

Message from the President

Dear friends,

Recently, the leadership of IFCM has begun to shift its focus to education. In the past thirty-four years the organization has accomplished many of its original goals throughout the world. Nevertheless, as we work in Africa and Asia, we are finding a genuine need for helping musicians get training that otherwise may not be available to them. Last summer, thanks to Vice-President Emily Kuo Vong, we produced two extensive educational tours across China that highlighted both the need, and the desire, for knowledge and the further development of musical skill sets. One approach that proved to be very successful is the application of learning by doing. It transcends language, brings renewed energy to the choral rehearsal, and gets people involved in their own education.

I ran across this quote by the famous American Benjamin Franklin: "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." I am a firm believer in this type of education in the choral rehearsal. When I was in high school, I had the opportunity to take part in an Action Learning Program where I had the opportunity to be an assistant teacher, under the guidance of the regular classroom teachers, in the local junior high and elementary school. It was the opportunity to "test the waters" to determine if I wanted to teach or not. It proved to be a fulfilling experience, led to a career in teaching, and my advocacy for learning by doing.

The Action Learning Paradigm is addressed, in part, by Thomas Regelski, from the State University of New York, Fredonia. In his article "The Practical Approach for Music Education: Action Learning," suggests that Action Learning is an outgrowth of several philosophical and scientific sources dating from the late nineteenth century. Diverse as these sources are, each holds the common viewpoint that humans

acquire knowledge by working directly with what is to be learned. (Regelski, Thomas. *Music Educators Journal* 69 (February 1983): 46-49.) Action Learning integrates work and study into one curriculum, which results in the simultaneous strengthening of both parts.

An example of how this can be applied to the choral rehearsal may be found in the article: Pinzino, Mary Ellen, Anderson, Michael J, (2005). *Awakening Artistry in the Choral Rehearsal*, *International Choral Bulletin*, XXV, (ii), pp. 7-14. As the title suggests, it awakens artistry through the use of movement in a hands-on approach to musical concepts, skills, and understanding. And for the student who may not know musical concepts, movement provides an immediate physical and emotional connection.

In coming months and years, IFCM will continue to address the need for education in those parts of the world where need outweighs accessibility. The leadership will be looking for experienced colleagues who would like to help, traveling to other countries, and assisting in the development of musical understanding and application.

Ultimately, this work will provide more opportunity for everyone: opportunity to expand knowledge; opportunity to experience new cultures; opportunity to learn from people of other traditions; and opportunity to share new and interesting music. This is huge task that will require a considerable effort on the parts of many exceptional teachers around the world.

Will you be one?

Dr. Michael J Anderson, President