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Show Choir Products and News

10 REASONS TO
**SUPPORT
SHOW CHOIRS**

HOW TO MAKE
EASY EDITS
TO SHOW CHOIR
ARRANGEMENTS

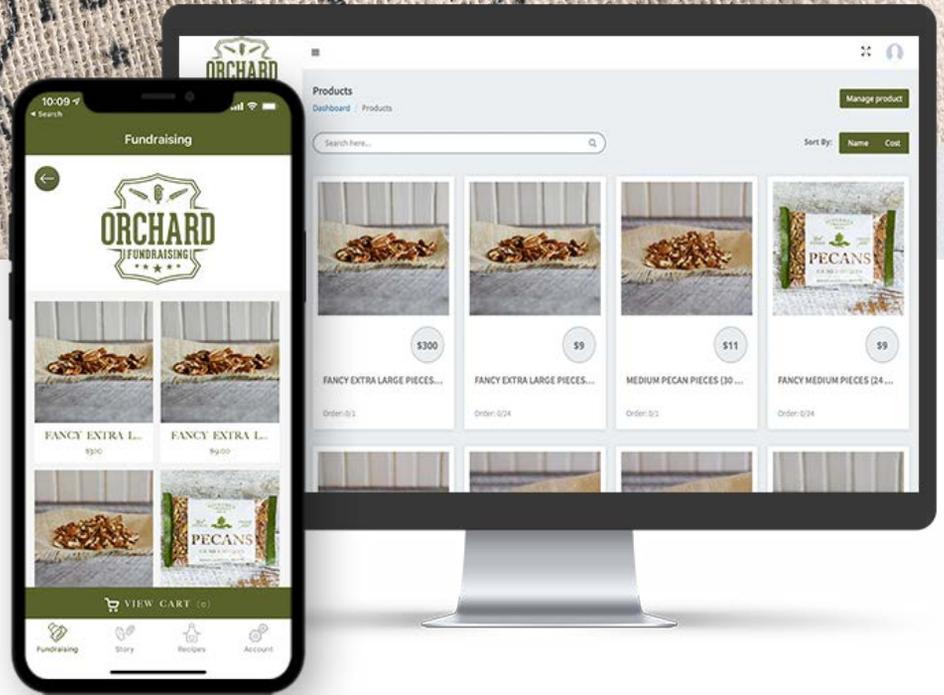
SOUND BITES

**SHOWBIZ
BOOTCAMP**
ATTACHÉ SHOW CHOIR



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Aron Wimberly can be reached at aron@schmerpecans.com or by calling 1.800.841.3403. Contact Orchard at info@orchardfundraising.com, call 833.850.8324, or visit www.orchardfundraising.com



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SHOWBIZ BOOTCAMP: ATTACHÉ SHOW CHOIR

Lance Bass was just another first-year student at Clinton High School in 1994 when he auditioned for Attaché, the school's award-winning show choir. Barely a year later, he was a member of the "boy band" vocal group NSYNC and well on his way to becoming a teen pop icon. It's no coincidence that he spent the intervening time learning how to use his voice and perform under the direction of David and Mary Fehr in what has become known as a showbiz bootcamp and de facto finishing school.



16 HOW TO MAKE EASY EDITS TO SHOW CHOIR ARRANGEMENTS

No matter how great your arrangements are, there will inevitably come a time during the school year where things start to plateau, or even worse, start to get stale. Knowing how to make useful changes and edits to the music is the key to getting through these moments and kicking your rehearsals back into gear. Below, I've listed eight of the most common things I tinker with when I work with groups—or even when I'm editing my own charts.

22 10 REASONS TO SUPPORT SHOW CHOIRS

Practitioners and educators of show choir intrinsically know the benefits of participating in this type of activity. Something just feels good about learning new music and choreography, about working with a group to create something special and magical while at the same time making the most of every personal contribution.



28 sound bites

editor's letter

Hello, and welcome to the holiday countdown of the big three, as they are known! We did have a nominee for number four but ultimately felt that College Football Conference Championship Saturday was not quite viable.

I love this time of year. October 31st starts us off with all the scary wonder that is Halloween. Yes, I love scary movies and will probably watch three every weekend until I am handing out candy at the door on Halloween night.

After that, we look at maybe the best food holiday of all time: Thanksgiving. To be honest, though, my house will be looking a lot like the following holiday, but that is because it is the most wonderful holiday that I love. This year, I have a lot to be thankful for: getting to share the day with family and watching everyone around the table together for another year is something I never take for granted.

Then we are on the final countdown to the biggest one of all: Christmas. From my childhood, my grandmother made Christmas a most special time of year. The joy she gave and brought to that day has been continued in our family as well, and I hope it is still going long after I am with her in the hereafter. Christmas seems to bring out the best in so many people. The season of perpetual hope and love for one another would be lovely to have all year round, but I will still enjoy it for the time that we get to have it with us.

I think it is interesting that we have three of the biggest celebrations at the time of year that is the coldest and darkest for us in the Northern Hemisphere. Maybe this cluster of holidays shows us that hope is the most important gift we have been given and that we should offer that to one another whenever we can. Also, maybe these holidays in the darkness show that hope shines the brightest right when we need it the most.

Show choir brings the Christmas joy to me every time I am lucky enough to get to see a performance. I want to thank all of you for the programs you are working on and the pure joy that you will be giving the fortunate ones who get to see you perform this holiday season. I look forward to seeing as many that I can—and for those who I do not get to, I look forward to watching the videos.

Isn't it great to get to have performances in person once again? Talk to you next time, and thanks again for giving all of us joy.

Ed Bauer
Publisher/Editor
ed@productionsmag.com
www.productionsmag.com
Productions Magazine



Ed Bauer

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
ed@productionsmag.com

Lawrence Provenzano

Director of Client Development

Cynthia Mwenja, PhD

Copyeditor

Hilary Moreno

Creative Director

Staff Writers

Lisa Gibbs, EdD
Cynthia Mwenja, PhD

Contributing Writers

Jim Beaugez
Garrett Breeze
Amy Porter



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PO Box 1903, Pelham, AL 35124
Toll Free: 800-705-5280
Fax: 855-239-8093

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SHOWBIZ BOOTCAMP

ATTACHÉ SHOW CHOIR

by Jim Beaugez



Lance Bass was just another first-year student at Clinton High School in 1994 when he auditioned for Attaché, the school's award-winning show choir. Barely a year later, he was a member of the "boy band" vocal group NSYNC and well on his way to becoming a teen pop icon. It's no coincidence that he spent the intervening time learning how to use his voice and perform under the direction of David and Mary Fehr in what has become known as a **SHOWBIZ BOOTCAMP AND DE FACTO FINISHING SCHOOL.**



Nashville singer-songwriter Shelly Fairchild—who has three solo albums to her credit, has appeared on records by Jason Aldean, Eric Church and Terri Clark, and has carved a successful niche by placing songs in television shows—had a similar experience after joining Attaché as a shy teenager. So did Broadway star Heath Calvert, known for his roles in *Hair* and *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*.

All three former Clinton High School and Attaché students, with the addition of fellow alums Drew Wardlaw, Max Lyall, and Brittany Wagner—the breakout star of Netflix’s *Last Chance U*—appeared onstage at the Attaché Alumni Theater at Clinton High School in April. The four-act performance celebrated the forty-second anniversary of Attaché by bringing alums back to the stage, raising money to support the program, which has earned the Grand Champion title at eighty-five competitions since 1992. The group’s current run of twenty-three consecutive Grand Champion wins dates back to 2014, and their 2019 bid was captured in *Attaché*, a PBS and Reel South documentary film.

Bass, in his first Attaché appearance since NSYNC debuted in December 1995, served

as host and emcee for the evening. Having learned to sing in church choir—and while receiving further guidance from Fehr through Attaché—Bass began vocal instruction with Bob Westbrook in Germantown, Tennessee. Westbrook had also coached Justin Timberlake, and introduced Bass and Timberlake when NSYNC was searching for a bass singer.

Although Bass’s time in Attaché was brief, it opened his eyes to his own talents and changed the course of his life. But much of the inspiration he felt came from watching his classmates. “I got to do *West Side Story* with Shelly Fairchild,” he says. “She was our Maria, and good Lord, we knew then she was going to do something. She was so talented. I was just a freshman then, and it was so new to me; I just couldn’t believe that high school students could be so talented.”

Fairchild did find success when she moved to Nashville and signed a record deal with Sony in 2004. The label released her debut album, *Ride*, the following year, sending Fairchild on a whirlwind of promotion including radio appearances and concert tours with country music stars Keith Urban, Tim McGraw, and Rascal Flatts. But her journey began when she



arrived at Attaché around the same time as the Fehrs, who took over after founder Winona Costello retired.

“The first year that I was there, Mr. David Fehr was our new director,” Fairchild says. “I’ll never forget him coming up to us as we were learning some of the songs and yelling at me in my face, like, ‘Open your mouth, Fairchild!’”

“To this day,” she adds, “people will ask me, ‘How in the world do you sing from your toes all the way up through the top of your head?’ And I’m like, ‘Well, if you had David Fehr as a director, then you would understand why your whole body is involved in this.’ So, it really made a big difference in my life.”

Fairchild remembers when Fehr brought Heath Calvert, then a first-year student, to the group—an unheard-of move, since membership was usually open to students beginning with the sophomore year. He had just moved to Clinton, and while his mannerisms weren’t

“When I joined Attaché, I didn’t dance at all — I had never danced in my life. I’m so glad I got to experience that for a couple of years, because if I wouldn’t have been able to learn choreography in a certain amount of time, there’s no way that I would’ve been able to do NSYNC.”

—LANCE BASS

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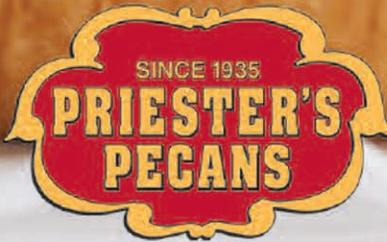
“It’s not the amount of time you put into something, but the quality of work that you put into something...Everybody says they work hard. Well, no, some people just waste a lot of time, [unless they are] working with a purpose or understanding what [they’re] working towards.”

—DAVID FEHR

disrespectful, he didn’t say “sir” or “ma’am” like most of his new peers, Fehr says. His style was a hard sell with his teachers; he had racked up nine detentions for such minor infractions, and one more would suspend him from school and activities.

“I went ahead and gave him his tenth detention so that he could serve his one day or whatever. It was so that we wouldn’t miss the performances coming up,” Fehr laughs. In the April performance, alums performed solo, in pairs, and in groups throughout the three-hour program. Calvert performed “If I Only Had a Brain” from *The Wizard of Oz* and “Anthem” from the musical *Chess*, while the current Attaché students performed their 2022 competition showcase, “Vacation!” Bass and Wagner joined the chorus for a number of songs.

The third act, though, was all about the Fehrs. Fairchild debuted “What We Leave,” a song she wrote especially for the event, as a duet with her sister, Lindsey Fairchild Lenoir. The performance was a surprise to the Fehrs, organizers, and the audience, but the current students were in on the plan; Fairchild recruited the daughter of a friend to circulate the lyrics to them so they could join in on the song’s finale.



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While Attaché provides the platform for students to explore their talents, they also learn life skills, Fehr stresses. Work ethic is crucial to the post-graduation success of the students who perform and those who run the show; perseverance is another. Fehr recalls a competition in California where Wagner performed while in pain from a broken finger she suffered during warm-ups, a show of grit and determination the public would later see on “Last Chance U.”

“We produce just good kids; the talent and desire come from good families,” Fehr claims. “Don’t credit that to Attaché. I can develop whatever is there and help them out, but those families and kids, they have goals and missions, and my job is to help them along. But the ninety percent that don’t go into the arts, they’re still getting the same thing.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jim Beaugez is a Mississippi-based writer whose work has been published by *Rolling Stone*, *Smithsonian*, *Oxford American*, *Garden & Gun*, *Guitar World* and other publications. He also created and produced *My Life in Five Riffs*, a documentary series for *Guitar Player* that traces contemporary musicians back to their sources of inspiration.

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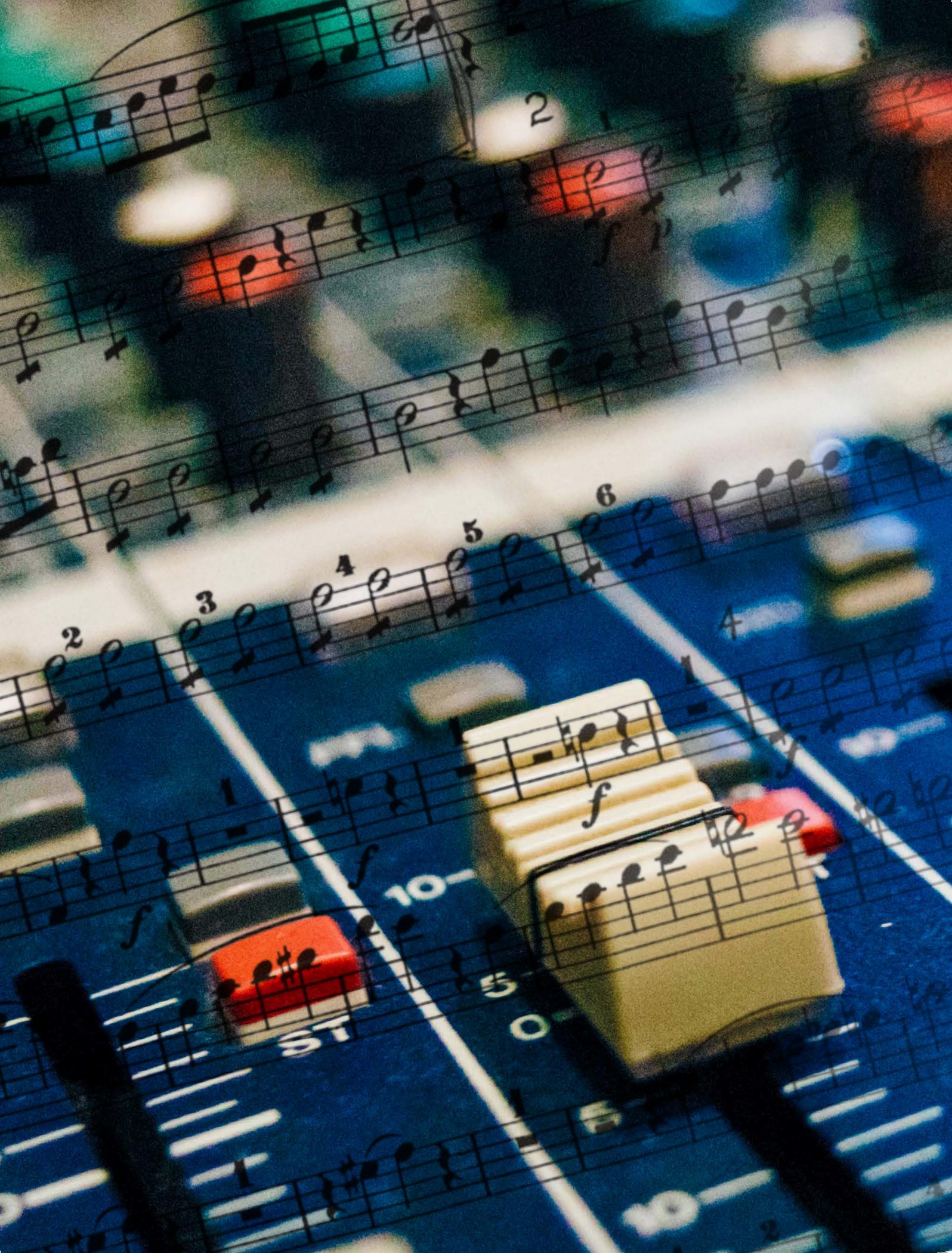
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HOW TO MAKE

EASY EDITS

TO SHOW CHOIR ARRANGEMENTS

by Garrett Breeze



BOTH PHOTOS BY ANGEL BAKER / VESTAVIA HILLS SINGERS

No matter how great your arrangements are, there will inevitably come a time during the school year where things start to plateau, or even worse, start to get stale. Knowing how to make useful changes and edits to the music is the key to getting through these moments and kicking your rehearsals back into gear. Below, I've listed eight of the most common things I tinker with when I work with groups—or even when I'm editing my own charts.

Add Dynamic Contrast

Make sure that each song in the show has at least one or two obvious dynamic changes. Frankly, I'm shocked how many groups I judge in competition that simply do not change volume at all. If making dynamic changes is a struggle for your group, start by adding just one moment per song—have them really nail it—and then add more from there until they reach the point that you feel like they're actually making music.

The key here is to make the changes obvious. Sometimes things don't translate as well as we think when we get on stage. Also, make sure the dynamic makes sense with the visual. If the choreography has the performers dancing full out with huge movements, but they're singing piano, the combination is not going to seem authentic.



Get Rid of Overlap in Transitions

Make sure to leave space between the singing and the dance break on both ends of the transition. I see this issue all the time, usually when one group or the other has pickup notes. Figure it out—lose some notes in the horns, add an extra measure; I don't care. Just make space to finish one thing before going on to the next.

Add Band Hits to Important Visual Moments

The arranger almost always writes the chart before they see the choreography, so one of the first things I do when I work with a group is take a step back and see if there are any important dance moves

that would benefit from an extra accent from the band. This strategy is similar to how Foley artists add sound effects to movies. Punches don't sound that loud in real life, but they seem to hit so much harder on screen because of the added sounds. Just make sure that the emphasis is stylistically and musically appropriate for the song. If the same China cymbal is hit every time for a specific dance move, the choice gets old real fast.

Fill Dead Space between Vocal Lines

The band needs to take responsibility for any moment without singing, dance break or not. The filler doesn't have to be complicated—maybe just a hit from the

brass, or a drum fill, or a guitar moment—but make sure to fill every gap so that the audience always has something to draw their ears in.

Voice Things up into Dance Breaks

I say "voice up," but I'm not talking about the voicing so much as I am the direction of the line. If the melody goes low at the end of a phrase but you're trying to build into a dance break, that's always going to be a struggle. A quick alteration to make that line move up instead of down will make all the difference in the world.

Make Pickup Notes Longer

I'm a big believer that phrases that start strong will end strong. Quick pick up

The band needs to take responsibility for any moment without singing, dance break or not. The filler doesn't have to be complicated—maybe just a hit from the brass, or a drum fill, or a guitar moment—but make sure to fill every gap so that the audience always has something to draw their ears in.

notes can easily feel frantic or difficult to start together; sometimes changing a 16th note to an 8th note or an 8th note to a quarter note will magically fix everything. Even if the group is executing a passage well, it might just move by too fast for the acoustics of the room, so giving the sound a little more time to resonate can make an enormous difference.

Add Extra Beats to Create Moments

This idea is one of my favorites. If the choir is holding an awesome chord for example, why not make it a 5/4 bar instead of a 4/4 bar so they can hold it a little longer? Or maybe sticking a 2/4 bar in a dance break helps them to set up their next move. Little things like that go a long way in making moments pop.

Make a Cut

And last but not least...don't be afraid to trim the fat! If a section repeats and you can't justify why it's being done a second time, the repetition is probably not needed. Even small cuts of two or four bars can help things flow tremendously.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: With more than 1,000 show choir arrangements in circulation, Garrett Breeze is a sought-after clinician and adjudicator whose credits include film and television, Broadway stars, and Grammy-winning classical artists. His show choir music is available at breezetunes.com and he recently launched a new catalog of music for concert and church choirs at holidaychoirmusic.com.

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10

REASONS TO SUPPORT SHOW CHOIRS

Based on “10 Reasons to Support the Arts in 2022” by Randy Cohen:
<https://blog.americansforthearts.org/2022/03/21/10-reasons-to-support-the-arts-in-2022>
Adapted by Lisa E. Gibbs

Practitioners and educators of show choir intrinsically know the benefits of participating in this type of activity. Something just feels good about learning new music and choreography, about working with a group to create something special and magical while at the same time making the most of every personal contribution. The physical, mental, social, and personal benefits of being in a show choir are at times unquantifiable. What we know innately is often difficult to express to administrators, school boards, and other key players in funding and support for show choirs.



Enter Americans for the Arts, a national non-profit organization with the mission “to build recognition and support for the extraordinary and dynamic value of the arts and to lead, serve, and advance the diverse networks of organizations and individuals who cultivate the arts in America.” With a focus on advocacy, research, building connections, and leadership, Americans for the Arts is a comprehensive resource for the arts in America.

In March of 2022, Randy Cohen, Vice President of Research at Americans for the Arts, published a blog titled “10 Reasons to Support the Arts in 2022.” Using formerly published research as the base for his list, Mr. Cohen provided

ten quantifiable justifications to support the arts in general. The results illustrate tangible benefits of participating in show choir.

Arts unify communities.

The study states “73% agree that the arts ‘helps me understand other cultures better’—a perspective observed across all demographic and economic categories.” Other research supports the concept that singing fosters social closeness. *Productions* magazine has published many articles with anecdotes about how show choir becomes like family to both students and educators. Additionally, show choirs often volunteer within their communities and perform at service clubs like Rotary and Kiwanis.

Arts improve individual well-being.

Many research studies support the idea that both singing and dancing improve posture, balance, breathing, and help sustain a healthy immune system. These activities have also been shown to boost mood and improve self-esteem. For those involved, show choir can be an experience that will “lift [people] up beyond everyday experiences,” as the study found 69% of the population believes the arts can do.

Arts strengthen the economy.

According to the study, “the nation’s arts and culture sector—nonprofit, commercial, education—is an \$876.7 billion industry that supports 4.6 million jobs. That is 4.2% of the nation’s

economy—a larger share of GDP than powerhouse sectors such as agriculture, transportation, and utilities.” Consider all the pieces that go into a show: lighting, sound, risers, costumes, sheet music, rentals, and so on—plus the people who do the work to provide such items and services—and the economic impact of a show choir becomes very apparent.

Arts drive tourism and revenue to local businesses.

Show choirs go on tour, participate in competition, and attend summer camps. Similarly, many schools host competitions and camps, as well. These activities increase local businesses revenue as people attending the event spend money on meals, lodging, and other recreational activities while visiting the city.

Arts improve academic performance.

Cohen’s study found that “students engaged in arts learning have higher GPAs, standardized test scores, and college-going rates as well as lower drop-out rates.” These results are consistent among all socio-economic levels. Many choir directors notice that their students excel in other academic classes as well as in show choir; these students often choose to continue their education after high school.

Arts spark creativity and innovation.

Cohen reports that “research on creativity shows that Nobel laureates in the sciences are seventeen times more likely to be actively engaged as an arts maker than other scientists.” This data from the study suggests that innovation in the sciences is enhanced by engagement in the arts. Both the sciences and the arts require creativity, and creativity leads to discovery. Consider the innovations that many educators developed or discovered during the pandemic that kept students engaged. Show choir is also a live performance art, which can mean adaptations mid-flow. No matter how many rehearsals were run, something unpredictable can happen that the performers need to quickly and creatively work through.



“Research on creativity shows that Nobel laureates in the sciences are seventeen times more likely to be actively engaged as an arts maker than other scientists.” This data from the study suggests that innovation in the sciences is enhanced by engagement in the arts. Both the sciences and the arts require creativity, and creativity leads to discovery.



Arts have a social impact.

The study demonstrates that a “high concentration of the arts in a city leads to higher civic engagement, more social cohesion, higher child welfare, and lower poverty rates.” Bringing arts activities and arts based businesses to a town positively impacts the community. Schools that offer show choir contribute to this benefit the arts bring to the area. Additionally, the content of the show can have a social impact by using music and choreography to explore current social issues.

Arts improve healthcare.

Cohen states that “nearly one-half of the nation’s healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and even staff.” This data point from the study gives strong support for the arts in healthcare. Quantifiable healing benefits for those in a healthcare setting include shorter hospital stays, better pain management, reduction of stress, and improved mental health. In addition to those benefits, a show choir performance at an assisted living facility, local

hospital, or outpatient facility can provide entertainment and enjoyment to patients and staff. Arts in medicine programs in healthcare settings are increasing in availability and popularity as are degree programs in higher education institutions, a career field students may consider.

Arts for the health and well-being of our military.

Undoubtedly, military service members and veterans deal with mental, physical, and moral injuries as a result of choosing to defend our country. The study explains that veterans of our armed forces “rank the creative arts therapies in the top four (out of 40) interventions and treatments.” As part of community outreach, show choirs can perform at Veterans Hospitals and other events for our military such as parades and awareness days.

Arts strengthen mental health.

Participating in an arts activity has been shown to reduce depression and anxiety and increase satisfaction. Several articles in *Productions* magazine cite anecdotes from students who were once reluctant to

admit they enjoyed singing and dancing because of the negative response from other students. Once they decided to do what they loved instead of listening to others, they found the show choir community to be very supportive.

Ample research continues to quantify the benefits of involvement in the arts. Practitioners and educators of show choir understand the impact of the arts because they witness their students’ transformations as they engage in the work of show choir. While putting the benefits of the arts into practice, every choir director can use resources such as Americans for the Arts data to explain to administrators, school boards, and other key players how impactful this work truly is.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: *Productions* staff writer

Lisa Gibbs earned her Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration in 2018. She is an advocate for arts, particularly dance, in education and for increasing the financial well-being of artists through financial education.



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- Outstanding Male Soloist (Aesen Copeland)
- Outstanding Male Performer (Logan Stokes)
- Outstanding Female Performer (Darby Copeland)



Los Alamitos High School

Show Choir Nationals 2023—March 23rd-25th, 2023

Gaylord Opryland Complex and Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville, Tennessee



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Westfield High School Choir Awarded "Outstanding" at Hershey Park Competition

by Amy Porter, *The Westfield News*



Photo by Korey Bruno

The Westfield High School Show Choir has returned from the national Music in the Parks Hershey Park Festival with near perfect scores and first place trophies in men's choir, mixed choir, women's choir, an award for outstanding accompanist (Shane McCarthy), and the Overall Outstanding Choir award.

"The kids were under a lot of pressure," says Director of Choral Activities Korey Bruno, because they knew the superintendent, mayor, and principal were all backing them. "They really felt like we can't come home unless we take it all." Bruno continues: "They really have a huge sense of pride this year. In an unrelated email, our principal Charles Jendrysik called the kids 'his choir.' It has gone so far with the kids, that he thinks that much of them to call them his choir," Bruno states. "I feel honored. I don't think in my twenty-six years of teaching a principal

has called them his choir," Bruno says.

WHS Show Choir members include Emma Beaulieu, Kathryn Breck, Camille Bruno, Luke Bulan, Patrick Callahan, Lauren Carnes, Annabelle Garza, Campbelle Lemelin, Pratham Makonahally, Shane McCarthy (accompanist), Masen Pittman, Quynh Rosario, Elena Silvia and Jordan Tonczak.

This was the first time that the WHS Show Choir attended the Music in the Parks festival in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Bruno says that normally they stick to the East Coast, within driving distance, and attend the Kings Dominion and Busch Gardens festivals in Virginia; every four years, they plan a trip to Universal Studios in Florida.

Bruno says that despite the pressure—which included not knowing what to expect at an in-person competition, after two years of the COVID-19 pandemic—the show choir members got a great

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—DIRECTOR OF CHORAL ACTIVITIES, KOREY BRUNO

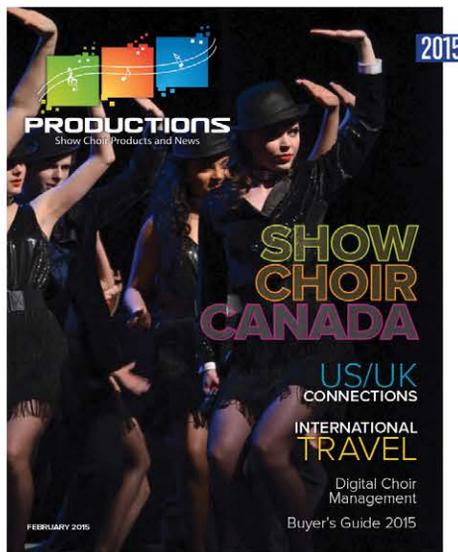
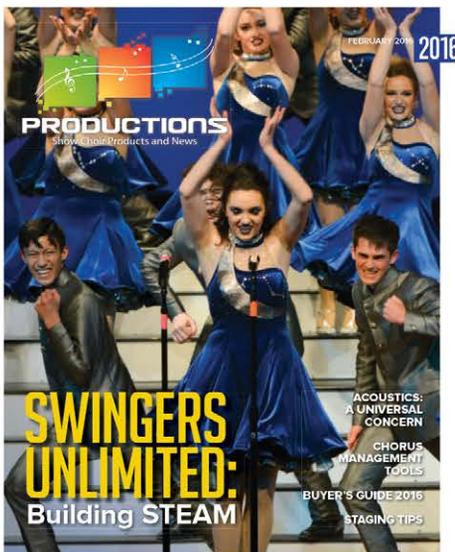
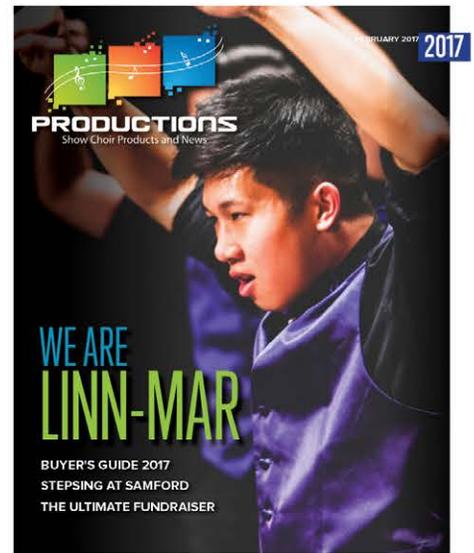
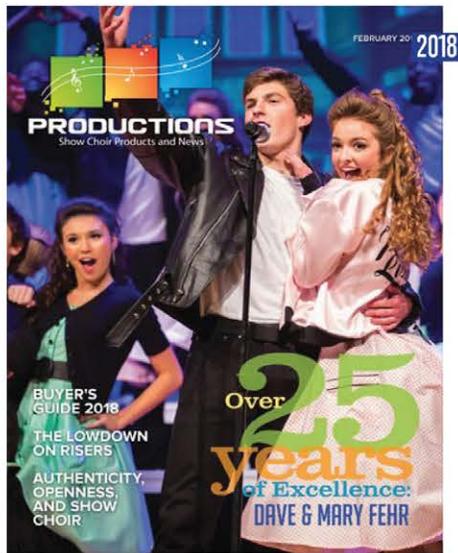
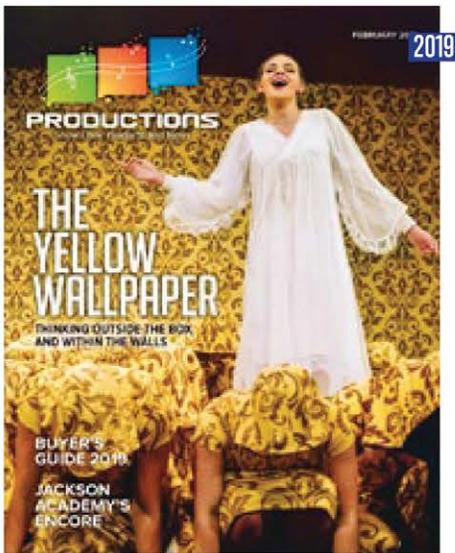
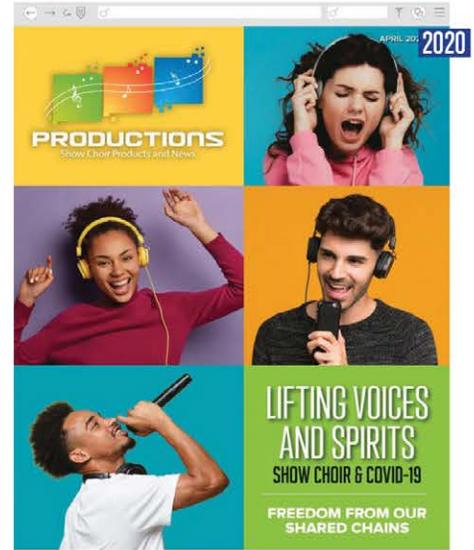
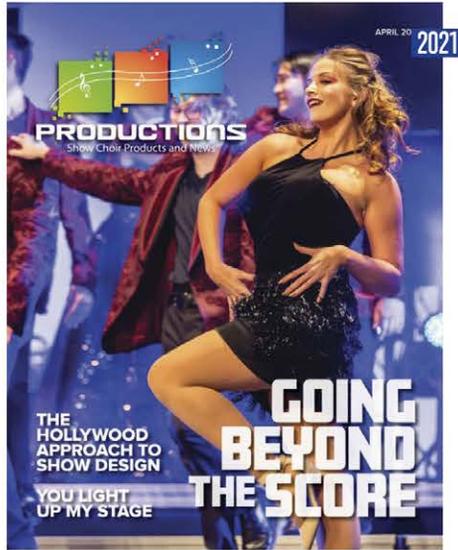
reception from the moment they arrived, and everyone loved their gowns, tuxedos, and professionalism. "I could have taken them by myself without worrying about it," says Bruno, who was accompanied by chaperones Tony Bruno and Larry Carnes. She says that the choir members were exemplary in representing their state, city and school district.

The choir competed in four categories, singing a total of nine songs, only two of which they had performed in the spring gala a few weeks ago. "They were so excited, so hyped up. Everything was fresh and new—they sang and danced in the pool, and sang for the personnel at the hotel," Bruno says. "It was fantastic."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Amy Porter is a reporter at *The Westfield News* and *The Pennysaver*, a Reminder publication, covering mostly Westfield and the Gateway hill towns.

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