

Spring 2008

The Kendor

Official Publication of the Kentucky Choral Directors Association

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President's Message

As I write this, registrations for the upcoming KY-ACDA Summer Workshop (July 14-15 in Louisville) are coming in. I see on the forms the names of old friends and those of friends-yet-to-be-made. We need both.

Many of us are regulars at the summer workshops. We wouldn't miss it. We find music, inspiration, new ideas and reminders of

what we already know but had forgotten. It's always a delight to catch up with colleagues from around the state. It's challenging to hear new ways of doing what we're doing, and fun to get to know clinicians who are leaders in our profession.

But we also need new blood. Who is the next generation of choral directors? Where will they come from? To whom do we "pass the torch" of our passion for choral music? Or perhaps they are experienced directors who have had the good luck to move to Kentucky. How better to get to meet their peers?

Last year I made the decision to waive the registration fee for student members of ACDA and for first-time attendees at the summer workshop. We had a noticeable increase in both categories. I'm hoping that they got hooked and we'll see them again this year. Students and first-time attendees who met the early registration deadline of June 15 again were not charged a registration fee. (A small fee is charged for late and at-the-door registrations.)

I ask you, the current KY-ACDA membership, to do one or more of the following:

1) *Register yourself for the summer workshop*, if you haven't already. Dr. Ken Fulton from LSU is a world-class choral conductor who will help you be a better director. Don't miss this opportunity!

2) *Invite colleagues to come*. A word from you may be the first they hear of it if they aren't currently an ACDA member. Or if they do know about it, it may be exactly what they need to make the decision to come.

3) *Encourage college and university students to come*. They may be your current students, or they may have sung under you in middle school or high school or at church, and they will be flattered that you thought of them. They will need ACDA—at national and division levels, but also at the state level—to develop and stay fresh in their chosen profession. Introduce them to this resource! I'll see you in Louisville!

May you have a clear downbeat,

John Campbell

KYACDA Officers 2008-2009

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Publication Information and Deadlines

If you would like to submit an article, upcoming choral event, or segment on a previous event for *The Kendorctor* contact Tiffany Marsh, editor, via email to tiffany.marsh@franklin.kyschools.us. Below are the deadlines for the upcoming newsletters.

| Issue | Deadline | Publication |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| Winter 2008 | November 1 | December 1 |
| Spring/Summer 2009 | May 1 | June 1 |

If you would like to advertise in *The Kendorctor* please contact John Campbell or Shelia Miller for ad pricing.

**Upcoming KY-ACDA Events
-Mark Your Calendar-**

Fall Convocation/All-State
Lexington, KY
October 31-November 1, 2008

ACDA National Convention
Oklahoma City, OK
March 4-7, 2009

2008 Robert K. Baar Choral Excellence Award

This award was named in honor of Robert K. Baar, outstanding master musician, retired from Murray State University, who developed KY-ACDA's Summer Choral Workshop.

The award will be presented at the 2008 KY-ACDA Summer Choral Workshop.

Previous recipients are:

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1994: Robert K. Baar | 2001: David Brown |
| 1995: Marilyn Schraeder | 2002: Stephen Bolster |
| 1996: Gary Anderson | 2003: Shelia Miller |
| 1997: Shirley Wilkinson | 2004: Bradley Almquist |
| 1998: Robert Ellis | 2005: Arthur DeWeese |
| 1999: Carl Smith | 2006: John Stegner |
| 2000: Frank Heller | 2007: David Davies |

New ACDA Executive Director

Dr. Tim Sharp has served ACDA in many capacities, including membership on the Choral Journal Editorial Board (1989-present); standing column editor for "Hallelujah!" (1995-present); and as a member of the Research and Publications Committee (1993-present). He has presented Interest Sessions at Divisional and National Conventions on writing for the Choral Journal. He started work as ACDA Executive Director on May 1, 2008. See Dr. Sharp's biography at www.acdaonline.org.

I envision a twenty-first century ACDA that establishes the opportunity for every child in the United States to sing in a choir.

We have new research that continues to support the fact that music forms an important piece of a child's education and development (see www.dana.org to download the Dana Consortium Report on Arts and Cognition: *Learning, Arts, and the Brain*). We know choral singing has the fewest barriers for entry of any music-making and music-teaching opportunity. Further, there is not one R&S area in ACDA that will not benefit directly from every initiative we take in this direction. ACDA has an advocacy statement poised to take us in this direction.

I envision a twenty-first century ACDA that becomes fully engaged in world choral initiatives.

ACDA is a founding and active member of the International Federation for Choral Music. There are IFCM programs and member benefits that can help any ACDA member connect with the world. To adapt architect Louis Kahn's statement, choral music "[B]egins with the immeasurable, moves through the measurable, and returns to the immeasurable." One aspect of this "immeasurable" is the beauty, peace, harmony, and common human spirit possible through choral music, and a way we "measure" those ideals is our connection with the world choral community.

I envision a twenty-first century ACDA that utilizes the full extent of technological communication and other technologies for the benefit of our membership.

Every R&S subgroup has specific and unique choral needs. These begin with repertoire and standards, but continue in many more specific ways. Repertoire & Standards areas are not simply our domain or special interest, but rather, they are the very core reason why we engage in the choral art and profession. Going forward, through working together and through our own creation and development, ACDA will be available for you throughout the day, every day. Pedagogical resources, demonstrations, master classes, networking and communication, inspiration, local and international choirs, musical publications and resources—all of these and more will be a click away from our membership and your unique attachment to ACDA.

I envision a twenty-first century ACDA that sets the research and publication agenda for the best thinking, past and present, in choral music.

Through the richness of our membership and the institutions with which we work, and through our own past initiatives, partners, and staff, the robust nature of our inquiry will become a resource to the world choral community through our strong choral research and publication agenda. We will set the agenda, and we will provide a plan to make resources available in the various ways that people need and locate information.



KYACDA Repertoire & Standards

Boy Choirs

David Davies
Harlan HS
420 East Central St.
Harlan, KY 40831
dld@harlanonline.net

Children's Choirs

Darrell-Letcher Parks
Bloomfield Elementary
360 Arnold Ln.
Bloomfield, KY 40008
darrell.parks@nelson.kyschools.us

College/University Choirs

David Etter
University of the
Cumberlands
7525 College Station Dr.
Williamsburg, KY 41501
etter@cumberlands.edu

Community Choirs

Heather McCormick
Henderson Community
College
2660 South Green St.
heathern.mccormick@kctcs.edu

Ethnic/Multicultural Perspectives

Tony Cunha
Campbellsville University
1 University Dr. UPO 853
Campbellsville, KY 42718
aocunha@campbellsville.edu

Junior High/ Middle School

Scott Burress
Larue County HS
925 South Lincoln Blvd.
Hodgenville, KY 42748
scott.burress@larue.kyschools.us

A Cognitive Crescendo: How Music Affects Our Brain Function

Mrs. Angela Hampton

Choral director at Floyd Central High School in Floyds Knobs, Indiana
ICDA R&S Chair – High School Choirs

This summer, I completed a sequence of three levels of coursework on Brain Compatible Teaching offered through my school corporation and Indiana University Southeast. While the class itself did not focus specifically on music, two of the four instructors are practicing musicians. They brought to light recent research on how the brain reacts to music and how musicians of all ages benefit from participating in musical activities. This is a huge subject for current neuroscience research and much information is published on the topic. In this article, I would like to present some interesting findings in the area of brain research as it relates to music. Though this will merely scratch the surface of the topic, I hope you will find that science supports the notion that our passion for music is beneficial to our mental capacities.

There are a few basic principles regarding brain function that are necessary for understanding music's role in shaping the brain.

First, *learning takes place when neurons are activated.* The more activation, the greater the capacity for learning. Musical activity engages millions of neurons.

Second, the principle of “*use it or lose it*” is especially true of the brain. Learning becomes permanent when neurons make connections to other neurons. This occurs when new learning is used. There are “windows of opportunity” for many intellectual functions, including learning to play a musical instrument, learning a foreign language, building vocabulary, developing spatial skills, etc. That is, there are optimal times in human growth and development (mostly from birth to puberty) in which the brain is equipped with a greater capacity to learn in these areas with ease; however, it is never too late to learn anything. The brain is malleable and can learn at any age.

Third, *there is no “musical center” in the brain.* Musical involvement activates more areas of the brain than any other activity. The right brain is involved in the experiential aspects; the left brain is involved with the analytical, structural elements of music; while the limbic system controls the emotional response to music.

Music is innate. Music has been a part of human life throughout all cultures in all times and is more foundational to our species than language.

Identified by Howard Gardner as one of the eight multiple intelligences, Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence is present in every human at birth. Of all the intellectual capacities, none develops earlier than music. Even individuals with physical, mental and emotional disabilities possess musical abilities and can have meaningful musical experiences (Lazear 105-106).

“Most musicians would agree that their involvement in music has yielded benefits beyond the intrinsic rewards that need no explanation. It is refreshing to know that scientists now not only acknowledge the physical and mental benefits of music, but that they have determined that music is so important to cognitive development and efficiency that it should be encouraged in each person. The functional architecture of the brain honors music as much as it honors language.”

- Dr. Norman M. Weinberger,
founding member of the
Center for the Neurobiology
of Learning and Memory

Music strengthens the brain. Numerous studies in the past decade have confirmed that participation in music has definite benefits to the brain. Even listening to music has a positive effect on the brain, though not nearly as great as with music making.

Listening to music stimulates the brain, increasing the neural connections.

Participating in music enhances brain development and increases the brain's efficiency.

Participating in music helps strengthen and maintain brain cells and connections that deteriorate with age under normal circumstances.

Because music involves many different areas of the brain, growth resulting from active music participation is evident in several places. The brain's capacity increases during musical activity because synapses are strengthened and connections are built between neurons. Music making is thought by some researchers to be the most extensive exercise for brain cells and for strengthening synapses. Brain scans of musicians reveal that nearly all of the cerebral cortex is active during performance (Weinberger).

In studies of professional musicians versus non-musicians, researchers have found that the professional musicians have up to 130% more gray matter (cell bodies, axons and dendrites responsible for processing information) in multiple areas of

the brain than non-musicians.

Broca's Area, the part of the brain associated with language, is one of those areas. Musical sight-reading is rooted here.

The cerebellum, long thought to control only motor skills, is also larger in musicians. We now know that it is the seat of tempo and rhythmic synchronization, extremely important elements to musicians.

Musicians who learned to play a keyboard or string instrument prior to adolescence reportedly have larger than normal areas of the brain dedicated to touch perception.

The thick bundle of neurons connecting the left and right hemispheres of the brain, the corpus callosum, is significantly (5-15%) thicker in musicians than non-musicians, proportionate to the age at which musical training began. This is due to increased inter-hemispheric traffic resulting from music processing. This strengthening of the communication system makes the brain more effective and efficient (Harvey).

“Music will not only help us understand how we think, reason, and create, but will enable us to learn how to bring each child’s potential to its highest level.”

- Dr. Gordon Shaw,
Co-Founder and Chairman,
M.I.N.D. Institute

Music enhances cognition in general and specific ways. There are strong connections between music and the development of language. Multiple researchers have examined the relationship of musical training to verbal skills, finding that many language processing areas in the brain are also involved in musical processing. Physically, the areas of processing for both music and speech (the frontal and temporal lobes) are very close together and actually have overlapping connections (Levitin 125-127). It is evident that children with musical training exhibit better verbal memory skills than children without musical training. The degree of verbal memory improvement appears to increase proportionally to the length of musical training, and the effects are long-term, as the benefits to verbal memory gained from the musical training are maintained even after instruction has been discontinued (Ho). A 2005 study at Stanford University showed that musical training increases the brain's capacity to process subtle differences in word syllables. Since these fine distinctions are often the source of a child's reading or speech difficulty, incorporating musical training may help overcome those obstacles (Sturrock).

Musical training aids in the development of spatial-temporal reasoning, a foundation for mathematic success. The popular “Mozart Effect” research brought the neuro-musical subject into the

public eye, but does not actually have the credibility to match the hype it received, due primarily to the fact that the achievement improvements were short lived. However, numerous studies have since established stronger correlations between instrumental music study and abstract reasoning skills. According to Dr. Gordon Shaw of the M.I.N.D. Institute (a research program using an integrated music and math curriculum with elementary children), "...music seems to tap into this internal neural structure we're born with, activating regions of the brain that are responsible for our ability to think in pictures." The effects are long-term (Armitage).

In his 2006 book, *This is Your Brain on Music*, Daniel J. Levitin explains that music training improves our ability to "discern structure and form in music" and confirms that even a small exposure to music lessons in childhood builds "neural circuits for music processing" that are more efficient and developed than for those without training (Levitin 190).

Music has lifelong benefits. While the "windows of opportunity" for optimal brain development end before or during adolescence, the ability to learn is always there. It may take more practice and desire to make the new learning "stick", but the brain can continue learning until it dies. It is clear that some neural deterioration occurs through normal aging. The brain

continually prunes away what it is not using, trying to maintain efficiency. Musicians who continue practicing and performing through adulthood, show little reduction in gray matter and, in fact, often show growth through their thirties and forties as compared with non-musicians (Radford).

"The story of your brain on music is the story of an exquisite orchestration of brain regions, involving both the oldest and newest parts of the human brain, and regions as far apart as the cerebellum in the back of the head and the frontal lobes just behind your eyes."

- Daniel J. Levitin, Author,
This is Your Brain on Music

Right Brain, Left Brain or Whole Brain? For years, music has been thought to be a "right brain" activity, implying that there is a specific area in the right hemisphere of the brain that processes music. While the right brain does process rhythm patterns, timbre, harmonic function and emotional responses to music, the left brain is also involved. Analytical and formal structures are processed in the left brain, as well as stylistic and artistic elements. In fact, active musical participation, perhaps more than any other activity, engages more parts of the brain and encourages the two hemispheres to work together effectively and efficiently. Levitin puts it this way, "...musical operations become

bilateral with increased training, as musicians coordinate and recruit neural structures in both the left and right hemispheres" (Levitin 220). Clearly, music is a "whole brain" activity. ♦

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**A Cognitive Crescendo
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Mark your calendar

KY-ACDA State Conference
July 14-15
St. Matthews Baptist Church
Louisville



KYACDA Repertoire & Standards

Male Choirs

John Stegner
Bluegrass Community &
Technical College
164 Opportunity Way
Lexington, KY 40511
john.stegner@
earthlink.net

Music in Worship

Louie Bailey
Crescent Hill Baptist
2800 Frankfort Ave.
Louisville, KY 40206
drlbailey@aol.com

Senior High School Choirs

Brent Merritt
Scott County HS
1080 Cardinal Dr.
Georgetown, KY 40324
brent.merritt@
scott.kyschools.us

Two-Year College Choirs

Norman F. Wurgler
West Kentucky
Community & Technical
College
4810 Alben Barkley Dr.
Paducah, KY 42001
norman.wurgler@
kctcs.edu

Women's Choir

Barbara Hall
Centre College
600 West Walnut St.
Danville, KY 40422
barbara.hall@centre.edu

Youth/Student Activities

Randy Pennington
Northern Kentucky
University
Highland Heights, KY
41099
pennington@nku.edu

2008 State Conference Guest Clinician

Dr. Kenneth Fulton is the Earleene Sanders Alumni Professor of Choral Studies and Chair of the Division of Ensembles and Conducting in the College of Music and Dramatic Arts at Louisiana State University where he conducts the LSU A Cappella Choir and guides the graduate degrees in choral conducting. He has been named as one of LSU's Distinguished Professors and in January 2006, was awarded an Alumni Professorship, the university's most prestigious endowed teaching professorship. He also recently was named a Distinguished Choirmaster by the Texas Choral Directors Association. The title, which has not been presented since 1997, is a lifetime achievement award given only on those rare occasions when the TCDA leadership believes that an individual has been a major contributor to the art of choral music nationally and internationally through many years of notable work. He is Chorusmaster for the Baton Rouge Symphony Chorus and Artistic Director/Conductor for the Linz International Choral Festival in Linz, Austria where he annually conducts performances with the Festival Orchestra and Chorus.



Dr. Fulton has conducted performances in some of the most prestigious performance venues in the world including Carnegie Hall in New York, Symphony Hall in Boston, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, the Mozarteum, and the Brucknerhaus in Austria. Prominent performances by his choirs include appearances for three national and seven divisional ACDA Conventions, a national MENC convention as well as performances for national meetings of the College Music Society, the Sonneck Society, the American Musicological Society, and the American Society of University Composers. He has conducted the LSU A Cappella Choir in invitational performances in Notre Dame and the Vatican, in six successful European tours. Dr. Fulton has conducted invitational clinics including All-State, and Honor Festival choruses, conducting master classes, and conductor/teacher workshops in forty different states and in Europe.

Sessions with Dr. Fulton

“Performing Choral/Orchestral Works - Hints on Literature, Interpretation, and Working with Instrumentalists”

This session will present accessible works suitable for performance with choirs and small or limited orchestras. In addition, we will consider the process of working with instrumentalists successfully.

“What have I forgotten from my college conducting course and how (and why?) did it happen?”

This session will focus upon the “IDEALS” of conducting gesture and what constitutes movement that enhances and symbolizes “MOTION” in music. In addition, the session will apply, through volunteer conductors, a methodology to analyze and focus upon a more effective pattern shape, the effect of hand speed on expressiveness, and the hidden (and often unwanted) messages sent by the hands.

“After the Notes, Then What”

This session will consider the interpretive considerations that lie beyond the notation of music. How can these elements, the core of music's expressiveness, help us to create more expressive and musically sensitive performances with our choruses?

2008 State Conference Events

Panel Discussion

“Choral Conductor + Composer = Collaboration”

Moderated by Sue Ellen Ballard

Can the egos of two musicians allow for creativity to flourish?
What were the strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration from the composer, choral conductor, choral ensemble and audience points of view?
How many choral works were produced?
Were the choral works performed by the chorus? outside groups?
Have the works been published?
Did the collaborative experience work? How does one measure the success of the event?

In an effort to answer these questions, choral conductors and composers who have worked together will have an opportunity to speak about the collaborative effort. The audience will also be provided time to ask the panel questions. The interest session is intended to generate awareness and encourage the pursuit of further collaborative efforts between choral conductors and composers.

Panel Members:

Richard Crosby, composer
Alan Beeler, composer
Sue Ellen Ballard, conductor

A Walt Whitman Portrait
Shaker Hymns from Symphony #3
EKU Concert Choir and Symphonic Band

Joseph Baber, composer
Jefferson Johnson, conductor

An American Requiem
Lexington Singers and Lexington Philharmonic

Larry Barnes, composer
Gary Anderson, conductor

Mass for SATB chorus and organ
Transylvania University Choir

Earlene Rentz, composer
Stephen Bolster, conductor

Various commissioned works
All Nations of the Earth
The Presence of the Lord
Berea College Concert Choir

Bryan Nichols

I Go Among Trees
Meade County HS Concert Choir

Reading Sessions

Multicultural Choral Music
Led by Tony Cunha

Church Choral Music
Led by various church choir directors

*Additional requested sessions



Join us!
ACDA 50th Anniversary
Conference
Oklahoma City 2009: March 4 - 7
www.acdaonline.org

ACDA Advocacy Resolution

Whereas, the human spirit is elevated to a broader understanding of itself through the study and performance in the aesthetic arts, and

Whereas, serious cutbacks in funding and support have steadily eroded state institutions and their programs throughout our country,

Be it resolved that all citizens of the United States actively voice their affirmative collective support for necessary funding at the local, state, and national levels of education and government, to ensure the survival of arts programs.

The Kendor

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