer session followed and led to some excellent discussion. Karen and Jennifer then updated everyone on SCVA's plans to include a sight-singing component at certain festivals. I think we all left with a clear idea of the goal and the process, and how to approach with confidence the task of preparing our students.

This was truly an outstanding day of professional development! If you missed this year's event, we hope you'll be able to attend next year. What would you like to see included on next year's agenda? Send me an email with your thoughts.



## Vocal Jazz

*Christine Tavares-Mocha, VP-Vocal Jazz*

**2015 SCVA Vocal Jazz and A Cappella Festival with ARORA (Known as SONOS)**

Friday March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at Valencia High School

**Save the date and sign up now at [SCVAChoral.org](http://SCVAChoral.org)!**

### **2015 California All State Vocal Jazz Auditions**

California All-State Music Educators Conference in Fresno, CA. on **February 18-21, 2015**

***Auditions must be postmarked by December 1, 2014***

Audition Includes:

1. Chromatic Scale
2. Blues Scale
3. The standard "I'm Old Fashioned"
4. One jazz standard of your choice
5. Excerpt of "London by Night" by Gene Puerling
6. Blues Improvisation

**For More Information visit: [www.cbda.org](http://www.cbda.org) , click on auditions, vocal jazz**

## **2014-2015 SCVA High School Honor Choir**

*Karen Garrett VPI – High School Honor Choirs*

Congratulations to the 275 members of the 2014-2015 SCVA High School Honor Choirs and the 98 schools that are represented this year. That's up 20 schools from last year! Many thanks to the 12 audition site hosts, 64 adjudicators, and my colleague Crystal Stone VPII of Honor Choirs, for all the hard work and organization it takes to make this huge event happen successfully.

October 25<sup>th</sup> was the first rehearsal at Fullerton College. The three choirs met from 8:00 am-4:00 pm to work with rehearsal conductors: Rich Messenger (Mixed Choir), Scott Melvin (Women's Choir) and Brandon Elliott (Men's Choir). Singers began preparation for Honor Choir weekend November 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> at Santa Monica High School. The culminating concert is at 7:00 p.m. on November 22<sup>nd</sup> at Santa Monica High School – Tickets are \$10.00 general seating and may be purchased in advance on-line at [www.scvachoral.org](http://www.scvachoral.org), at rehearsals, or at the door.

Just a few reminders for directors and students participating in the Honor Choirs to ensure that everyone has a great experience:

- Students must attend all scheduled rehearsals in their entirety or be subject to removal from the choir. If a student does not attend all rehearsals, their home school may be suspended from Honor Choir participation for one year.
- All the Honor Choir rehearsals are open rehearsals. This is a great opportunity for you to see our outstanding conductors work with the Honor Choirs. We always learn great techniques and rehearsal ideas from the Honor Choir guest conductors in rehearsal. Rehearsals are Friday Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> and Sat. Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> at Santa Monica High School.
- We count on you, the directors of participating singers, to volunteer on Honor Choir weekend. Crystal Stone will be sending out an e-mail through VolunterSpot to sign up to help. Thank you in advance for your assistance!
- Please encourage your students to PRACTICE! It is so important that singers feel confident on their individual parts. Have them come to you with their music and sing their parts with the tracks. Do not assume efficient practice is occurring at home. Have them be accountable to you before Honor Choir weekend. Practice tracks are available for each song at:

LINK: <http://www.partrecordings.com/honorchoir.php>

HONOR CHOIR ID: **scva2014**

PASSWORD: **mozart92**

**I look forward to seeing you all the 2014-2015 SCVA Honor Choir Concert**

Invite all your students, their parents and the community to the Honor Choir concert Saturday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> at Santa Monica High School, 601 Pico Boulevard, Santa Monica. \$10 Tickets available at [www.scvachoral.org](http://www.scvachoral.org), during rehearsals, and at the door.

## **Festival Registration Opens Nov. 15!**

*Nancy Ludwig, VP of Festivals I; Melva Morrison, VP of Festivals II*



The deadline to register to host a festival has passed, and registration to participate in festivals will be available soon! There are many fantastic opportunities for your choirs to attend an SCVA festival throughout the Southern California Region! There are both middle school and high school offerings at the Novice, Open, and Advanced levels. This is a wonderful performing opportunity for all our choirs, in addition to the incredibly helpful adjudications they receive.

We have a new addition to our festival choices this year! Four of our Advanced High School level festivals are piloting a sight-singing portion. This is a new and exciting addition to our festivals, as a way to promote and support the wonderful musicianship work you are all doing in your choral classrooms. While this can sometimes be a very intimidating festival element, your SCVA board has worked very hard to choose a sight-singing process that is very accessible to all choirs regardless of the level of experience. Each director will be able to choose the level of sight singing for their own ensemble based on a carefully constructed rubric, to ensure that there is no 'teaching to the test.' You are encouraged to take a look at this rubric online. In addition, Masterworks Press has reproducible materials available at low cost to assist each conductor in preparing for the festival sight-singing process.

Beginning November 15, you will be able to access the list of festivals and the online registration form at <http://www.scvachoral.org> as well as our FAQ page regarding attending a festival. You must be a current member of SCVA to attend a festival, so take a moment to renew your membership if you've not already done so! The cost to attend a festival is \$100; you can submit payment through PayPal, or by mailing a check to the address listed on the registration form.



### **Website Update**

*Mark Freedkin, Webmaster*

#### **Why Is Your E-mail Address So Important???**

We just completed the High School Honor Choir Audition Application process, and we received over 540 applications. The on-line Audition Application system uses the choral director's e-mail address to gather together all of the singers from each school. Therefore, it is really important that all of your students use a SINGLE e-mail address for you when they submit their applications. Please identify one e-mail address and have all your singers use that address.

Similarly, it is really important that your students enter your preferred e-mail address accurately. There's no easy way for the website to know the difference between a slightly mis-typed e-mail address and a totally different e-mail address (such as [mfreedkin@yahoo.com](mailto:mfreedkin@yahoo.com) vs. [mfreedkin@yhoo.com](mailto:mfreedkin@yhoo.com)).

#### **Don't Reply Directly to E-mail Broadcast Messages**

Please be aware that if you simply reply to any of those automated broadcast messages, your response will be sent to me (as webmaster), and I must then forward your message the originator. For more efficient communication, please send your response to the sender's e-mail address.

# Vocal Solo/Small Ensemble Preliminary Competition Registration

Marisa Rawlins Bradfield, VP – Vocal Solo Competition

SCVA Vocal Solo Competition/Small Ensemble Festival

Marisa Rawlins-Bradfield, VP-Vocal Solo Competition

This competition is an excellent opportunity for your students to sing outside of the choral classroom and build on their instrument as a soloist. The experience of preparing for a performance of this nature will bring a more confident and disciplined musician back into your ensembles. The Vocal Solo Competition and Small Ensemble Festival provide a chance to expand on confidence, musical growth and self-discovery. Please encourage your students to participate!

SCVA applicants who earn a Superior rating will be invited to the CMEA State Solo and Small Ensemble Festival.

## Online Application and Payment Deadline

Saturday, December 6th

Registration is only available online  
[www.scvachoral.org](http://www.scvachoral.org)

Further questions and information

Please email me at  
[marisa.bradfield@providencehigh.org](mailto:marisa.bradfield@providencehigh.org)

## Preliminary Competition/Festival Dates and Locations

Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup>

Glendale High School,  
Glendale

Host: Grace Sheldon-Williams

Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup>

Murrieta Mesa High School,  
Murrieta

Host: Jeffrey Kopasz

Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup>

Fullerton High School,  
Fullerton

Host: Scott Hedgecock

Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup>

Canyon High School  
Santa Clarita

Host: Mary Purdy

Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup>

Westview High School  
Westview (San Diego)

Host: Crystal Stone

## Competition and Festival Categories

### Performance Fees

- ✓ \$25 for a solo performance
- ✓ \$35 for duet, trio, quartet, small ensemble

- ❖ Classical Vocal Solo-Competitive
- ❖ Classical Vocal Solo – Non-Competitive - Comments or Ratings Only (Superior, Excellent, Good)
- ❖ Musical Theatre Solo – Non-Competitive for Comments or Ratings Only
- ❖ Small Ensemble Performance - Non-Competitive - Duet, Trio, Quartet, 5-part Madrigal, Barbershop Quartet. Comments or Ratings Only

# JUNIOR HIGH/9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE HONOR CHOIR UPDATES

*Molly Peters, VP-JH/MS Honor Choir*

We are so excited about the 2014-2015 Junior High/9<sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Choir! Our guest conductor is Michael Hayden from Mira Costa High School. Your younger singers will just love working with Mr. Hayden this spring, so be sure to encourage them to sign up for auditions! More information about honor choir is below.

One of the biggest obstacles that keeps our singers from auditioning is the fear of the SIGHT-READING. Not to worry--there are TONS of resources **online** if you are not sure where to send students for sight-reading practice. The **Florida Vocal Association** and **Middle Tennessee Vocal Association** both have some GREAT sight-reading examples online. **Masterworks Press** also has free samples for use in the classroom at various levels, including mixed voicings! Here is a sample of sight-reading at the level of JHS/9<sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Choir auditions:



We also include a rhythmic sight-reading as part of the JHS Honor Choir audition. Here is an example of a rhythmic sight reading, similar to one your students would be expected to read:



Auditioning in general is not easy, but unfortunately, it is a way of life for a musician. By introducing our young singers to the process, we are helping them immensely as they prepare for life as a musician. The more often students audition, the more they get used to it, and the higher the comfort level at future auditions. So please consider the Junior High Honor Choir this year—you won't regret it, and neither will your students!

SCVA Junior High/9<sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Choir auditions are OPEN! Please encourage your younger singers to consider auditioning for this wonderful choral opportunity. Our guest conductor is Mr. Michael Hayden, Choral Director at Mira Costa High School in Manhattan Beach. Registration can be done online at [scvachoral.org](http://scvachoral.org). Auditions will be held in January at various locations around Southern California. A Paypal fee of \$5 is required for the audition. If you have any questions, please e-mail me at [mepeters79@gmail.com](mailto:mepeters79@gmail.com). Audition requirements are:

1. Sing a major scale up and down (a cappella)
2. Sing a major triad and a minor triad (a cappella)
3. Sing an octave (a cappella)
4. Sight read one melodic and one rhythmic example
5. Sing tonal memory patterns
6. Sing **"America"/"My Country 'Tis of Thee"** (a cappella)



## Young Women's and Men's Harmony Festivals

Mark Freedkin, VP of Barbershop Harmony Festivals



We are pleased to invite you to this year's Barbershop Harmony Festivals for Young Women and Young Men. Both events will be held at the Robert B. Moore Theater on the campus of Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa. The 10th annual "**Diva Day**" Young Women in Harmony Festival, sponsored by the Harborlites Chorus, will be held on Saturday, February 7, and the 15th annual "**Young Men's Harmony Festival**" will be held on Saturday, February 21, sponsored by the Masters of Harmony. Both of these events will provide a unique musical opportunity for your singers and will provide a positive boost to your choral music program.

Each event will consist of morning and afternoon clinics and rehearsals, followed by a public performance in the evening with the respective adult choruses. There will also be a clinic for music educators who would like to participate in a hands-on demonstration of how the barbershop style is taught and how it can be used to attract more young men and women into your program.

The early application fee is only \$25 per singer for applications that are submitted by November 14. After November 14, the application is fee \$30 per singer. The sponsoring choruses will cover the remaining costs for all sheet music, practice CDs, rehearsal facilities, guest clinicians and performance costumes. Each singer will receive a commemorative t-shirt. We will also provide lunch and dinner for the singers, choral directors and any adult chaperones accompanying the singers.

Please download and print the appropriate application forms from the SCVA website. Complete and return the applications and forms, along with payment by cash, check or money order payable to **Harborlites** (for Diva Day) or **Masters of Harmony** (for the Young Men's Festival). Each event is limited to 250 participants, so be sure to submit your applications early. Note that these festivals are completely separate events, and you must send the appropriate forms and payments to the proper recipient.

### Young Women's Festival Only:

In order to accommodate more schools, we are limiting the number of singers per school to twelve (12). Ideally we suggest 1-2 tenors, 3-4 leads, 2-3 baritones and 3-4 basses. This will allow you to perform the music as a group and use this group to help your other students learn the joy of singing four-part harmony, barbershop style. Send applications for all students you wish to participate, indicating those students beyond the initial 12 that you wish to put on the waiting list. We will try to accommodate as many as we can.

### Young Men's Festival Only:

There is no limit to the number of singers from your school that wish to participate, but please submit your applications early to ensure that all of your singers can be accommodated.

We look forward to receiving your applications. Please contact us if you have any questions about our festivals.

Diva Day - Karen Ridout  
Harborlites Chorus  
Home: (714) 847-0787/ Mobile: (714) 319-2325  
Email: kridout@socal.rr.com

Mark Freedkin - Young Men's Harmony Festival  
Masters of Harmony  
Home: (949) 559-9621/ Mobile: (714) 357-1187  
Email: mfreedkin@yahoo.com

## Southern California Vocal Association

Harvard-West-Lake Upper School

3700 Coldwater Canyon, North Hollywood, CA 91604

[www.scvachoral.org](http://www.scvachoral.org) / email: [scvamail@yahoo.com](mailto:scvamail@yahoo.com)



### IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

Festival Host Application Deadline	November 1, 2014
SCVA Festival Registration Opens	November 15, 2014
High School Honor Choir Weekend	November 21-22, 2014
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