

Section VI

HONORS CHOIR

Purpose: To select and honor the best senior vocal musicians in Virginia; to provide the students with rehearsal and performance opportunities at the highest level of achievement.

The VMEA Honors Choir consists of 132 senior vocal musicians who are enrolled in Virginia school choral programs. The first Honors Choir performed at the 1979 VMEA Convention in Richmond. Solely sponsored by VMEA, the Honors Choir is not a Choral Section (VCDA) activity.

All 12th grade students enrolled in their school choral program are eligible to audition with the recommendation of their director. Singers are selected by solo audition consisting of a prepared, pre-selected solo piece and a sight-reading selection. Auditions are held in early October in a centralized location and students are auditioned by two judges who are not teachers of the students involved.

Rehearsals and the concert performance are held in connection with the annual VMEA In-Service Conference. The guest conductor will be selected by the Honors Choir Chairman, based upon recommendations submitted by the Honors Choir Committee, and/or the choral directors.

The rehearsals and concert performance provide an opportunity for outstanding choral students to perform for music educators of all disciplines and levels with a nationally recognized conductor. Parents and families of participants are invited to attend the concert.

REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

The following principles, procedures, and management were discussed and agreed upon by the VMEA President's Committee and the appointed VCDA Committee on April 28, 2007.

1. Principles

- (a) Choir will consist of the most outstanding senior vocal musicians in Virginia.
- (b) Organization of the event will be administered by an Honors Choir Chairman appointed by the VMEA President to serve a minimum of one year. The Chairman will appoint appropriate committees for housing, meals, and chaperones, and will appoint an Auditions Chairman. The Honors Choir Chairman will be responsible for all financial reports to VMEA.

(c) The Auditions Chairman will select an Audition Committee, which will assist in the selection of judges, audition selection, sight-singing exercise, audition schedule, and tabulation of scores.

(d) The Honors Choir Chairman and the Auditions Chairman will determine fees per student necessary to cover expenses of auditions.

(e) Choir will consist of no more than 132 voices.

(f) All participants will be selected through a single Virginia audition.

(g) The choir will rehearse for two days during the VMEA In-Service Conference and perform for the VMEA membership during a General Session.

(h) The Honors Choir activity, including auditions, will be financially self-supporting.

(i) The Choir will be conducted by a guest clinician, selected by the Honors Choir Chairman, based upon recommendations submitted by the Honors Choir Committee.

2. Audition Procedures

(a) Auditions will be held at a centrally located Virginia site.

(b) Auditions will be held in early October, with the specific date to be determined by the Honors Choir committee.

(c) Audition selection and sight-singing exercise will be determined by the Honors Choir Chairman and the Honor's Choir Committee.

(d) Audition adjudication and performance selection information will be mailed to all high school choral directors in the Commonwealth. A mailing list is secured through the Virginia High School League and includes all high schools and secondary schools, both public and private. The information will also be posted on the Honor's Choir web site through VMEA.com and sent in a mailing to a membership list supplied by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC).

(e) Auditions will begin at 8:30 A.M. The order of auditions will be determined by request at the time of registration and by the projected travel time from the school to the audition site.

(f) Information concerning audition fees and schedule, a map for location of auditions, sample score sheets, and any other pertinent information will be mailed to VMEA members during the week preceding Labor Day. Mailing will be labeled "Honors Choir Information, Open Immediately." Mailing will be determined by membership information supplied by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), the Virginia

High School League (VHSL), and the Virginia Music Educator's Association (VMEA) membership list in August, immediately preceding the mailing date.

(g) Sample score sheets will be made available to students prior to the audition date.

(h) Female tenors or basses and male altos or sopranos are not eligible for participation in Honors Choir.

(i) The deadline for audition registration will be during the third week of September. Only those registration forms postmarked by the deadline date will be accepted.

(j) Registration forms will be signed by the school principal, verifying that each participating student is a registered senior in the school choral program and is auditioning for the first time for Honors Choir.

(k) No senior selected for Honors Choir will be granted a second opportunity should he/she repeat the senior level in school.

(l) Transportation to and from the audition location will be the responsibility of the choral director. Students will be accompanied by their director or a designated chaperone approved by the school principal.

(m) Choral directors or designated chaperones will register students at the audition location.

(n) Each registration packet will include two score sheets per student with that student's pre-printed audition number.

(o) Students should report to the audition area at least ten (10) minutes prior to their audition time. The singers will be called into the audition room by number.

(p) Students should be dressed appropriately. Appearance and stage presence are included as part of the final score.

3. Audition Management

(A) Procedures

(1) Audition Chairman will select a Tabulating Committee and provide instructions as to tabulation procedures during and at the conclusion of auditions.

(2) Audition Chairman will select qualified collegiate or adult accompanists for each audition area.

(3) Audition Chairman will assign dependable runners for each audition area for the purpose of assisting students to proper location and helping the Audition Chairman in maintaining the time schedule.

(4) A minimum of four audition rooms with two judges per room will be used. Additional rooms with two judges each may be used if registration numbers necessitate. i.e. S1, S2, A1, A2, etc

(5) All students in the same voice category must be heard by the same two judges with the same accompaniment tempo and procedures and on the same audition selection and sight-singing exercise. No part or section of the audition selection or sight-singing exercise may be changed or omitted after the first student audition has been held.

(6) The Honors Choir Chairman and Auditions Chairman will meet with judges and accompanists prior to auditions for the purpose of establishing tempos, audition procedures, etc.

(7) The Audition Chairman will provide for an adequate lunch break for judges and accompanists. Other short breaks may be provided as necessary.

(8) The accompanist will be responsible for supervision of proper procedures in the audition room.

(9) Only judges, accompanists, Honors Choir Chairman, and/or Audition Chairman are permitted in the audition rooms.

(10) Only those students preparing to audition are permitted in the audition area.

(11) Students will sing the sight-singing exercise a cappella on any syllable of his/her choice, followed by the performance of the prepared audition selection.

(B) Judges/Accompanists

(1) Judges and accompanists will be selected by the Audition Chairman and Committee.

(2) Judges will not include Virginia high school choral directors. Judges may not adjudicate their own private students.

(3) Judges and accompanists will receive an appropriate fee and reimbursement for travel, lodging and meals.

(4) Judges will be encouraged to write comments of a positive nature which will provide help and encouragement to students. The audition will be a helpful, positive experience for all participating students.

(C) Audition Results

(1) No scores will be given out on the day of auditions.

(2) The Honors Choir Chairman and Auditions Chairman will determine the cut-off score in the selection of the Honors Choir, based on a predetermined number to balance the voicing of the total choir. In the event the cutoff score is duplicated with two or more students, the tie will be broken based on (1) the sight reading score, and (2) Vocal quality (3) Tonal Accuracy, (4) Rhythmic Accuracy.

(3) The Audition Chairman is responsible for publishing audition scores. Audition scores will be posted on the Honor's Choir website within 48 hours of the final audition.

(4) Audition results will be published in the order of final scores.

(5) Audition results and score sheets will be mailed to directors within the week following auditions.

(6) The Audition Chairman will submit a financial report to the Honors Choir Chairman within four weeks following auditions.

Important Note

The Honors Choir is sponsored by VMEA and governed by the VMEA Executive Board.

Performance Attire

In order to facilitate a uniform and consistent appearance, the following Honor's Choir Performance attire will be required.

Girls:

KNEE LENGTH or LONGER Black Dressy Skirt

Long Sleeve, Pressed Dress Style White Blouse

Black or nude pantyhose

Dressy black shoes. No sandals or flip-flops

Please keep heel height to 2" or less

Boys:

Dress Style Black Pants (tux pants are acceptable)

Long Sleeve, Pressed Dress Style White Shirt-

Dark color tie

Dressy black shoes and black socks

No jacket or sweater.

Please do not wear cologne, perfume, body sprays, and perfumed lotions during rehearsals or the concert. Some people are allergic to them.

Jewelry should be kept to a minimum for the concert.

Remember: The focus is on the choir's singing!

Failure to cooperate with the above dress code will result in removal from the performance.