

SCMEA Orchestra Division  
February 19, 2005

Susan Baier, orchestra division president, brought the meeting to order at 2:00pm at Furman University.

**Thank You**

- Thank you to Furman University, Tom Joiner, and the faculty and staff of Furman for arrangement and use of these wonderful facilities for our All-State event.
- Thank you to Bruce McLean, Christine Hallett and the Greenville teachers for organizing the 2005 All-State Orchestra.
- Johanna Pollock presented Susan Baier with a plaque as a “Thank You” for serving as our orchestra division president for the past two years.
- Tom Joiner gave information about the Furman Summer Camp. There are limited brochures, but more complete information can be found on the web-site. A \$100.00 scholarship is available to every All-State student and a \$50.00 scholarship is available to every Region student. The Furman Chamber Strings will perform in Charleston on Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Officers Reports**

- *Approval of the Minutes (Amy Strahm):* A change was noted for the February 12, 2005 minutes. The deadline for submission to be considered for a 2006 convention performance is changed from May 1<sup>st</sup> to a postmark deadline of June 1<sup>st</sup>. Paul Buyer motioned to accept the minutes with the date correction. Chris Selby seconded.
- *Treasurer’s Report (Sharon Doyle):* The current operating budget is \$41,758.87.. All money has been collected for the year. This figure represents the amount the division can work with for the remainder of this school year. Johanna Pollock motioned to accept the treasurer’s report. Sandy Goldie seconded.
- *President-Elect (Sarah Fitzgerald):* She is still taking suggestions for next year’s conference. Remember to submit applications for next year’s performance groups by June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- *Concert Festival:* Jacob Dakon was not in attendance. He will try and get all the information to the local site chairmen this week. If you have not received your information, e-mail Jacob Dakon at [jmdakon1@yahoo.com](mailto:jmdakon1@yahoo.com). Teachers from the Spartanburg area and who will be attending Concert Festival will meet with Paul Buyer at the conclusion of this meeting for scheduling.
- *All-State (Chris Corde/Melissa Martin):* The voting occurred to select All-State conductors for the 2005-6 school year. Melissa Martin presented the conductor

nominees. Mark Cedel was the first choice last year, but had a date conflict. He will automatically be the first choice this year. Potential senior orchestra conductors included Kevin Bertrain, William Haydn, Bill Scott, James Anderson, Tom Hildreth, Tom Joiner, Manny Alvarez, and Bredon Slocumb. The three potential conductors selected by membership vote were Marc Cedel, James Anderson and Tom Joiner respectively.

Potential junior orchestra conductors included Jesse Suggs, Linda Pickney, Neil Casey, and Bredon Slocumb. The three potential conductors selected by the membership vote were Neil Casey, Jesse Suggs, and Linda Pickney respectively.

*Region Orchestra (Chris Selby):* The following are the Region Chairs:  
Region 1-Denise Burcham, March Moody  
Region 2- Cathy Robinson, David Saliny  
Region 3-Johanna Pollock  
Region 4-Jean Epting

- *Bruce McLean (All-State at Furman):* Goodie bags are up in the lobby. He needs help with handing out programs at the door for the Sunday performance. The programs will need to be stuffed with the seating changes. Please fill out a sheet telling him which event your students will attend Saturday evening. There was disappointment about the t-shirt situation. They will be reordered and there is a new order form. The t-shirt price was increased to \$17.00 due to set-up costs. The shirts will be sent to the individual teachers.
- *All-State Taping (Paul Buyer):* There are still people who owe him excerpts. He still needs Junior and Senior Violins.

### **New Business**

- Susan Baier discussed the need for a committee to select All-State performance music. This will allow the conductors to know the level of our students. We can select music that challenges every section of the orchestra. We need a rotation of appropriate pieces. This will also aid the All-State chairs and our students who will be working on meaningful literature. Rex Conner will chair and Tom Joiner and Paul Buyer volunteered to be on this committee.

### **Old Business**

- **Three-tiered All State Proposal:**  
Second reading: We propose that the current All-State configuration be modified into three orchestras; the structure being: Grade 6-8, Grade 9-10, Grade 11-12.
- **Live Auditions Proposal:**  
Second reading: We propose that we move towards live auditions for both Region and All-State orchestras. The Region auditions will remain the same with each region hosting the separate auditions. Students accepted into the Region

orchestra will travel to USC Columbia for live auditions for All-State orchestra. Auditions will take place on the first Saturday after the first week of school in January. Gail Barnes and USC will host and organize the auditions. It is the intention that the Up-State will host All-State orchestra every year, the Mid-State will host the All-State auditions every year, and the Low-Country will host Conference every year.

- *The floor was opened for discussion:*
- Chris Selby - Refer to the minutes for previous discussion. There are enough numbers to support three orchestras. There would be a middle-school level orchestra, a bridge orchestra with 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades and a senior orchestra. The two older orchestras would be full and the middle school orchestra would be strings only.
- Susan Johnson- Many of the kids in middle-school do not have the full orchestra experience. Is there a way to have a few of the 6-8 grade orchestra selections be full orchestra so they can have that experience?
- Jean Epting- There is a middle school All-State Band in the band division.
- Martha Bronze- The older wind players could perform for both groups.
- Chris Selby- The winds, brass, and percussion could stay in one location and the strings could rotate to them. There could be a separate wind section for the Senior Full Orchestra.
- Catherine Crowe- We are already struggling with facilities and finding wind players. We are already experiencing problems with two orchestras. This could complicate things more.
- Chris Selby- Three years ago we were able to accommodate three orchestras.
- Catherine Crowe- There was difficulties handling accommodations.
- Rex Conner- The quality of the performance could go down. Taking the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders out of the senior group and replacing them with lower 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade players could drop the ability level of the top group. There is concern about maintaining the quality of the top orchestra.
- Sandy Goldie- We could have three orchestras without decreasing the quality. Human error in judging needs to be considered. This three tier system would include those kids that are on the line; on a good day there are in and on a bad day they are close. Most of the complaints about our current system stem from having good kids not making it. If the good kids are making it into an orchestra there will not be a problem.
- Chris Selby- When we lost the Senior String Orchestra there were some complaints that we were losing good kids.
- Cathy Robinson- Each level would be different skill level. Those 9<sup>th</sup> graders who currently have the option to choose Junior or Senior Orchestra would lose this option and placed in an orchestra playing a lower grade of music.
- Chris Selby- If you divide by skill level, you get that "second" group. The grade separation gets rid of this. As the system stands, there are many 10<sup>th</sup> graders who do not make it at all. This would give them a chance. The repertoire would be a little less difficult than what the Senior Orchestra is currently performing. There

was a demographic study done last year in support of splitting the orchestras into the three levels.

- Tom Joiner- The cycling of Up-state universities, Furman included, is a great idea. There needs to be a better procedure for selecting winds. There needs to be collaboration between the band and orchestra directors. The band directors were just contacted this week. Guest conductors may walk away unhappy with the winds selection and preparation as the system stands.
- Susan Baier- We did our scheduling, but no one commented on the USC band clinic. We did not learn about this conflict until three weeks ago. It is a communication problem. We now know it occurs the same time every year.
- Tom Joiner- The responsibility of finding winds needs to be divided. It is too much for one person.
- Susan Baier- It has been divided to make selections easier.
- Sarah Fitzgerald- The ASTA conference also effected out scheduling.
- Chris Selby- The band had their auditions one week later this year and there is little time between All-State Band selection and when we need the All-State band students for our event. This is something that needs to be looked at.
- Susan Johnson- Find a name to call each group so they feel special.
- Chris Selby- This was discussed this year. Options included the Premier Orchestra and the Festival Orchestra. Many of us feel the word "All State" needs to be kept in the name.
- Lois Akins- Georgia has the three tier system and it does very well. They figure out what kind of literature needs to be used each year. The 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra is still a string orchestra. Perhaps the younger orchestra could have winds in one piece.
- Bruce McLean- There is concern about the facilities. Auditions and sectionals complicate the situation. Everyone participates in auditions, who would you use? Everyone was used this year with only two orchestras.
- Paul Buyer- The initial audition would be in the fall for Region; the later audition would indicate the chair avoiding the audition problem at the event. The high-schools could probably handle it, but the college facilities are limited.
- Tom Joiner- Furman has the space if the scheduling is done in advanced. We would have to plan 2-3 years out. The large ensemble space is available with planning. The band meets here every year and it works.
- Chris Selby- The three tier system would only work with a live audition system. The proposed audition date is the Saturday before school starts back at USC.
- Dianne Pinner- The live audition weekend is the weekend before the pre-college starts at Bob Jones University.
- Sarah Fitzgerald- Are we not running into an even bigger crunch with acquiring band members?
- Tammy Burrows- Could the audition be scheduled at the end of November?
- Chris Selby- The students would not receive their audition music until November. December, for most of us, is difficult while there is a lull in January. The idea is to have the students audition on their All-State music. This would force the students to practice their performance music to get into All-State, preventing the "unprepared student" scenario. Some teachers have mentioned the Cello/Bass

literature is not difficult enough to separate the talent. We could add an etude excerpt to aid in the selection of students.

- Rex Conner- This means hundreds of kids would be driving around the state at one time. What is the advantage of having the students show up for a live audition instead of the taping?
- Chris Selby- The second audition is needed for the three tier system. There are discrepancies between each audition results with the taping. The second live audition would help prevent this. The live audition prepares the students for future auditions, including college. The live audition removes the discrepancies of tape quality and rehearsal hall quality as well.
- Sandy Goldie- The recording equipment varies around the state.
- Catherine Crowe- The discrepancies come from the number we audition. If we want to bring all the violins from all the regions together for the live audition, we will have a various number from each region. We would have to set a number from each region.
- Bonnie Balawender- This second audition gives the student who was sick, etc. a second chance.
- Mary Taylor- Weather conditions would be a concern. The numbers are a concern as well.
- Jean Epting- The top 18 violins from each section would only be 72 violins.
- Chris Selby- Teachers will create a natural selection process by not allowing unprepared students to audition.
- Paul Buyer- There is a lot of great dynamic possibilities for this idea. The committee needs more discussion before further group discussion is had.
- Martha Bronze- There will be more people auditioning in Columbia than other areas due to the audition location.
- John Kvasnicka- The Columbia audition only involves the Region students.
- *The open floor discussion was closed at this time.*
  
- Marsha Gross asked if the deadline for Solo and Ensemble could be changed. The current deadline is difficult when some teachers do not see students until second semester. Susan Baier commented that Solo and Ensemble will be March 3-4 or 10-11 for next year. This will allow the deadline to be moved to the second semester.
  
- 2006 Tentative Dates:  
**Please contact Susan Baier if you foresee any major calendar conflicts with these dates. The calendar meeting is May 1<sup>st</sup>.**
  - October 1: Region Auditions
  - November 11-12: Region Orchestra (all regions)
  - December 3<sup>rd</sup>: All State Solo Auditions
  - February 9-11: SCMEA Conference
  - February 24-26: All State Orchestra
  - March 3-4 or 10-11: Solo and Ensemble Festivals (regions choose)
  - March 29-31 or April 5-7: Concert Festival (regions choose)

- The Furman Cello Choir is scheduled for the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of September, 2005.
- Martha Bronze commented on being pleased with the growth of the membership.
- John Kvasnicka motioned to close the meeting. Bonnie Balawender seconded.

Respectfully Submitted:

Amy E. Strahm