

## **NORTH AMERICAN SINGERS' ASSOCIATION 2006 NATIONAL MUSICAL DIRECTORS FORUM**

The National Musical Directors' Forum took place in Toledo, Ohio on July 21 & 22, 2006 and was hosted by the Teutonia Männerchor and Damenchor. Twenty Directors and officers of the National Board were present. Directors in attendance came from Milwaukee to Pittsburgh and from Toledo to Cincinnati, Evansville, Houston and Omaha and cities in between.

Moderator Richard McGinty suggested that there be a co-moderator. Ernie Flamm of Dayton was elected as co-chair for the Forum.

This was the third meeting of the Musical Directors. Two key points were made that proposals to the Board need to be finalized and that the discussions need be important enough that it gives the choruses a reason to send and pay for their directors to attend in the future. Directors agreed that this is very important.

### **Archiving Music**

Richard McGinty has contacted several universities that have expressed an interest in archiving German music. There are questions regarding copyrights. San Antonio has the Institute of Texas Culture which is interested due to German settlers in Texas.

- 1) After discussing technical aspects, do we want to go through a University or a cultural institute?
- 2) How much music to start? How to accumulate?

Under the 'Source' for directors, is this public (University of Texas)? Private (Institute of Texas Culture, Wisconsin University, Northwestern University, American Choral Directors)? Would electronic archiving fall under 'fair use' provisions? This is a storage, not a performance. Would the archive entity know the rules? They do not and are asking for direction. If archived, 'for viewing purposes only,' and if they want to purchase/perform, point them to the appropriate place. Cpdl.org is a website that specializes in public domain works: Choral Public Domain Library. Would they be open to a specific section of their web-site be available for this electronic archiving? The archives should know rules regarding copyrights, etc.

Should the Bund commission money to look into the access issue? Value in archiving old music that is not necessarily ever to be sung again; storage of paper by local choruses is an issue, and access. Electronic access would be scanned for retrieval.

Old music that local choruses do not want to throw away could be sent in to the Archive depository for historical purposes.

**Decision:** Cathy Wendt will investigate the Institution options, costs, protocols, accessibility, etc., for scanned archival of German Music.

### **Copyrights**

Choruses have had ASCAP issues and have had to join ASCAP due to their club's activities in garden concerts (charges an entry fee for these), various other activities venues. Band music was more of an issue than the choral music. It was reported that it is cheaper to join ASCAP than pay fines for music without proper performance rights. One chorus negotiated a reduced membership fee, usually \$600/year, down to \$180/year. Again, the German music is not really the problem.

Clarification – if no money is exchanged, there are still issues with ASCAP. This could be an issue for schools, as well. Also if your club rooms have a Juke Box, also.

Peoria has also been paying fees each year to ASCAP; maybe under a performance-by-performance fee, rather than an annual fee. Evansville pays into ASCAP, also. If the publishing company is under ASCAP's umbrella, they can go after you. If the publisher does not have an arrangement with ASCAP, ASCAP cannot go after you, per Chuck Eakins. Does not protect from BMI, etc.

Don Guske is singing a piece that is still being published, Aaron's Blessing. Asked to 'rent' the song – no. Purchased copies in order to sing.

Elmer Menhart indicated that the Sangerfest committees have made every effort to secure permission or copyright release.

Wolfgang Wengler is the new Archivar and has created an index of all selections sung. Loesje Chandler reminded everyone that this conversation started with a request to share District Fest books with other Directors. Not every District prints the music; not every District has a book; not everyone has a District Fest.

**Decision:** include intellectual property law as a topic at next Forum with someone that is an expert in the subject.

### **Internet Conferencing within the group**

- Teleconferencing is available through the NASB. If you wish to use, please notify Tim Pecsentye ([tim629@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tim629@sbcglobal.net)) or 419-474-7604 and he can assist you.
- Group Internet meetings to have discussion on a regular basis and provide a more summarized issue to boil down issue for voting/resolution: If you have not joined the NASBDIRECTORSFORUM on Yahoo! Contact Richard McGinty at [r.e.hourich@excite.com](mailto:r.e.hourich@excite.com). He will also send you an invitation to join. There is a calendar with this, as well.
- E-mail communication amongst directors; set topics for discussion –

### **Improving Sources for Help**

German American Chamber of Commerce of the US – the national would love to help market our singing. Very enthusiastic about promoting German culture throughout the United States. Most cities have an organization for German businesses to communicate with each other. [sbayer@gaccsouth.com](mailto:sbayer@gaccsouth.com), 530 Means Street, Suite 120, Atlanta, GA 30318; 404-586-6800; 404-586-6824 FAX; [www.gaccsouth.com](http://www.gaccsouth.com)

### **When/Why/How to get chorus to make the performance special?**

- Visiting choruses provide a lot of motivation to prepare for a concert; some comparisons, a little ‘show’ in the rehearsals; learned from listening and tried a little harder to sing
- Sing with local professional orchestra members; Diction coaches for uniform German pronunciation
- Austrian piece in Sangerfest book and all songs, look at the poetry, the meaning of the text
- Brief announcement to introduce each piece to the audience
- Translation for non-German chorus members
- Review text in light of the music structure and dynamics
- Tell the story
- Sing without the music, not looking at the music all the time
- Singing a cappella
- If we sing the same music, it will be sung out of habit; try something new
- Members will only do what is asked, no more; do not use the word ‘volunteer’ – what would you expect from the *volunteer* firemen?
- Change tempos, dynamics, etc. to keep their attention

### **Impacting the Community**

- Leading the National Anthem for events; Events like sponsoring cabaret concerts in Indianapolis (Loesje)
- Choruses seem to be losing the sense of community between the choruses
- Annual concert at a local church, new repertoire, solos, close with a sing-a-long; something they can ‘whistle’ as they leave
- Christmas carols, sponsored by a business, in front of their store, can use small group
- Sing at weddings in the church, since church choirs are not always available for weddings
- Sing for funerals at various churches
- German church services in church; liturgy through the year with a Lutheran church that was re-building its membership, concert with various groups participating
- Do you sponsor a scholarship or soccer or baseball team? Should you?

- Introducing the pieces; selecting pieces the audience will be familiar with to draw new singers to participate

### **Organization of this Forum**

- Committee Chair positions – Do we want to keep the committees as they are? We will keep these as they are at this time Three committees:
  - Assignment of Fest Directors;
  - Archival Committee on hold until more information is available;
  - Commission Committee: to be continued with Yahoo discussion group (music commission, or instruction book, or archival storage).
- Attendance of Directors is advantageous to all directors
- Communication throughout the year amongst Directors
- Off-season if we join the Forum and Music Selection Committee would mean one less trip selection of Fest directors – Board has responded, why not have committee meeting during the Forum to save trip expense and Directors are in attendance; each District rotate their directorship; by-laws say the directors should be selected at the meeting; increase participation in this meeting would be accomplished if it happened during these annual meetings; in conjunction with national music selection meeting. Each club in district should submit three pieces of music which are whittled down and presented to the national committee; national music selection committee, district directors of each district plus the chair District presidents need to get the District Directors to attend the selection meetings **Decision:** Recommend to NASB Board that the National Music Selection be held the day after the Directors' Forum
- Question: would Forum have better attendance if moved to first week in August instead of late July? NO Maintain the July dates, third weekend, July 21<sup>st</sup>

### **What can the Directors do to help the Fest director?**

- Learning the music in the book.
- Submitting music in a format that is legible (music selection committee issue).
- **Help chorus President understand the** importance of rehearsing the Sangerfest music.
- **Impress on singers the implied obligation to participate in Sangerfeste.**
- Registration of choruses to know how many people. These will be sent out to each individual club. Coming in September; get it back in to committee in a timely fashion.
- Friday night districts sing at Empfangskonzert. What three songs will each district sing, no more than 10 minutes – these are past due. Friday night at Fest: Chuck would like information regarding section formats/seating arrangement for each District (7/22 request)

### **Educational Topics for future Forums**

- Marketing person? – in Omaha, there is a German-American web-site, monthly book to members, also available through e-mail, in *German Life* publication; bus tours come out to the club and are entertained by the chorus and dance group
  - Leadership education was approved last year, as per our suggestion, possibly in Indianapolis, including publicity; is marketing really for the directors or is this the chorus' leadership?
- ASCAP and copyright rules/law, staying within the law without getting bankrupt
- Conducting workshop, advanced conducting techniques; conductor vs. musical director
- Voice therapist/coach or hearing: when is it a physical issue versus technique?

### **Directors' Chorus.**

Directors' had opportunity to rehearse as a Directors' Chorus for presentation at the Empfangskonzert in Evansville. It is agreed that this will be a good addition to the Concert. Directors also had opportunity to sing through Sangerfest book.

### **Action items until next meeting:**

1. Can we commit to send a copy of the District Fest books and/or Song List to each other?  
**Decision:** Directors agree to bring up to twenty copies of the prior year's Fest books, Song List and/or music.

2. Commission a handbook for singers for basic music instruction, music theory, German pronunciation  
**Decision:** go back to our choruses and ask if they would find a handbook helpful/useful
3. Commissioning the work for the Fest for the 2010 book, which would be due by 2008 selection; next Board meeting will be in April 2007; how much money is available for this project? E-mail topic? Are the directors interested in a commissioned work? Medley of known German pieces was a success in Cincinnati, Ohio, performed with the symphony.  
**Decision:** We will come to the board by the Evansville Fest up or down on this issue.

### **Sänger Zeitung**

Writing Articles for the newsletters; 3 issues between now and next year; positive, up-beat, group success of choruses, possible introduction or background.

- Richard to write one of the articles;
- Dennis to write an article, maybe coming through the ranks from Kinderchor to now directing;
- Loesje will also write an article.

### **Recommendation to NASB Board re: Fest Directors**

- Fest Directors should be district directors that participate in the music selection committee meeting; Nine people make up the National Music Committee: Third Vice President, District Director Representative from each District
- Directors to should rotate for variety.
- Host city director, selected by host city, is one of the three Fest directors.
- The other two are selected from the District Directors who participated in the music selection committee. Those in attendance will determine who will fill the Director slots.
- There would need to be a change to the by-laws, changing this responsibility from the organizing committee.
- If not enough Directors show up for the music selection committee meeting, Host City can choose a Director to fill any open slots.

This recommendation is to be forwarded to the Board of Directors for consideration in April.

### **NEXT DIRECTORS FORUM**

THE CONSENSUS IS THAT THIS IS WORTH THE TIME AND EFFORT. **THE POINT OF MEETING IS TO DEVELOP A SENSE OF COMMUNITY WITHIN THE DIRECTORS AND WITHIN THE CHORUSES.** IT WILL BE HELD: JULY 20 & 21, 2007, AGAIN HOSTED BY THE TEUTONIA MÄNNERCHOR AND DAMENCHOR AT OAK SHADE HALL AND CLUBHOUSE IN OREGON, OHIO.