

# Middle Tennessee Vocal Association

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February 7, 2006

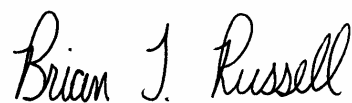
Dear members:

As we prepare for the MTVA Choral Festival next month, I thought it prudent to update you on our adjudicators. We are fortunate to have such a distinguished rank of choral experts for this event. In assembling the panel, the MTVA Executive Board wanted not only to find those with the best credentials, but also to take a cross-section of the choral spectrum, thereby gaining different points of view from each.

For example, a college professor, active educator of Middle School children, and a former middle school and high school educator make up our panel for the Middle School Festival on March 1<sup>st</sup>. For the High School days, we are blessed with a college choral director, an activist for the choral art and retired choral conductor, and a director from one of Tennessee's most successful high school programs. Our sight reading adjudicator brings to us many years of experience as a composer and educator. As you read their vitas below, I know you will excitedly anticipate the valuable insights they will give to us all. Most importantly, each adjudicator shares the same goal; to enhance through their work the future of our art.

I hope we can each share in this goal as we prepare our choirs for the Festival. Best wishes to you and your students; I look forward to working with you all. As always, should you need to contact me, please do not hesitate to do so. Until then, I remain

Enthusiastically,



Brian T. Russell  
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## Middle School Adjudicators

**Katie Baker** received her bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. From 1997-2001, she was the conductor of the Hendersonville Community Singers. She taught in the Sumner County school system for seven years, and at White House High School from 2000-2004. During her time at White House HS, her choirs received superior ratings at regional and state choral festival. She also served as President-Elect for the Middle Tennessee Vocal Association. Mrs. Baker is currently taking time off from teaching to raise her son, Andrew. She and her husband Jim are currently expecting their second child, a girl, in April. She stays involved in music education by accompanying local choirs, teaching private voice lessons, and serving as an adjudicator and clinician for festivals and honors choirs.

**Dr. Fred P. Spano** is Assistant Professor of Music/Music Education at the University of Tennessee at Martin. A specialist in Choral Music and General Music, Spano teaches undergraduate courses in Music Education methods, supervises field experiences and student teachers, teaches conducting, and coordinates the music education program at UTM. Spano also advises the CMENC chapter at UT Martin.

Dr. Spano has taught general music and choral music not only in the US, but also in international schools in Iraq and Ecuador. He has been a conductor for the International Schools Music Festival, Quito, Ecuador, UTM Women's Honor Choir, the Georgia Independent Schools Association Music Festival, and adjudicated for music festivals in Middle and West Tennessee. Dr. Spano has presented workshops locally and internationally, worked with area schools, and maintains active membership in TMEA, MENC, ACDA, and the College Music Society. He served as a visiting Assistant Professor of Music Education at the University of Memphis' Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music during 2003-2004 teaching graduate and undergraduate music education students, and coordinating the Music Education Licensure Program.

Dr. Spano received the BA in Music Education from William Penn University, the MM in Choral Music Education from Westminster Choir College—the School of Music at Rider University, and the PhD in Music Education from Florida State University. Spano has studied conducting with Rodney Eichenberger, Andre Thomas, and Allen Crowell.

**James Wells** is currently serving as the Director of Music for Children and Youth at Brentwood United Methodist Church. There are nine different choirs at BUMC for age three through High School with over 500 active participants. Mr. Wells directs the Sonshine Senior High Choir, the New Covenant Junior High Ensemble, the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Alleluia Choir, and the 3-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Asbury Choir.

Mr. Wells served as the Choral Director and General Music Teacher at Freedom Intermediate School in Franklin from 1995 – 2005. While at FIS, the choirs received only superior ratings at the MTVA Choral Festival. Approximately 1,500 FIS singers have participated in the MTVA Honor Choir and Mass Choir events over the last 10 years.

Mr. Wells is the founder and director of the Tennessee Choral Academy. Founded in 2001, TCA is a community choir program for elementary, middle, and high school students. TCA is a non-profit organization that encourages choral music in the Williamson County and surrounding areas. TCA has a great mixture of home school, public, and private school students. In 1999 Mr. Wells got his start in community choirs while directing the Nashville Boys Choir at the Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University.

Mr. Wells is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University and will soon complete his Master's degree from Belmont University. Mr. Wells and his wife Amy have two daughters (Molly and Emily) and live in Spring Hill.

## High School Adjudicators

**Dr. Jack Boyd** received his bachelor's degree in music education from Abilene Christian College/University in 1955, a master's degree in music composition from the University of North Texas (Denton) in 1959, and a Ph.D in choral literature from the University of Iowa (Iowa City) in 1971.

His teaching experience includes six years of high school and junior high choral work in Paducah, Kentucky. He has conducted many region and all-state choirs, with a specialty in chamber choirs. He was Professor of Music at Abilene Christian University from 1968 to 1999, where he taught chorus, choral conducting, Music History, Introduction to Music, and Church Music. He currently directs the 190 voice ACU Alumni Chorus and publishes his choral arrangements through his own business, Cat Claw Music Press.

He has two published books on choral music, *Rehearsal Guide for the Choral Director* and *Teaching Choral Sight Reading*, as well as *Encore!*, a music appreciation textbook. For three years he was editor of *The Choral Journal*.

**Kathryn E. May** is completing her twenty-first year as Choral Director at Greeneville High School and her twenty-sixth year in teaching. She received her BSME and Master of Education Administration degrees from East TN State University and was selected as the 1995 Alumna of the Year by the ETSU Music Department. In 1996, she was the Greeneville City Schools Teacher of the Year and the Smoky Mountain Music Teachers Association Teacher of the Year.

Under Mrs. May's direction, Greeneville High School Choirs have performed many places, including the 1996 ACDA Southern Convention, the 2000 ACDA Southern Convention, the 2000 SD-ACDA Women's Choir Festival and the 2003 TN ACDA Convention. Recently, the Advanced Men's Chorus appeared on the program of the S-D ACDA convention in Charleston, WV. The guys were the clinic chorus for Vincent Oakes in a session on adolescent male voices. Her choirs have appeared on several TN Music Educators Convention programs. Last fall, the Greeneville High School Advanced Chorus was the featured choir at the Belmont University Choral Festival in Nashville, TN. She is the choir director at Salem Presbyterian Church and resides in Limestone, TN with her husband Mike, a middle school band director. Mike and Kathy have two teenagers, Benjamin, a sophomore at Vanderbilt University and Rebekah, a high school junior.

**Dr. Jamila McWhirter** currently teaches secondary choral education methods and directs the Women's Chorus at MTSU. Prior to MTSU she served as adjunct faculty for Central Missouri State University, Missouri Baptist University and Stephens College. She also taught at the University of Missouri--Columbia as a graduate teaching assistant. Preceding doctoral work she taught for thirteen years in the public school system of Missouri as a successful choral music educator and fine arts department chairperson.

A Missouri native, McWhirter received the Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction--Music Education from the University of Missouri -- Columbia, the Master of Music in Music Education from Central Missouri State University, and the Bachelor of Music in Music Education from Southwest Baptist University. Active in ACDA and MENC she has served on the executive boards of the Missouri Choral Directors Association and Missouri Music Educators Association in both officer and representative positions. She has served many years as a guest conductor, clinician, adjudicator, and conference presenter. Her choirs and voice students have been selected for ACDA and MENC performances on the district, state, and national levels. She also enjoys staying active as a performer by participating in community musical theater.

## Sight Reading Adjudicator

**James Pethel**, born December 24, 1936, in Gainesville, Georgia, was the Distinguished Composer-in-Residence and Associate Professor of Music at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee for 37 years. His undergraduate work was at Carson-Newman where he majored in organ and music education.

As an NDEA scholarship recipient in '60, he received his master's degree and did doctoral studies in music composition and theory at George Peabody College in Nashville where he was a student of Phillip Slates and Arnold Salop in composition. At Peabody his organ teachers included Scott Withrow, Sam Bate Owens, and Peter Fyfe. At North Texas State University, he studied organ with Don Willing and Charles Brown.

While active at Carson-Newman as a member of the Music Department, Mr. Pethel taught organ, piano, composition, and theory. In addition to his recital work at C-N and churches, he also has served as organist in several churches. He currently is serving as organist at the First United Methodist Church in Jefferson City, Tennessee. Mr. Pethel also has served as the sight-singing adjudicator for state vocal and choral association festivals in Tennessee for many years.

A regular winner of ASCAP's Standard Award for significant creative work writing and publishing music since 1985, he has had over 250 titles published by seventeen major publishing houses and has written several commissioned works including a choral work for the Governor's School for the Arts in 1988. His favorite medium for writing is the organ, but he also writes and publishes for the piano, solo instruments, solo voice, and chorus as well. Like many composers today, Mr. Pethel uses MIDI technology and Finale on his computer to produce his works. Several of his composition students have had music published.

Mr. Pethel has been the nominee for Tennessee's Composer of the Year by music organizations in both Knoxville and Greenville, Tennessee. He was selected by Carson-Newman to receive the Outstanding Alumni Award in '96. He also was honored by the Knoxville chapter of the American Guild of Organists with their Meritorious Award in recognition of his contributions to that organization and his musical activities and achievements as a composer in the field of music.