

# Chorale groups attract all types

Some go for an 'easy A'  
others just for the fun of it

By Diane Winocur  
Of the Emerald

Most of the 100 or more students who audition for the University's Chorale are "scared to death," says Prof. Paul Westland.

As conductor, Westland knows auditioners for this rather exclusive singing group are "a little bit more frightened at this level."

But frightened or not, membership in the music school's ensembles is growing. And the positions are not being filled by only music majors, either.

**NON-MAJORS ACCOUNT FOR** half of the Chorale's 77 singers, and 40 percent of the University Singers, another audition-based group. And of the 95 non-auditioned singers in the Contemporary Chorus, about 75 percent do not study music.

If requirements do not bring them in, what is setting so many hearts to song?

Students who hear a good show often return to try their own voice, Westland says.

He also says the cultural experience of college is an encouragement to join a singing group. As students come in contact with the humanities, arts, and music of the countries and periods they study, "they may learn about classical music for the first time and become turned on to it," Westland says.

Members of the Contemporary Chorus don't

see their membership as quite so esoteric. Junior Steve Peery says he joined the group because it was a "good means to develop (his) voice and great sight-reading practice." But he adds that he appreciates the after-concert parties and relaxed mood of the class just as much.

"It's a good time, not a lot of work," says Peery.

Because of the openness of their memberships, the University's four largest choral ensembles — Contemporary Chorus, Chorale, University Singers and Vocal Jazz Ensemble — share some common difficulties.

**ATTRITION CLAIMS HALF** of the Contemporary Chorus each term, says Prof. Stephen Stone, who claims continuity is not a problem for the group at all. The class is set up loosely enough to take the changeover in stride, he says.

A second potential conflict in choral groups arises from the variety of people who join, and their range of ability — especially when auditions aren't mandatory.

Stone calls the Contemporary Chorus' membership "as varied as you can imagine, with majors from all over the University, and ages from underclassmen to an 80-year-old long-standing member from the community."

Each choral group is unique in the skill level required, the type of music studied, the time it is offered, and the atmosphere cultivated by its



Both music majors and non-majors join chorale groups.

Photo by Mark Pynes

conductor.

But because students select their group for any number of reasons, and may even join two for the sake of variety, inter-group "rivalry or snobbishness does not exist," Westland says.

**THE ONE CREDIT CHORALE CLASSES** can be taken for a grade or pass/no pass. Westland admits most students choose the grade option because they receive an automatic "A" with attendance.

But he insists this scarcely repays students for their time investment — three one-hour rehearsals each week, plus concert attendance and occasional extra rehearsals.

High school choirs are nothing like college ensembles, according to Hope Harrison, a freshman who passed her audition to become a soprano in the Chorale.

"People want to be here," she says of the group, "not because it's an easy 'A', but because they want to work harder. When they're there for a reason, more gets done."

Harrison says she enjoys singing with the group, and would take the class even if it weren't required of her as a future music major.

"I love to hear massive voices," she says. "It sounds real neat."

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**Judge denies retrial for RCYB members**

Two members of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade were denied retrials Friday on arson charges brought against them for burning a yellow cloth at a speech by former Iranian hostage Victor Tomseth.

Lane County Circuit Court Judge George Woodrich dismissed motions for a new trial for John Kaiser, 25, and Nancy Whitley, 30, who were convicted of first-degree arson in October.

Kaiser and Whitley were sentenced Dec. 11 to 10 days in jail and two years of unsupervised probation and remain free on bail while their cases are appealed.

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