

# SCVA NEWS

Southern California Vocal Association November, 2015

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Rodger Guerrero*

Thanks to the enduring patience of our amazing, longtime SCVA Newsletter editor, **Karen Bluel**, I am able to write this message the day after the simply fantastic **2015 SCVA Fall In-Service**. Nearly one-third of the SCVA membership experienced this comprehensive day of choral music education. From the hysterical honesty and completely flawless vocal warm-ups of **Desiree LaVertu**, to the full-throttle energy and thorough teaching approach to sight singing from **Heather Gold-Pollak**, to **Zach Halop's** hilarious, self-deprecating humor and practical methodology as applied to Non-Pitch Matchers, to **Mary Ester Blakely's** thoughtful presentation on choral tone, to the outstanding choral literature offered by **Joe Schubert** and **Michelle Jensen**: this was a choral day for the ages, one made even more momentous by a phenomenal performance from the **Manhattan Beach Middle School Madrigal Singers**.

And in the midst of this spectacular day, your SCVA Executive Board took time out to hold a 90-minute meeting. Your volunteer crew of dedicated, generous, concerned, and meticulous worker bees unreservedly worked to further their plans to stage events for you and your students. From the upcoming High School Honor Choirs (thanks **Karen & Crystal**), to the new and improved Vocal Solo & Ensemble Competition (thanks **Marisa**), to the innovative Vocal Jazz & Contemporary A Cappella Festival (thanks **Christine**), to the always evolving Show Choir Festival (thanks **Patty**), to the incredibly valuable Junior High/Middle School Honor Choir (thanks, **Molly**), to the mind-numbingly expansive Choral Festivals (thanks **Melva & Nancy**): your SCVA Executive Board does everything possible to coordinate a myriad of exciting opportunities for all choral directors and singers in the schools of Southern California.

Have you seen the SCVA Website lately? Have you noticed the subtle changes and constantly metamorphosing array of information? Did you know that the remarkable human being who manages the SCVA Website volunteers to do so in order to give back to the choral community? (Thanks **Mark!**) Are you aware of how fortunate we are to have a capable person who willingly does a substantial amount of work to keep SCVA fiscally healthy and solvent? (Thanks, **Carolyn!**) And what about the dedicated person who keeps the considerable flow of SCVA information current from meeting to meeting? (Thanks, **Marcelo!**) And finally, have you seen the creative, hysterical "**Choir Directors Read Mean Tweets**" video or logged on to the informative SCVA Facebook page? (Thanks, **Erin!**)

If this reads like a "Let's Go Team!" pep talk, well, it is. After all, it is nearly the first semester mid-point, and the increasingly stressful and significant workload we choral musicians face at this time would overwhelm any normal human being. But the SCVA Executive Board consists of atypical human beings who choose to take on even more responsibility. They do so because they genuinely care about you, your singers, and the Choral Art.

We know that learning is not a linear, steadily progressing, and block-by-block proposition. We know that continually adaptive teachers empower their students to do similarly, both with regards to learning and recovering from life's challenges. We know that music is a verb of action, an activity in which self-reflection and problem-solving must become synchronized and instantaneous. We know that the finest choral conductors fundamentally understand that detailed learning derives from methodical, sequential, and thoughtful teaching. Most importantly, we know that successful music teachers believe that the communal, music-in-action events they lead will simultaneously generate self-concept and group identity, and that both are necessary in the perpetual evolution of our culture. We know this because we, the choral teachers in Southern California schools, firmly believe in the power of the Choral Art and have experienced it through the results of the SCVA Executive Board's work.

Some one-third of the SCVA membership observed SCVA Past President **Mark Henson's** superhuman efforts to organize an astoundingly successful Fall In-Service. They were personally rewarded by his absolute commitment to the Choral Art. He represents a group of extraordinary individuals who characterize the pulse and heartbeat of SCVA: **The Executive Board**. Please profusely thank them when you see them at the next SCVA-sponsored event.

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# 2015 SCVA Regional High School Honor Choir

*Karen Garrett, VP I & Crystal Stone, VP II*



Congratulations to the 279 members of the 2015-16 SCVA Honor Choirs and the 90 schools that are represented this year. We auditioned 571 students this year! Many thanks to the 12 audition sites and 56 adjudicators that made this whole experience possible. We certainly could not do it without you and appreciate the hard work, preparation and facilities you provided.

October 24<sup>th</sup> was the first rehearsal at Fullerton College. A special thanks to John Tebay for hosting us at Fullerton College again this year. The three honor choirs met from 8am-4pm to work with our inspiring rehearsal conductors: Michael Hayden (Women's Choir), Scott Melvin (Men's Choir) and Brandon Elliott (Mixed Choir).

Honor Choir weekend is November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> at Redlands University, hosted by Dr. Joseph Modica. The culminating concert is at 7pm on November 21<sup>st</sup> at Redlands Memorial Chapel. Please invite your students and parents to attend what is sure to be a brilliant concert. Tickets are \$10 for general seating and may be purchased in advance, online 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 of the Honor Choir rehearsals are open rehearsals. This is a great opportunity for directors to see our outstanding guest conductors at work. You can learn great techniques and rehearsal ideas from these conductors that you can use in your ensembles at home. Rehearsals are Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - Again, our directors are Dr. Lynne Gackle, (Mixed Choir) Director of Choral Activities, Baylor University, Angel Vazquez-Ramos, (Women's Choir) Director of Choral Activities at CSU Bakersfield and Dr. Christopher Peterson, (Men's Choir) Professor of Music, CSU, Fullerton
- We count on you, the directors of participating singers, to volunteer during Honor Choir weekend. All directors with at least 2 students in Honor Choir are expected to help at Honor Choir weekend. Please find the **Volunteer Spot** link at [www.scvachoral.org](http://www.scvachoral.org) and sign up as soon as possible. You can choose from a variety of volunteer areas including t-shirt distribution, registration, ushering, clean-up and more. Thank you 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: scva2015
  - Password: schubert765
- Please continue to check the Honor Choir tab at [www.scvachoral.org](http://www.scvachoral.org) for updated honor choir information.

***We look forward to seeing you all at the 2015 SCVA Regional High School Honor Choir weekend!***



## Young Women's and Young 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 11th annual "**Diva Day**" Young Women in Harmony Festival, sponsored by the Harborlites Chorus, will be held on Saturday, February 6, and the 16th annual "**Young Men's Harmony Festival**" will be held on Saturday, February 20, 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 discussion 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 Friday, November 13. After November 13, 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 (Young Women's Festival)  
Karen Ridout  
Harborlites Chorus  
Home: (714) 847-0787  
Mobile: (714) 319-2325  
Email: [kridout@socal.rr.com](mailto:kridout@socal.rr.com)

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

## Time to Grab That Festival Slot!

Nancy Ludwig, VPI Festivals



The deadline to register to host a festival has passed, and registration to participate in festivals will be available as of November 15! There are many fantastic opportunities for your choirs to attend an SCVA festival throughout the Southern California Region!

If you are looking for a new challenge, consider one of the festivals with a sight-singing element. Last year was our pilot year, and this year we have double the amount of options available for sight-singing festivals. We even have two festivals at the middle school level offering this element! Take the plunge with your students and go for it! While this can sometimes be a very intimidating festival element, it is a perfect way to promote and support the musicianship work you are all doing in your choral classrooms. As someone who was hesitant to support this addition, I prepared and took my students to a sight-reading festival last spring. It turned out to be a blessing in disguise. My students, who in the past resisted this kind of work began to rise to the challenge. This year my intermediate and advanced students just understand it is an expectation, and their musicianship is much improved. I'm a believer!

Beginning November 15, you will be able to access the list of festivals and the online registration form at <http://www.scvachoral.org>. 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 regular festival is \$100, and it is \$130 for a sight-singing festival; you can submit payment through PayPal, or by mailing a check to the address listed on the registration form.



## Website Update

Mark Freedkin, SCVA Webmaster

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

We just completed the High School Honor Choir Audition Application process, and we received over 580 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** vs. **mfreedkin@yhoo.com**).

Along the same lines, when you register to host a festival or as a festival participant, be sure to use the same e-mail address that you used for your SCVA membership. That way, you will be able to see all of your festival registrations when you login to the Members-Only page on our website.

### 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 directly to the sender's e-mail address.

# VOCAL JAZZ HAPPENINGS

Christine Tavares-Mocha, VP-Vocal Jazz



**SCVA Vocal Jazz and A Cappella Festival 2016**  
featuring "PST" from Cal State Long Beach!



***Friday March 18th, 2016 at Valencia High School***

Christine Guter and Jeremy Fox, Adjudicators

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



## **2016 California All State Vocal Jazz Auditions**

Auditions must be postmarked by December 1, 2015



***Performance at California All-State Music Educators Conference  
February 10-13, 2016 in Fresno, CA***

Audition includes:

1. Chromatic Scale (one octave, eighth notes at ♩ = 120)
2. Blues Scale (one octave, eighth notes at ♩ = 120) Scales ascending/descending, your choice of syllables
3. "Ghost of A Chance" by Victor Young, Bing Crosby and Ned Washington
4. "Love Letters" Arr. by Paris Rutherford - Sing the voice part you are auditioning for a cappella
5. Blues Improvisation (2-3 choruses in any key)

***Visit: [www.cbda.org](http://www.cbda.org) - click on auditions - vocal jazz***

## **AN INSPIRING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Mark Henson, Past President**

An energetic group of veteran choral directors, new teachers, retirees, and college music students gathered last Friday for our annual Fall In-Service. The day was packed with informative presentations giving us techniques and tools we can put to use right away in our rehearsals. What a wonderful day of learning, sharing, and celebrating choral music!

**Desiree LaVertu** from Occidental College shared warmup techniques as well as suggestions for making the warmup process meaningful and productive. **Zach Halop** from Northwood High School in Irvine presented effective methods for working with and encouraging beginning singers and non pitch matchers. (The "Tone Challenged")

Our guest choir, the Madrigal Singers of Manhattan Beach Middle School, under the direction of **Heather Gold-Pollak**, performed a beautiful program of choral selections while those wishing to become certified as SCVA Adjudicators completed sample adjudication sheets to be evaluated by a committee of the Executive Board. Following their performance, Heather then gave a presentation on sight singing methods for classroom use. We all agree that our singers need to become literate musicians, and Heather's presentation included specific ways to approach the teaching of sight singing during rehearsal.

**Mary Ester Blakely**, enjoying her recent retirement from Villa Park High School, demonstrated techniques for achieving a fine tone with our choirs. Her presentation offered several recorded examples as well as ways for us to be "relentless yet encouraging" to our singers while developing their tone. Our reading session leaders, **Michelle Jensen** of Azusa Pacific University, and **Joe Schubert** of Orangeview Middle School in Anaheim, presented repertoire for Middle School and High School choirs. (What a joy it is to read and sing with a group of choral directors!) I'm sure we all found pieces that we can't wait to start with our choirs.

Special thanks to **Sam DeRenzi** at JW Pepper for ordering and assembling our reading packets, **Patty Breitag** for accompanying, **Rodger Guerrero** and Harvard Westlake School for providing our morning refreshments, and to the rest of the SCVA Board Members for ensuring a smooth day for all of us.

If you missed this year's event, please make plans to attend next fall. It is a true joy to experience a day of relevant presentations and networking with a wonderful group of people who share the passion for Choral Music. How lucky we are!

## JUNIOR HIGH/9TH GRADE HONOR CHOIR UPDATES

Molly Peters, VP-JH/MS Honor Choir

Every fall, I get so excited (and slightly overwhelmed) about the possibilities of another fantastic SCVA Junior High/9th grade honor choir, because every year I get to start at the ground level again and create an even better event for your developing singers. This year is going to be no different—Ms. Lori Marie Rios will be our May 7th, 2016 guest conductor. I think we all know how amazing Ms. Rios is as a musician and an educator, and how much darned FUN she is. Your singers will just love working with Ms. Rios this spring, so be sure to encourage them to sign up for auditions! \*More information about the honor choir auditions is in the box 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! [thesightreadingproject.org](http://thesightreadingproject.org) is an awesome online resource (free!) that allows you to set whatever parameters you want for a sight-reading example: tempo, which (if any) sol fege syllables you want to show, how many parts, etc. The biggest hurdle to overcoming a fear of sight-reading is practice, practice, practice. And sell it to your students—don't approach it like a chore! Sell it as a useful tool towards music literacy. Every morning it's like a puzzle that we solve within 5 minutes, and I give them a class grade on it (2 points each measure for pitch, 2 points for rhythm, just like an SCVA auditions). It gives students a feeling of accomplishment. It's worth the 5 minutes of class time. I promise.

We also include a rhythmic sight-reading as part of the JHS Honor Choir audition, which can be performed on numbers or syllables such as Takadimi.

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/9th Grade Honor Choir auditions are opening SOON! Keep your eyes open for an SCVA E-mail from me. 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 [atmepeters79@gmail.com](mailto:atmepeters79@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)

**The final rehearsal and JHS/9th Grade Honor Choir Concert will be held on Saturday, May 7th at Lincoln Middle School in Santa Monica.**

# Vocal Solo/Small Ensemble Preliminary Competition Registration

SCVA Vocal Solo Competition/Small Ensemble Festival  
Marisa Rawlins-Bradfield, VP-Vocal Solo Competition

After completing my first year of the vocal solo competition, I can honestly say that it has been an enriching experience to serve on the SCVA board. I've learned so much and I have gained a deeper appreciation for this organization. The vocal solo and small ensemble competition is one of the many opportunities that your students can benefit from. I had many of my own high school students participate last year, and their experiences were invaluable.

We are excited to announce that we will be offering a vocal jazz and musical theatre competitive category. In past years, this was only offered as non-competitive.

Your students will benefit from the experience regardless of the chosen genre. Please urge your students to participate in this wonderful opportunity.

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

## Online Application and Payment Deadline

Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

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 23<sup>rd</sup>

Fullerton High School,  
Fullerton

Host: Scott Hedgecock

Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>

Glendale High School,  
Glendale

Host: Grace Sheldon-Williams

Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>

Providence High School  
Burbank

Host: Marisa Bradfield

Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>

Murrieta Mesa High School  
Murrieta

Host: Jeffrey Kopasz

## 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/Jazz Solo - Non-Competitive - Comments or Ratings Only
- ❖ Musical Theatre/Jazz Solo - Competitive
- ❖ Small Ensemble Performance - Non-Competitive - Duet, Trio, Quartet, 5-part Madrigal, Barbershop Quartet. Comments or Ratings Only

## 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@aol.com](mailto:scvamail@aol.com)



### IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

Festival Host Application Deadline	November 1, 2015
High School Honor Choir Weekend	November 20 & 21, 2015
Jr. High/9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Choir Auditions	January 16, 2016
Jr. High/9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Choir Auditions	January 23, 2016
Diva Day	February 6, 2016
California All-State High School Honor Choirs	February 11 - 13, 2016
Young Men's Harmony Festival	February 20, 2016
ACDA Western Division Conference	February 24 – 27, 2016
Jr. High/9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Choir Regional Rehearsal	March 12, 2016
SCVA Vocal Jazz & A Cappella Festival	March 18, 2016
Jr. High/9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Choir Regional Rehearsal	March 26, 2016
Junior High/9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Choir Concert	May 7, 2016