

# SCVA NEWS

Southern California Vocal Association

May, 2013

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*John Hendricks*

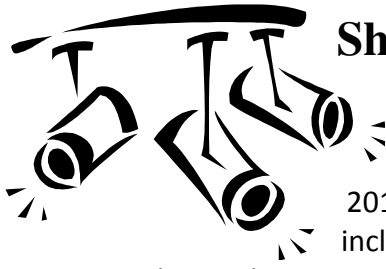
I hope that you are enjoying your final days of the school year and are looking forward to a superb summer. Whether you will be relaxing, working, learning, planning, or simply enjoying family, I certainly wish you all the best in the upcoming months until the SCVA calendar becomes full once again. I strongly encourage you to visit our website, [scvachoral.org](http://scvachoral.org), often during the summer, as there will be a great deal of information available in the near future about our offerings for the upcoming school year.

In recent weeks, I have visited a number of our SCVA festivals to listen to our members' choirs and to hear from you about your hopes and expectations for your organization. I am so excited by quality of the ensembles, conductors, and adjudicators in our region, and by the dedication of our site hosts to their students and to the philosophy that guides our festival system—that we will continue to provide invaluable educational opportunities through our festivals—experiences that are accessible to as many choirs as possible in Southern California. The students I encountered at our events were so friendly and articulate, and I am deeply grateful to our members who have so generously opened their schools to host. I also salute Nancy Ludwig and Melva Morrison, our Festival Vice-Presidents, for their tireless and inspired efforts in leading a consistent, high quality, and ever-evolving system of adjudication. I look forward to the eventual integration of our rating system with those of CMEA and other organizations, and am grateful to our colleagues at CMEA and ACDA for their collaboration as we move toward a statewide festival system in the coming years. If you have ever considered hosting or participating in an SCVA festival, I strongly encourage you to do so in the 2013-2014 school year.

I do have several important requests of our members as many of us approach our final classes of the 2012-2013 school year:

1. Actively encourage your students now, before the vacation begins, to audition for our 2013-2014 Honor Choirs. We have an outstanding and exciting group of conductors to inspire you and your students in the coming school year. Auditions for the High School Honor Choirs begin in late September, so please suggest to your students that they prepare for auditions during the summer.
2. Consider hosting and/or participating in an SCVA Festival or our Solo and Ensemble Competition (the only comprehensive Solo and Ensemble festival in Southern California) in 2013-2014.
3. Be an SCVA volunteer in the coming school year. It's a great way to be of service to your organization (we need you), and connect with colleagues.
4. Register for our Fall In-Service, your SCVA professional development day for educators. You will absolutely love what we have in store for our members this year, as this event will follow a new and exciting format in 2013.
5. Continue to support our advocacy efforts via Stand Up 4 Music, a collaboration in lobbying efforts with CMEA, ACDA, The California Arts Project, and many instrumental education-based organizations in our state.
6. Visit the SCVA website ([scvachoral.org](http://scvachoral.org)) regularly during the summer months for updates.

Thank you so very much for your support of SCVA during this school year. I look forward to hearing from you, and also to seeing you at our many events in 2013-2014. It has been such a pleasure serving you this year.



# Show Choir Spectacular

*Patty Breitag, VP – Show Choir*

SCVA is proud to sponsor the *Show Choir Spectacular Competition* on May 11, 2013. This yearly event is open to any high school or middle school with divisions that include: Novice Women, Novice Mixed, Intermediate Women, Intermediate Mixed, Advanced Women and Advanced Mixed. Presently, we have 12 groups signed up in the various divisions. Applications, along with a \$200.00 fee, will be accepted through April 25, 2013. You may use your PayPal account or mail a check to:

SCVA Attn: Patricia Breitag,  
Diamond Bar High School  
21400 E. Pathfinder Rd., Diamond Bar, CA 91765

If you are looking for a final show choir event for 2013, feel free to sign up @scvachoral.org. Click on the link for Show Choir Competition and fill out the paperwork. If show choir is new to you, consider bringing your students to pay for a seat in the audience and see and hear what all the excitement is about!

Every year we try to have venues that are in various parts of the Los Angeles area, so those who travel the farthest one year might not have to travel as far the next. If your school would like to be considered as a host school, let me know soon as we will set up next year's dates as soon as possible. This year's host is Diamond Bar High School and "Solitaire".

We encourage groups to attend regardless of the ability or experience of the group. Students really enjoy the competitive atmosphere, sharing with the other schools, and the music and choreography they have worked so hard to master. The judges have years of experience and always give positive assessment for improvement. So come and experience this popular choir genre on May 11, 2013.

The following schools are performing as of April 14, 2013:

## **HIGH SCHOOL NOVICE WOMEN**

- 10:00 p.m. - Eisenhower High School Ikettes
- 10:20 p.m. - Redlands East Valley High School Belle Voce
- 10:40 p.m. - Saugus High School Blue Heat

## **HIGH SCHOOL NOVICE MIXED**

- 11:00 p.m. - Granada Hills Charter High School Highlander Show Choir
- 11:20 p.m. - Eisenhower High School Ike Singers
- 11:40 p.m. - Cypress High School The Sparks
- 12:00 noon – El Capitan High School Show Choir

## **HIGH SCHOOL INTERMEDIATE WOMEN**

- 1:40 - Redlands East High School Sweet Sensation
- 2:00 - Cypress High School Pink Thunder
- 2:20 - Mayfair High School Mayfair Mariners

## **HIGH SCHOOL INTERMEDIATE MIXED**

- 2:40 - Mayfair High School Mayfair Showtime
- 3:00 - Cypress High School High Voltage

## **HOST SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

- 3:20 p.m.

# High School Honor Choir

*Tina Peterson, VP- High School Honor Choirs*

The 2013 High School Honor Choirs event will be here before we know it, and our students won't want to miss the opportunity to work with the conductors we've invited to guide our groups for next year! Now is the time to begin, or better yet, continue the work that we do with our singers to be ready for their auditions in September and October. Preparing for these auditions has many benefits.



- It improves our students' work in our own choirs, and instills musical confidence—especially if they go through a sequential, steady process of practicing their Italian song and their applied music theory.
- It improves our students' skills in sight singing, tonal recall, and performing a major scale, a chromatic scale, a major triad, and a minor triad.
- The students who typically score well at the honor choir auditions have almost always been those who have practiced their skills and enhanced their musicianship each day, every day, over time.
- Our musicians who have participated in the honor choirs have often cited their experiences as transformative, exhilarating, inspiring and life-changing, so please encourage your choristers to audition!

This year, three exceptional conductors will lead our students in the 2013 Honor Choir experience:

Mixed Honor Choir will be conducted by Dr. Robert Istad, Director of Choral Activities, from California State University, Fullerton. The Men's Choir will be conducted by Dr. Jeffrey Benson, Director of Choral Activities, from San Jose State University. The Women's Choir will be conducted by Dr. Amanda Quist, Associate Professor of Conducting, from Westminster Choir College.

## THE AUDITION REGISTRATION PROCESS

The improvements in the web-based system for our registration and audition site selection that we used last year were very successful. We will use the same systems this year. It allowed us a faster turnaround time in getting the honor choir music to our students after the results have been posted. In addition, they will be able to purchase their tickets to the honor choir performance online in advance.

## THE PART-CHECK PROCESS

We will also continue the part-check system that was implemented last year. As it was a new part of the SCVA honor choir experience, understandably students and teachers alike had a number of questions and uncertainties. However, I believe that everyone had a positive experience with the process, and it helped to make the October rehearsal more enjoyable and productive. We also received a number of recommendations from our members on ways to improve the process that will be implemented in the Fall of 2013. Stay tuned for details!

## Important Dates (subject to slight changes, except for the audition dates, rehearsals, and the Honor Choirs Weekend):

*On-line Audition registration opens: Thursday, August 29*

*Audition registration closes: Friday, September 20*

*Audition times and locations confirmed: Monday, September 23*

*Audition dates: Saturday, September 28, and Saturday, October 5*

*First rehearsal with Part Checks: Saturday, October 26 or November 2 - Location: TBD*

*Honor Choirs Weekend: Friday, November 22, and Saturday, November 23*

*(Tentatively at Santa Monica High School)*

*Honor Choirs Concert: Saturday, November 23, 7:00 p.m.*

In closing, I'd like to express my deepest thanks to all who have supported our honor choirs over the past year, and in particular to Karen Garrett, our VP-II of Senior Honor Choirs, for her tireless work on behalf of our students and her commitment to bringing the best experience possible for the SCVA participants. Thank you also to Mark Freedkin, our brilliant technical-mind at SCVA. Please contact me at [tinapeterson@iusd.org](mailto:tinapeterson@iusd.org), if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you and your students at our honor choir events this year!

## Concentrated Teaching Part 3: The Power of “Warm-up” (Resonance 1)

*Jeff Huls, Vocal Solo Competition*

Following a body/mind warm-up and a breath awareness exercise, I train resonance. In general, this is the actual “voice” training section of the warm-up. It is here where I find myself going into perfunctory mode. It becomes easy to do the same exercises over and over again (the kids know them, right? or “Hey, Mr. Accompanist, can you lead a warm-up while I finish this email, my coffee, \_\_\_\_?”) Think creatively and ask yourself what kinds of things would you do to ready your voice? Remember to keep them on their toes and make them think.

I further break down RESONANCE into three parts. First up are voice placement and vocal readiness exercises. These are simple exercises with limited range, often using nasal resonance [n] [m] [ŋ] [ŋ] to pull the voice forward and create the sensation of singing in the “masque.” When I am teaching a new exercise I teach it on solfege and have the students perform it a few times on solfege. In this way I am doing double duty. I also begin most of my exercises right above the break in the female voice so they aren’t tempted to use their chest voice (which is easily confused for resonance). You should consider adding hand and body motions to free the voice, show direction of phrase, and keep the mind involved as well. Also, try to think about slowing down and really listening (you and your students), and fix the things you are hearing in the warm up. Many of the problems that you later have to fret about in the repertoire could have been “cut off at the pass” (so to speak).

### Here are just a few:

1. Lynn Bielefelt began every rehearsal with this one. I still love it! Move up and down by half steps within the range of a P5 for this and the remaining exercises.

Adagio

[m] \_\_\_\_\_ [u] \_\_\_\_\_

The musical notation for the Adagio exercise is on a single treble clef staff. It consists of two phrases. The first phrase starts on a middle C (C4) and moves up by half steps: C4, C#4, D4, D#4, E4, F4, F#4, G4. The second phrase starts on G4 and moves down by half steps: G4, F#4, F4, E4, D4, C#4, C4. The notes are quarter notes. Below the staff, there are two horizontal lines representing breath marks. The first line is under the first phrase and is labeled with the phonetic symbol [m]. The second line is under the second phrase and is labeled with the phonetic symbol [u].

2. **Cupid’s Bow and Arrow:** Have the students simulate pulling the bow back on the nasal and letting it go as the sound explodes into the vowel.

Moderato

[m] [i] [m] [e] [ma] [mɔ] [mu]

The musical notation for the Cupid’s Bow and Arrow exercise is on a single treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of seven notes: a half note F#4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a half note A4. The notes are marked with accents (>). Below the staff, there are seven phonetic symbols: [m], [i], [m], [e], [ma], [mɔ], and [mu].

3. **Tiny Nail, Tiny Hammer:** This is one of Joe Miller’s favorites. He has the choir mime holding and hitting a little tiny nail and little tiny hammer (metal on metal sound). Make sure the sound is created in that tiny space between the nose and eyes and not a chesty “belt.” It is particularly important to follow this exercise with one that continues with resonance but pulls the voice out of the nose since there is no ensuing vowel that serves that purpose in this exercise.

Presto!

[miŋ] [miŋ] [miŋ] [miŋ] [miŋ]

The musical notation for the Tiny Nail, Tiny Hammer exercise is on a single treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of five quarter notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, and C5. Below the staff, there are five phonetic symbols: [miŋ], [miŋ], [miŋ], [miŋ], and [miŋ].

4. My student teacher taught this one last year. It's a great exercise.

Moderato

[hʌŋ] [a]

5. **Second-Grader:** Slide one index finger on the other towards your neighbor (*alla shame, shame, shame*).

Vivace

[næ] [næ] [næ] [næ] [næ]

6. **Nasal to Pure Vowel:** I like to use the motion of stretching a rubber band up and down when the vowel opens on this one. It helps the singers pull out of the nasal resonance to a tall vowel.

Vivace

[mi] [me] [ma] [mɔ] [mu]

7. **Abdominal Energy:** Be sure to engage the abdominal musculature on this one. But be careful a big thrust of the gut is more harmful than helpful. Just make sure there is muscle antagonism working and in place to support the voice.

Vivace

[mi] [me] [ma] [m] [mu]

8. **Newsies:** Here is another steal from Joe Miller. It is also a great agility exercise.

Vivace 3

[nɔ] [nu] [nɔ] [nu] [nuz]

There are a ton more. Be encouraged and brave to make up your own. Select and restructure passages from your repertoire, think of something interesting on your drive in to work, experiment, and remember that this is also a great time to teach phrasing, breath support, direction, diction, and the list goes on. Happy Resonance Building! Next up: mid-range and agility.

# 2013 Fall In-Service: *The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual SCVA Choral School*

*Rodger Guerrero, Past President*

It is my distinct pleasure to announce that the 2013 Fall In-Service will be transformed into the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual *SCVA Choral School*! This phenomenal, all-day choral rehearsal, workshop and performance will take place on Saturday, Oct. 19, 2013 from approximately 9:00am-4:00pm at Placentia Presbyterian Church. It will feature the talents and refreshingly diverse educational approaches of two of California's most outstanding choral conductors: Dr. Rob Istad, from Cal State Fullerton, and Dr. Jonathan Talberg, from Cal State Long Beach.



What, you might ask, is this *SCVA Choral School*? It is a chance for each of us to travel back in time and re-visit what it means to be a chorister; to warm-up together; to sight read new, varied, and substantial music; to rehearse as an actual performing ensemble might rehearse; to consider tone and intonation and text and performance practice issues and musicality and to work to articulate and improve each of these areas throughout the day; to learn about and adjust to two completely different approaches to rehearsal technique; to understand, and adapt and respond to a variety of conducting gestures; to operate as a team and grow and mature as an actual choir; to do everything we expect our own singers to do and thus become better at empathizing with them; to experience – again – the wonder and magnificence of group singing and remember why we are so addicted to it; to replenish our personal teaching methods with new ideas and fresh perspectives; to become students for a day. In short, the *SCVA Choral School* will be an incredible opportunity to make and share music with friends.

How will the *Choral School* be organized? Well, quite frankly, I'm not completely sure.☺ My plan is to establish two equal and balanced SATB choirs via registration. In order to do so, when registering, all participants will be asked to list a preferred voice part (S-I, A-II, etc.) and articulate a specific level of choral knowhow based upon previous experiences (novice, intermediate or advanced, dependent upon choirs previously participated in, collegiate study and choral involvement, etc.). Dr. Istad and Dr. Talberg will choose literature for and rehearse each of the two choirs throughout the day. Educational and musical philosophies, rehearsal and conducting technique and more will be addressed, discussed, and demonstrated as each choir practices. A brief end-of-the-day performance by each choir will be followed by a performance of two or more pieces by the combined ensembles.

Other interest sessions may be incorporated into the *Choral School* format. The inclusion of a question and answer session seems quite logical. Perhaps members from each choir could literally adjudicate the other in the manner of the SCVA Adjudication Clinic. Maybe each choir could be adjudicated according to the new, standards-based format of the emerging Coordinated System of California Choral Festivals.

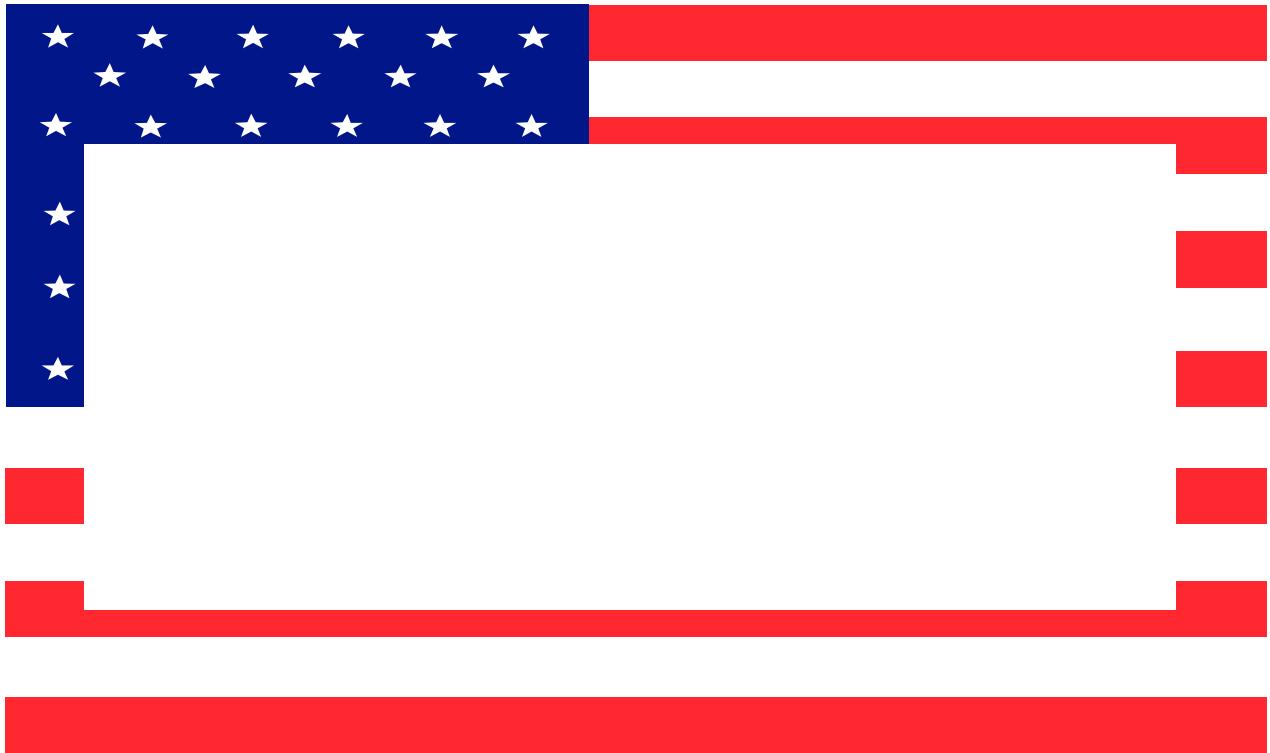
However the new Fall In-Service format develops, all SCVA members should mark their calendars now (Sat, Oct. 19!). Registration will begin in August and must end much earlier than in past years in order to assure the establishment of two, balanced SATB choirs. So, mark that calendar today, and get ready for a brand new, exciting experience: the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual *SCVA Choral School*!

# Southern California Vocal Association

c/o The Buckley School

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## Important Dates and Deadlines

Show Choir Spectacular

**On-line Registration opens for HS Honor Choirs**

On-line Registration closes for HS Honor Choirs

**Audition times and locations confirmed for HS Honor Choirs**

Audition dates for HS Honor Choirs

**SCVA Choral School**

HS Honor Choirs Rehearsal

**HS Honor Choirs Weekend**

HS Honor Choirs Concert

**Diva Day**

ACDA Western Division Conference

**Young Men's Harmony Festival**

California All-State Honor Choir Weekend

May 11, 2013

**August 29, 2013**

September 20, 2013

**September 23, 2013**

September 28 & October 3, 2013

**October 19, 2013**

October 26 or November 2, 2013

**November 22-23, 2013**

November 23, 2013

**February 8, 2014**

February 19-22, 2014

**March 1, 2014**

March 20-22, 2014