

Repertoire & Standards, R&S defined

—Karen L. Bruno, R&S State Chair
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Karen Bruno

As I begin my tenure as WCDA's Repertoire & Standards chair, I have been thinking about how I can be most useful. The obvious role for an R&S Chair is encouraging the selection of high quality choral music. But don't choral directors always talk about music? We attend reading sessions, we go to conventions and summer conferences, we talk with colleagues we respect about what rep they taught recently. We are professional choral musicians – don't we know how to find good music?

R&S is about more than just finding "good" music. It is also about encouraging standards of excellence in our rehearsals, in our performances, in our community, in our students' vocal production, and in our own professionalism. For my first *Soundings* article as R&S State Chair, I have decided that it is time for us to remind ourselves what we, as an organization, have agreed upon as worthy goals in our choral art.

Please refer to WCDA's "Commitment to Excellence," at right. It's a good document, isn't it? As we begin our academic year, let us consider the role of R&S by thinking beyond the obvious – choosing music for our choirs – and explore the other standards mentioned in the document. In subsequent articles, I will explore ways to address these standards in our school, community and church choirs. If you have a successful story to share in regard to one of these standards, please let me know – I would love to share your experiences in this column.

I am looking forward to my new role with WCDA as it gives me the opportunity to connect with our membership in a significant way. Please feel free to contact the R&S Chair for your division (children's choir, women's choir, etc) with specific questions, but know that I am also ready and willing to talk with you about the joys and challenges in regard to repertoire... or standards. ✧

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE WISCONSIN/AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

Please Fill Out COMPLETELY (For office use) Account No. _____

Please accept my application for membership in WCDA/ACDA as indicated below:

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Active \$65.00 Student \$20.00

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Life membership is payable in annual installments of \$200.00 or more.

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5 StudentChap. 9 Church

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WCDA Office • 6802 Miller Road • Abrams WI 54101-9799 **Welcome!**

Commitment to Excellence:

Defining Standards for the Choral Director Adopted March, 1999

Repertoire & Standards Statement of Philosophy

The Wisconsin Choral Directors Association represents a diverse group of choral musicians in our state: music educators from the elementary to the collegiate level, church musicians, community choir leaders, and friends and lovers of choral music. As advocates for excellence in all aspects of the choral art, WCDA introduces the following standards as an evolving set of guidelines for its members and their many constituencies.

We consider that choral conducting is an art, and that outstanding results can be produced by a variety of personal styles and techniques. We also recognize the diversity of settings in which our members practice their craft, and have attempted to allow for the musical goals of choral directors in a variety of circumstances. Thus, the standards set objectives for our membership, not expectations. They are intended to be encouraging rather than prescriptive. Above all, they are designed to allow the WCDA membership to bring the joy of excellent music making and the rewards of lifelong singing to the entire community.

Standards of Music Selection

The Wisconsin Choral Directors Association encourages in its members:

- Commitment to finding and presenting pieces that are high quality examples of a particular musical style.
- Commitment to selecting music that is appropriate to the age and proficiency of the ensemble.
- Commitment to achieving a balance between music that has stood the test of time and various styles of contemporary music.
- Commitment to exploring choral contributions of the many cultures of the world.
- Commitment to encouraging the composition of quality choral music.

Standards of Vocal Production

The Wisconsin Choral Directors Association encourages in its members:

- Commitment to understanding the functions of the vocal mechanism and characteristics of the voice.
- Commitment to providing instruction in healthy vocal production and the art of singing.
- Commitment to encouraging a healthy singing voice for singers of all ages, and to promote the joy and rewards of lifelong singing.

Standards of Rehearsal

The Wisconsin Choral Directors Association encourages in its members:

- Commitment to excellence in vocal production, musicianship and musical expression.
- Commitment to having singers involved in a variety of activities at each rehearsal.
- Commitment to training singers to be independent musicians.
- Commitment to fostering a positive sense of community and communication between ensemble members.
- Commitment to rehearsal schedules that place reasonable demands on participants.

Standards of Performance

The Wisconsin Choral Directors Association encourages in its members:

- Commitment to achieving the highest performance proficiency possible.
- Commitment to performances that communicate effectively and are enjoyable, educational and entertaining.
- Commitment to variety in performance format, accompaniments and repertoire.
- Commitment to performing for and with other arts organizations.
- Commitment to performance schedules that place reasonable demands on participants.

Standards of Community Outreach

The Wisconsin Choral Directors Association encourages in its members:

- Commitment to sharing musical experiences with local arts and educational organizations.
- Commitment to advocacy for local arts institutions and arts education programs.
- Commitment to developing strategies for involving the entire community in singing.

Standards of Professionalism

The Wisconsin Choral Directors Association encourages in its members:

- Commitment to continuing professional development in the areas of instruction, conducting, singing, and interpretive skills.
- Commitment to developing healthy and respectful relationships and leadership styles.
- Commitment to ethical business practices.
- Commitment to local, state, and national professional arts organizations and institutions.
- Commitment to working within the constraints of current copyright laws.

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Repertoire & Standards

An Arts Advocacy Resolution

Whereas

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

whereas

serious cutbacks in funding and support have steadily eroded arts institutions and their programs throughout the country;

be it resolved

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

The American Choral Directors Association, approved February, 1994

CHILDREN'S CHOIR REPERTOIRE

submitted by Cheryl Meyer



Cheryl Meyer

1. *How Can I Keep from Singing?*, Quaker Song arr. Ginger Littleton. UNISON, OPT. DESCANT, PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT; BRI LEE MUSIC, BL228.

This is an accessible arrangement for treble voice choir that also works with middle school and

high school mixed voices. Sung in a sacred or secular setting, the pentatonic melody works well with solfege syllables and its repetitive rhythmic motive provides experience with dotted quarter-eighth note patterns. With two verses of text, students can expand their vocabulary and think about what is the "rock" in their life. The third verse is the first verse of text repeated with an optional, but very effective, descant. Good performance notes are included.

2. *The Bird's Song*, Henry Hinnant. 2-PART TREBLE (OR MIXED) VOICES, PIANO AND C INSTRUMENT; HINSHAW MUSIC, HMC 1953.

Written by a child in a Czechoslovakian death camp, the depth of this text has great appeal for teenagers as well as for younger children and would fit with themes of freedom, loss, risk-taking, nature, youth and life! After the unison of verse one, the melody of "This Is My Father's World" is combined with the first verse melody, producing beautiful harmony. The hymn text is given, as well as an alternate *Alleluia* text. A part for a C instrument is provided but is not necessary for performance.

3. *Wintersong*, Audrey Snyder. 2-PART TREBLE, OPT. SSA, PIANO ACCOMP; STUDIO 224, SV9332.

A secular song suitable for a winter concert, Audrey Snyder has set the stanzas of an Emily Bronte poem as three melodies in different voice ranges. Fitting together as partner songs, the harmony is effective and accessible to younger singers, as well as changing voices. Have singers discover the form of the piece to aid their memorization of the song.

4. *The Holly and the Ivy*, arr. Nick Page.

SA CHORUS WITH SOPRANO RECORDER AND PIANO; BOOSEY AND HAWKES, OC2B6516.

This is one of my favorite carol arrangements! After singing together in unison, the choir splits into two parts for verse two. Following a vocal interlude that imitates the choir singing, a different lower harmony continues in verse three before concluding with the unison coda. Since the lower part is different in verse two and three, you may wish to switch parts during the interlude so that each vocal part sings a verse of melody as well as learning a lower harmony part.

5. *I Saw Three Ships*, arr. Donna Gartman Schultz.

2-PART CHORUS AND KEYBOARD; PAVANE PUBLISHING, P1178.

Originally scored for brass quintet (parts available separately), this energetic carol arrangement has some harmonic surprises in the accompaniment. Alternating the verses between unison and harmony settings, the lower vocal part has the same countermelody for two verses. The final verse has an upper voice descant but is equally effective sung in unison. Adding handbells, chimes or orchestra bells would also add color to this piece.

COMMUNITY CHOIR REPERTOIRE

submitted by Ruth Knoll

The following selections have been used in the past several years with my Hartford Community Chorus. This group of 50 to 60 voices enjoys singing a diversity of styles. These selections will appeal to a wide range of musical tastes and competencies.



Ruth Knoll

1. *On High*, Michelle Hynson. (an arrangement combining *Ding, Dong! Merrily on High* and *Angels We Have Heard on High*). SATB, DIVISI, A CAPPELLA; ROGER DEAN PUBLISHING CO., 15/1818 R.

On High is an interesting interweaving of the well-known French carols with a touch of contemporary harmonies and rhythms. The men often carry the melodic line with women's voices

“HIGH FIVES”

creating new harmonies. In an early variation section, the women's voices (SSA) feature jazz syllables and rhythms to outline a descending scale passage imitating ringing bells against the men singing the verse. There is a tricky transition from the key of D to a two measure phrase in Bb and then to B major. The selection builds to a powerful climax with rich, contemporary harmonies. Not for the faint-hearted!

2. *A Shoot Shall Come Forth*, Richard Horn. SATB, *A CAPPELLA* OR ACCOMPANIED; MORNING STAR MUSIC PUBLISHERS, MSM-50-0010.

This lovely octavo, based on Isaiah 11 and 32:18, is constructed in hymn style with the refrain repeating the well-known words, "Then the lamb shall lie down with the leopard..." There is an alternate ending if sung *a cappella*. Written in D minor, I have performed it with and without accompaniment. It is probably more effective *a cappella* as the accompaniment merely doubles the voice parts except for one brief section. When the Nova Singers performed this work at our last Convention, the director noted that the late Richard Horn was a composer from Wisconsin.

3. *Resonet in Laudibus*, Z. Randall Stroope. (Resounding with Praise). SATB, PIANO AND SNARE DRUM; MARK FOSTER MUSIC CO. MF 553

This contemporary little gem is based on a composition of the same title composed by Jacob Handl (1550-1591). I actually prefer to perform this *a cappella* which gives it a more medieval flavor. When the introductory (dissonant) chords and snare drum are used, it becomes more contemporary-sounding. The theme fragments are alternated between the women's and men's voices with a nice touch of syncopation. There are essentially three short sections and a reprise of section A. The text is in Latin except for section C which is musically contrasting in style and uses English with the *Resonet* theme underlying in the men's voices. It is a very spirited number except for section C. This interesting composition provides great opportunities for articulation as well as lyricism.

4. *Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine*, arr. Howard Helvey. (Traditional German Carol, c. 1544). SATB, PIANO FOUR-HANDS; BECKENHORST PRESS, INC. BP 1529

Based on a familiar German tune, this lovely arrangement is enhanced by the four-hand piano accompaniment. There is one short, eight measure *a cappella* section set to the words, "He came among us at Christmastide..." which creates a nice contrast with the remainder of the composition. There are no harmonic or rhythmic surprises and the piece is quite accessible, even for high school choruses.

5. *Mary Sat A-Rockin'*, Greg Gilpin. SSATB, *A CAPPELLA*; SHAWNEE PRESS – A 2186.

With original words and music by Greg Gilpin, this gospel/spiritual gives two distinct and syncopated recurring themes to the tenors and basses and places the women's voices in SSA chords above. There are two short sections where the music moves more homophonically and then returns to the syncopations. Contrasts in dynamics along with rhythmic vitality add to the effectiveness of this selection. High School choirs and church choirs would also enjoy this composition. ✧

To write great music, the musician must make his life a great song.

—Anonymous

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Choir Camp



Middle Level Division:
Entering Grades 6–8
June 19–23, 2005

High School Division:
Entering Grades 9–12
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