



SHOW CHOIR: STARTING, BRANDING AND SUCCEEDING WITH IT

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BACKGROUNDS: CHRIS PRATT & RICHARD WOLF



Christopher Pratt
Director of Choirs
Grosse Pointe South HS

BS Music Education K-12, 2000
Ball State University, Muncie, IN

MS Urban Principalship, 2011
Indiana University, Bloomington,
IN

EdS Educational Leadership, 2018
Oakland University, Rochester, MI



Richard Wolf
Assistant to Choir Director
Accompanist & Arranger
Grosse Pointe South HS

BS Speech & Theatre Ed., 1992
Ball State University, Muncie, IN

SESSION DESCRIPTION

This session will assist interested directors in starting, implementing, branding and succeeding with curricular or extra-curricular competitive and non-competitive show choirs. There will be a step-by-step review, helpful resources, examples through media and a question and answer portion.

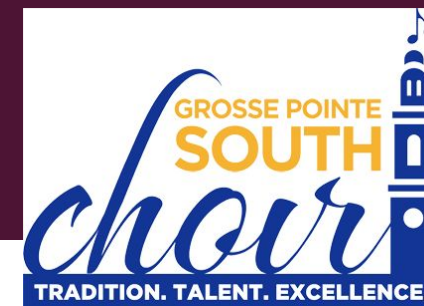
WHAT IS SHOW CHOIR?

- Intersection of Music Dance and Theatre
 - Philosophy
- Enhancement versus Replacement
- Implementation:
 - Curricular or Extra-Curricular
 - Competitive or Non-Competitive
- Branding: What is your style?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SHOW CHOIR (READER'S DIGEST VERSION)

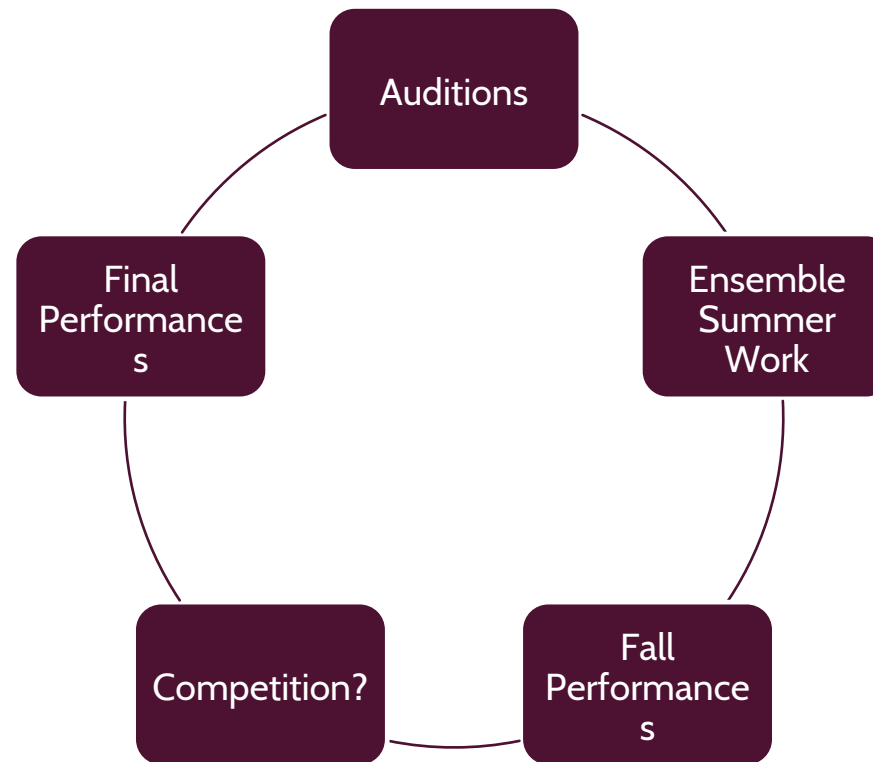
- Fred Waring and The Pennsylvanians https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lO2FH21D1_E
- Colleges:
 - Indiana Singing Hoosiers (1956)
 - The Young Americans (1962)
 - The Ball State University Singers (1966)
- High Schools:
 - First organized competition for high schools: The Annual Bishop Luers Midwest Swing (later changed to "Show") Choir Invitational (March 1975) – Now celebrating its 44th year this coming year.

WHAT WE DO AT GROSSE POINTE SOUTH



- www.gpsouthchoir.org
- Four choirs, one extra-curricular a cappella ensemble that specialize in a variety of choral genres including show, concert/classical and jazz.
 - 2 varsity show choirs that compete in show choir invitationals usually in February and March.
 - The Pointe Singers
 - The Tower Belles
- Participate in Solo and Ensemble Districts and State competitions
- Host MSVMA East site for Musical Theatre Solo and Ensemble
- Bi-Annual Tour (this past year to the French Riviera)
- Spring Musical (last year was Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat)
- That's Entertainment Show Choir, Jazz Ensemble and A cappella Ensemble Workshop (August 20-25th)

TIMELINE FOR SHOW CHOIR



SUCCESSFUL SHOW CHOIRS SHARE...

- A Culture of Team Work
 - Between students, but also the staff: your key people
 - *Example:* Director, Arranger, Accompanist, Choreographer, Secretary/Assistant, Instrumentalists.
 - Parents and booster support group to assist in key positions, like costuming, technical needs, raising funds
- Items to support productions
 - Risers, costumes, number line, appropriate props: ability to find those, make-up, hair
- Advocacy
- Style and Brand
 - Pointe Singers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtIfmD7WnWg&list=PLYGnFh1q3tHSHmZaqXS4S1NPomHOuu1r>
 - Tower Belles <https://youtu.be/7hD9iV-rFkl>

ARRANGEMENTS

- “Stock” (published) arrangements – these are published by mainstream publishers (Hal Leonard, Alfred, etc.)
 - Typical instrumentation – 2 trumpets, woodwind, trombone, synthesizer, electric guitar, electric bass, drum set
- Custom arrangements – a large amount of music used by competitive show choirs are custom arrangements (written specifically for the group performing the selection). Choral voicing, instrumentation, level of difficulty, and form can be tailored to your specific ensemble. If you wish to use custom arrangements, some things to consider:
 - Copyright – you **MUST** get permission to arrange any song. Tresóna Music (www.tresonamusic.com) holds the rights to MANY published songs and administers the licensing. Penalties can be extremely stiff if this step isn't taken.
 - When arranging, care should be given to vocal ranges of the ensemble (if the original key of a given song doesn't work for your group, the key should be changed) as well as when instruments are playing (when singers are singing, wind instruments should be tacet – one trumpet can play louder than 50 singers – they can “play out” during introductions, transitions, and dance sections, as well as playing “punctuation”)
- Websites Richard loves for help in arranging:
 - Instrument ranges - <http://www.andrewhugill.com/manuals/ranges.html>
 - Help with writing drum set parts – www.edrumbats.com
- The music in your packets shows a variety of styles of music that can be used for show choir performance.

QUESTIONS?!

- QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- If you have any questions after today, please feel free to contact us!
- Christopher Pratt, prattc@gpsouthchoir.org and/or Richard Wolf, wolfr@gpschools.org