

# THE CHARLES HIRT PAPERS: AN OVERVIEW

**MARVIN E. LATIMER JR.**

**C**harles Carleton Hirt (1911-2001), founding member and tireless advocate of ACDA, served as our National President from 1970–1972. He became, in that role, the primary architect of our first independent National Convention, which introduced a conference template singularly focused on choral excellence. The fundamental structure of Hirt's innovative conceptual framework for ACDA National Conventions remains today. At the time of his death, February 3, 2001, Hirt was Professor Emeritus at the University of Southern California, where he had studied and taught for more than sixty years.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after Hirt's passing, Lucille, his wife of sixty-five years, donated his papers to the ACDA International Archives for Choral Music. Those documents and artifacts subsequently were named the Charles Hirt Papers, one of several private collections donated to the Archives by distinguished ACDA leaders. According to Christina Prucha, ACDA Archivist 2006-10, the papers were received in the Archives in 2003 when the National Office was located in Lawton, Oklahoma.<sup>2</sup> They were moved from Lawton to Oklahoma City in 2008, where they were sorted, catalogued, and described.<sup>3</sup> This article seeks to provide a brief overview of the collection with an eye toward encouraging researchers to further investigate its substantial holdings.

Marvin E. Latimer Jr., PhD is assistant professor of choral music education at the University of Alabama and chair of the Organizational History Sub-committee of the ACDA Research and Publications Committee <mlatimer@music.ua.edu>.

More images from the Charles Hirt Collection can be viewed on the  
ACDA Web site at [www.acda.org/page.asp?page=hirtarticleaugust2012](http://www.acda.org/page.asp?page=hirtarticleaugust2012).

CHARLES HIRT  
(1911–2001)





# THE CHARLES HIRT PAPERS

## BIOGRAPHY

Various papers in the collection offer fascinating snapshots of Hirt before he chose to make choral music his life's work. They record, for example, that Hirt was born November 4, 1911, in Los Angeles, California, to Adolph and Della Belle (Mills) Hirt.<sup>4</sup> He attended elementary school in Glendale, California, and received an Elementary Diploma from the Glendale City District on June 19, 1925.<sup>5</sup>

Though Hirt reportedly received little encouragement for music in his home (his parents were not musical), he enjoyed a variety of music activities throughout his schooling. For instance, he found time to play both violin and trumpet in addition to singing in the choir; and performing in a number of musical dramas. After graduation from Glendale High School in 1929, Hirt remained unsure about what career to pursue, so he matriculated to Glendale Community College and joined the Los Angeles Oratorio Society.<sup>6</sup>

## THE SMALLMAN A CAPPELLA CHOIR

Hirt's tenure at the community college was short lived, because, in the fall of 1929, John Smallman (1886–1937), Director of the Los Angeles Oratorio Society, invited Hirt, on very short notice, to sing in the upcoming Smallman A Cappella Choir Tour.<sup>7</sup> Smallman, who came to Los Angeles from Boston after studying with Emil Mollenhauer (1855–1927), conductor of the Boston Handel and Haydn Society (1900–27), organized the Smallman A Cappella Choir in December of 1924.<sup>8</sup>

The collection holds a number of concert programs for Smallman's choir, which typically consisted of thirty-two choristers who wore elaborate costumes evocative of Victorian-era Spanish dress (Photo 1). It specialized in eclectic programming of primarily unaccompanied choral repertoire. One reviewer wrote,

They sing in many languages. Their repertory is unhampered by any restrictions about religion, race, or

## FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL TOUR



## THE SMALLMAN A CAPPELLA CHOIR

JOHN SMALLMAN, FOUNDER AND CONDUCTOR

Photo 1: Cover of the Smallman A Cappella Choir "First Transcontinental Tour."  
Hirt is on the top row in the center.

period. Every program lists numbers that will wake a response from each individual in the audience, whether he [is] interested in Jewish, Italian, English music, religious, folk, or modern styles of composition.<sup>9</sup>

Leonard Van Camp (1934–2003), noted historian of unaccompanied singing in the United States, later compared the Smallman

A Cappella Choir to such seminal choral organizations as the Harvard Glee Club, directed by Archibald T. Davidson (1883–1961), and the St. Olaf Choir, directed by F. Melius Christiansen (1871–1955).<sup>10</sup> In the fall of 1929, the Smallman A Cappella Choir, with Charles Hirt singing in the men's section, visited 35 venues coast-to-coast from October 8 through December 19.<sup>11</sup>

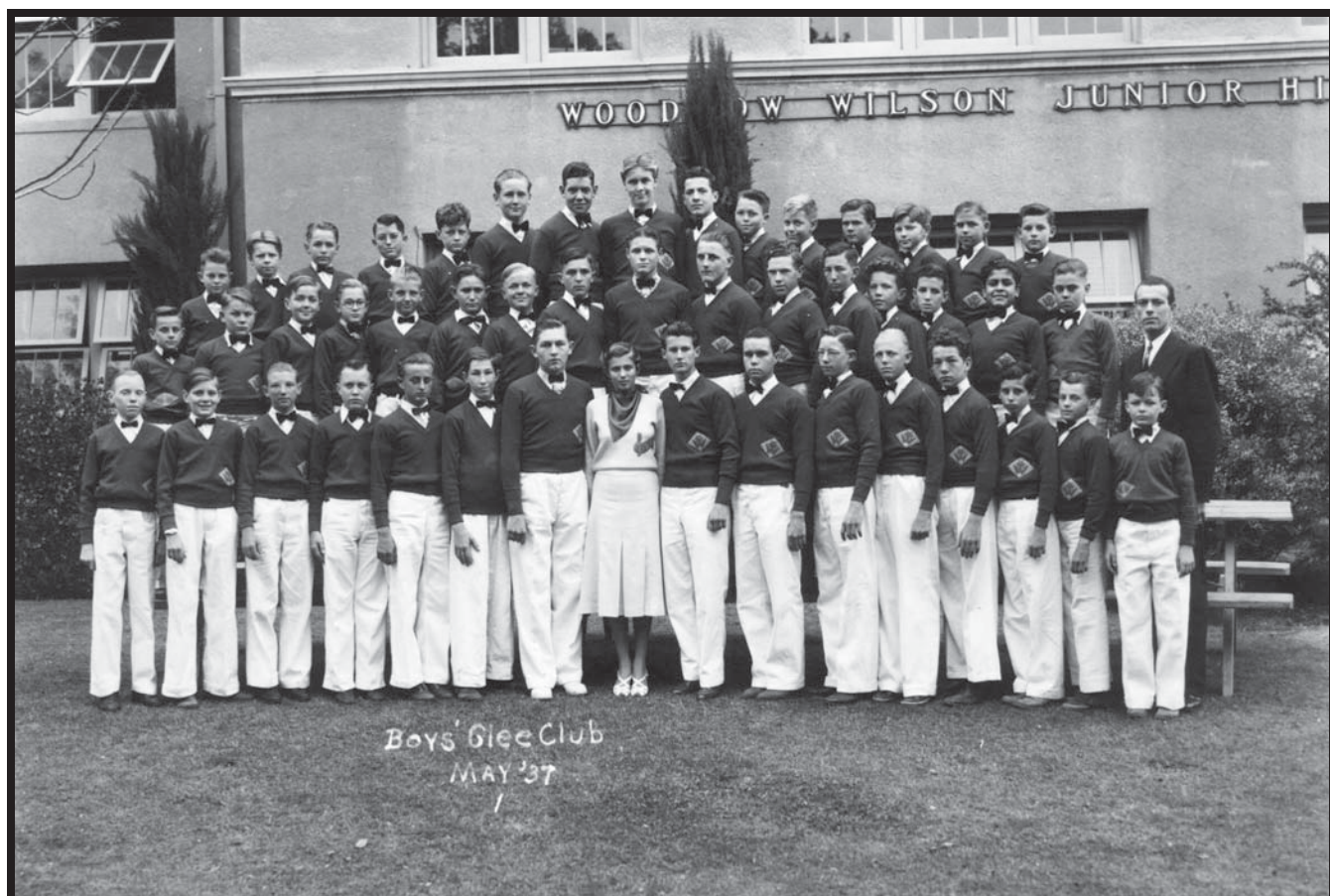


Photo 2: Hirt with the Woodrow Wilson Junior High School Boys Glee Club, 1937

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Curricula vitae, diplomas, photographs, and teaching certificates found in the collection support the notion that Hirt's experience, as a chorister in Smallman's choir, was transformative. Upon his return from the tour, he entered Occidental College to pursue choral music study with Walter E. Hartley. Hartley was the immediate predecessor to Howard Swan (1906–1995), celebrated choral director and scholar, who remained at Occidental for thirty-seven years and became Hirt's lifelong friend and mentor.<sup>12</sup>

At Occidental, Hirt met the love of his life, Lucille Thompson, a French major and accomplished organist and pianist. Active in music and drama, Hirt graduated with

a teaching certificate and Phi Beta Kappa membership in 1934.<sup>13</sup> During the next six years, he married Lucille, taught music in Glendale Secondary Schools, earned an MS from USC, and directed a music program with five choirs at the Glendale United Methodist Church.<sup>14</sup> He also found time to attend Westminster Choir College summer school sessions at Occidental College, directed by John Finley Williamson (1887–64).<sup>15</sup> A historic photograph in the collection shows Hirt, standing back row center (as usual because of his height), with the 1937 class (Photo 5).

In May 1941, the Glendale Board of Education offered Hirt a teaching assignment at the Glendale Junior College (Photo 3).<sup>16</sup> He accepted the position and began work on a PhD at USC that same year. Also, in the fall

of 1941, Hirt received an invitation to join the staff of the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood as director of music. He and Lucille served the church for thirty years and developed one of the most recognized church music programs in the country.<sup>17</sup>

In 1942, while still a graduate student, Hirt joined the USC faculty as director of choral activities. By the time he completed his PhD in 1946, Hirt had founded and chaired the department of church music and the department of choral music within the School of Performing Arts.<sup>18</sup> Choral music historians later reported that Hirt, who became an innovator in higher education choral music curricula, was one of two professors broadly credited with the institution of the first DMA in Choral Music—the other was Hirt's close friend, Harold Decker; at the



# THE CHARLES HIRT PAPERS



Photo 3: Glendale Junior College A Cappella Choir, 1942

University of Illinois.<sup>19</sup>

During his thirty-five year tenure at USC, Hirt developed several choral ensembles, the most widely known of which was the USC Chamber Singers.<sup>20</sup> In addition to countless distinguished national appearances, Chamber Singers toured internationally on many occasions, including the Europa Cantat, Asian Cantat, ACDA Vienna Symposium, and the A Couer Jolie in Belgium and France. Such interest in expanding international choral music collaborations influenced Hirt to join other choral music leaders in organizing the International Federation of Choral Music. As a leader in IFCM, he actively participated in planning the first World Symposium on

Choral Music, a tradition that continues today.<sup>21</sup>

## Disneyland and Olympics

The collection holds hundreds of papers that chronicle Hirt's long-standing personal and professional relationship with Walt Disney. When Disneyland opened in 1956, Walt Disney asked Hirt, who by then was widely recognized as a choral conductor with a broad understanding of popular genres, to serve as its choral advisor. His most distinguished contribution to the Disney legacy came in 1958, when he originated the an-

nual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. Hirt directed it for the next 25 years. According to Disneyland publicity, the Candlelight Procession and Ceremony continues as one of Disneyland's most popular yearly traditions.<sup>22</sup>

In 1955, the International Olympic Committee designated Squaw Valley, California, as host site for the 1960 VIII Winter Games. It was to be the first time in 28 years that the Olympic Games would be held in North America. The Olympic Planning Committee named Walt Disney Chairman of Pageantry, and he and CBS produced the opening and closing ceremonies.

Not surprisingly, Hirt was one of Disney's

hand-picked production team. He organized a performing ensemble of some three thousand seven hundred high school choristers and instrumentalists to perform in the opening ceremonies. Hirt later said, "To be a part of that 'Miracle of Squaw Valley' with Walt was a very special honor, and one of the highlights of my career."<sup>23</sup> The Disney documents include a very interesting page from the *Disney News* (could not be reprinted due to copyright), which includes a photograph of Hirt, Disney, and the other members of Disney's committee.<sup>24</sup>

Hirt again served in a leadership role in the 1984 XXIII Summer Olympiad held in Los Angeles. David L. Wolper (1928–2010), celebrated producer of television and cinema and USC alumnus, produced the opening and closing ceremonies. Arthur C. Bartner (currently in his forty-second season as director of the USC Marching Band) joined Hirt in the enormous task of recruiting, rehearsing, and conducting one thousand student musicians, who formed the honor choir and band.<sup>25</sup> Documents from the XXIII Olympiad are scores, scripts, photos, and letters, which appear to be the most recent professional documents in the collection (Photo 4).

### Scholarship

Though perhaps less celebrated as a scholar than as a conductor and teacher, Hirt contributed significantly to choral research and pedagogy. For example, several sources in the collection reference collaboration, early in his career, with otolaryngologist Henry J. Ruben. Hirt and Ruben, under a grant from the United States Department of Public Health, studied the human vocal mechanism using high-speed photography. Their cutting-edge research contributed significantly to the rapidly expanding fields of voice science and voice pedagogy.<sup>26</sup>

Hirt was considered by many to be one of a few authorities on Graeco-Slavonic liturgical chant, a topic that he lectured on

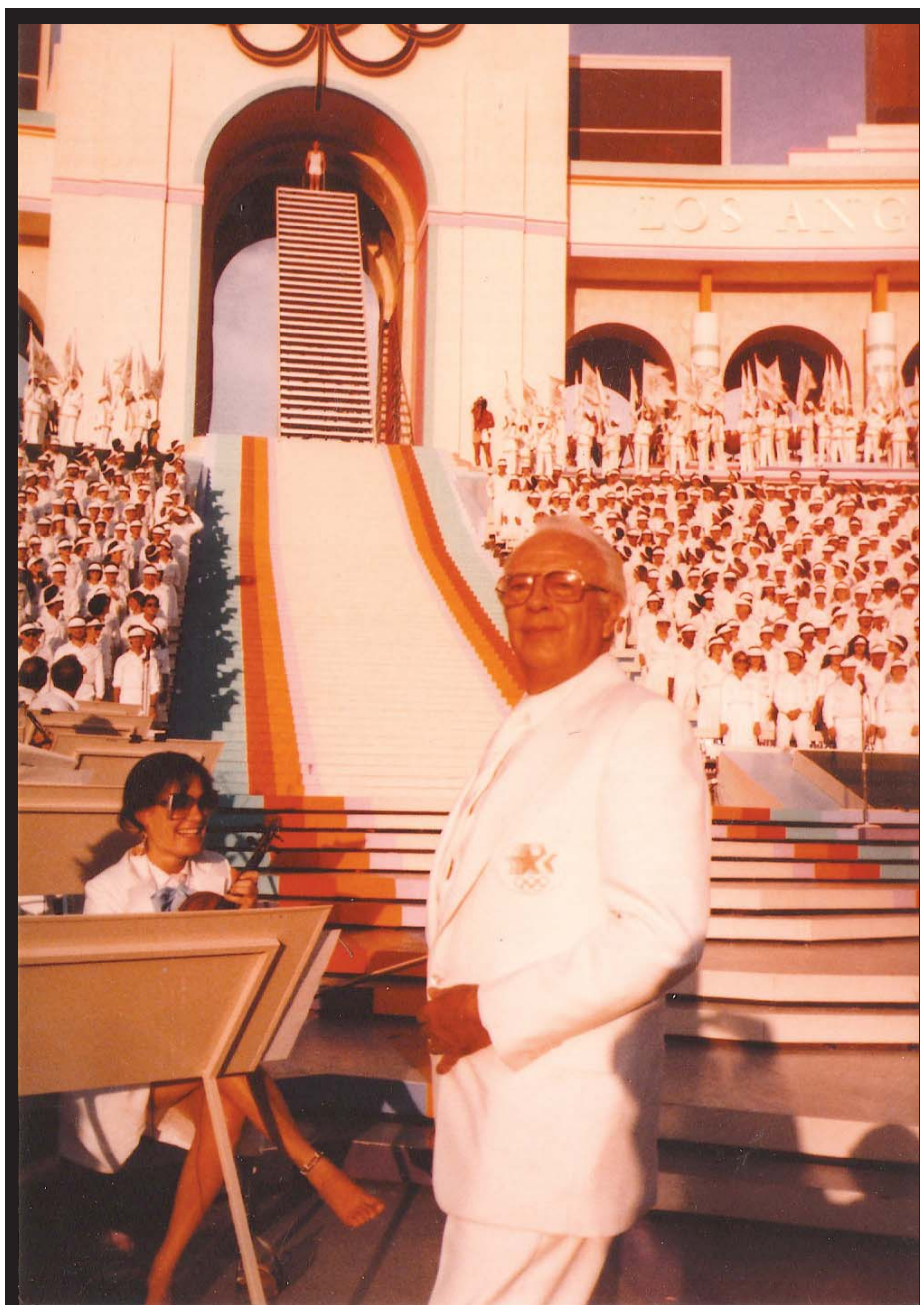


Photo 4 Hirt at the 1984 Opening Ceremony of the XXIII Summer Olympiad

nationally and internationally throughout his career. Hirt's series, *The Choral Repertory*, became a widely used source in choral literature courses nationally. He edited and published numerous scholarly editions of choral works published by Carl Fischer;

Warner Brothers, Belwin Mills, and Hinshaw. Partially in recognition of such scholarship, Hirt was awarded Honorary Doctoral degrees from Occidental College (1970), Westminster Choir College (1971), and Pacific University (1976).<sup>27</sup>



# THE CHARLES HIRT PAPERS



Photo 5 : Westminster Choir School Summer School at Occidental College, July, 1938, John Finley Williamson, Director

## Hirt Remembered

The Charles Hirt Papers hold numerous tributes written for various occasions that attest to Hirt's profound influence on students, choristers, parishioners, and others. One such document, a transcript of an address delivered by William Denning—who for many years chaired the USC departments that Hirt founded—occasioned the presentation to Hirt of a second lifetime achievement award at the 1996 ACDA Western Division Convention. It read in part:

It was from Charles Hirt as musical visionary that I, and many others, learned the central principle ... of music-making, which has guided our work for our entire careers. I

encountered it for the first time in class in 1966, when I interrupted his empyrean train of thought with a grad student's typically mundane technical question regarding how to create a good sound in the alto section. He turned slowly and gave me his famous thousand-yard stare for what seemed at the time like four days.

Here's what that stare said to me then: 'For God's sake, man, here we are trying to split the very heart of reality itself, and we only have three weeks left to do it, and you're asking about alto sound?'

Here's what that stare has said to me

for the ensuing 30 years: 'There is no substitute for the musical idea, for living with—and sweating over—a piece until you've found its essence and can then impart that essence to your ensemble. Aspects of technique will follow if you understand what the piece needs to come alive. As to the singer and the conducting gesture itself: the body coordinates when it has something to say, so find something for it to say; and finally—and most important—that in the indissoluble marriage of form and function, form must always be the dominant partner—that it ain't what you say, it's the way you say it (and I could add: it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing).'<sup>28</sup>

8. How did you happen to make music your career?

I can't remember when I had any other intention. I always knew music would be my career, but I didn't always know that music education would be. I thought I might be a solo singer or an instrumentalist. I played violin through my junior high school days, and then I changed to trumpet. I worked my way through the last years of high school and first years of college in a pop band. I knew that music would always be my first love and my profession. At Occidental when I got my degree I also got a teaching credential. I was able to get it at the same time without it costing any more. Then I fell in love and I found that I could get a job teaching. My first incentive to go into music education was to get enough money to marry Lucy. Then when I did the background to a couple of films at Warner Brothers and had an opportunity to get out of teaching, I found that I did not want to do so. I found that my incentive now was not the making of money but the joy of working with young people. When I got into university work I found that the third motivation took hold of me; music became pre-eminent. Now my motivation at the university is heightened greatly by the fact that I haven't lost my love for the young people with whom I work, and I don't mind the monthly pay check. But they are not my chief incentives now.

Accepted a Teaching position so that we could afford to get married

Photo 6: Hirt's responses to the questions that served as the conceptual framework for Carole Glenn's *Choral Journal* series, *In Quest of Answers*.

## The Collection

Consisting of 15 linear feet of materials in 18 boxes, the Charles Hirt Papers is the largest private collection in the Archives.<sup>29</sup> A finding aid can be found on the Archives Web page.<sup>30</sup> The holdings are predominantly in English and mostly relate to Hirt's professional life. They are teaching materials, newspaper clippings, correspondence, tribute letters, programs, and photographs. Those materials are from his school days; his undergraduate years at Occidental College; his early years as a public school teacher; his service to churches in the Los Angeles area; and his tenure at USC, first as graduate student then as faculty member.<sup>31</sup>

The collection also documents Hirt's writing activities and his involvement with the Walt Disney Company; the Olympics; and a variety of festivals, clinics, work-

shops, and tours. Unlike some important ACDA leaders who, for various reasons, did not preserve their records, Hirt, and his wife Lucy, maintained a well-ordered quantity of materials that represent the many years of his active participation in ACDA. Notably, they include documentation of the many conversations that led to the first independent ACDA National Conference. They also include some very interesting recordings used as part of ACDA's Hirt Endowment Fund CD.<sup>32</sup>

## Interesting Documents

As with other recent writings focused on ACDA Archives collections, I chose to feature several interesting documents on the Archives Web page. They include photographs of Hirt with early choirs; a number

of interesting newspaper clippings; some professional documents such as teaching contracts; a few of the more interesting personal letters; and documents, scripts, and scores from Olympic ceremonies.

During the process of selecting those items, I discovered a transcript of Hirt's responses to the questions that served as the conceptual framework for Carole Glenn's *Choral Journal* series, *In Quest of Answers*.<sup>33</sup> In a personal communication, Glenn reported that this transcript, sent to Hirt for review, was of an interview conducted in the fall of 1970 for her thesis at Occidental College.<sup>34</sup> He did not return it in time to be included in her paper. In 1974, she again asked that he return his responses, this time so that they could be a part of her *Choral Journal* series *In Quest of Answers*.<sup>35</sup> Still, for reasons unknown to Glenn, Hirt did not send them.

She requested them a third time as she began the process of publishing her *In Quest of Answers* series as a book by the same name.<sup>36</sup> The document's material culture suggests that Hirt had begun the process of editing his answers and

was on his way to complying with Glenn's appeal (it evidences numerous hand written strike-throughs, interlineations, and marginalia). But, on July 12, 1987, he wrote Glenn the following message:

Dear Carole,

It is painful for me to have to write you this letter, but I must do so without delay, and with finality. I have been forced to the conclusion that I cannot be represented in your book, *In Quest of Answers*. My neural-spinal disease is progressive, and I cannot respond to the questions for your book with the care and thought they require and merit, and that I could accept. My answers today would be quite different and more complex than those I gave you many



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years ago. As for using as answers a composite of excerpts from my letters to the ACDA membership written over a decade ago, I realize now that, taken out of context, they appear either irrelevant or obsolete, and also different from what I would write today. . . . This is why, Carole, I must firmly state that I cannot permit either a composite of my letters written to the ACDA membership so long ago, nor anything I have said or written as responses to your 21 questions to be used in your book. . . . I wish you all possible success with your book.

Affectionately,

Charles<sup>37</sup>

The document's content provides a fascinating snapshot of Hirt's thinking about choral singing at a time when his influence was at its peak nationally and internationally. Said Scott Dorsey, ACDA Director of Education and Communication and current ACDA Archivist, "This is, indeed, a very important historical document."<sup>38</sup> Therefore, because it was not included in Glenn's work, and because it is revealing in a way that is not accessible elsewhere in print, I have chosen to include it in its entirety. Still, because it was not intended for publication in its current state, I have, with the aid of Hirt's own hand-written comments, carefully edited it.

## *In Quest of Answers: Charles Hirt*

**Glenn** What are your overall objectives for your choral program?

**Hirt** I am a music educator; so my first objective is to give singers an experience that will be most valid and helpful to them in their own programs. In almost every instance, they are going to pursue music either as an avocation or as a vocation. My goals also include non-musical things that build people as well as performers. I am chiefly concerned about process rather than a product. I cannot arrive at the quality of performance that I want

unless, in the process, we have been able to accomplish the many organic things that are extra-musical.

**Glenn** What personal and musical criteria do you use for selecting singers?

**Hirt** I consider basic intelligence first. This usually means that a person must be a fairly good musician who has basic intelligence, who is attractive, who has a nice personality, and who is adequately endowed to handle the musical assignments. Naturally, the voice is important—at least the potential of the voice if not the actual development at the time. I also consider social attitude—how a person responds to his fellows.

**Glenn** How do you audition your singers?

**Hirt** First, I talk to them to put them at ease. That seems to be the best way to find out if they are intelligent. I ask about their musical background, their major field of interest, their aspirations, how long they intend to pursue an academic program, and so on. By that time we are fairly well acquainted, at least enough so that the trauma of auditioning has been removed. Then I ask them if they have brought a piece they would like to sing for me. If they follow the usual pattern they'll say, "I'm just getting over a cold," or "I'm just coming down with one." To give them the benefit of the doubt, they probably do have or have had a cold.

If they do not have a piece I bring out something from the library. At this point I want to hear how they treat a choral line, not necessarily how well they sight-read. If they have fallen short in the interview or in the quality of sound that I hear when they are singing, I don't go further. I would be wasting their time and mine. Next, I will take a song from our Chamber Singers repertoire and have them sight-read it. If they pass muster here, then I like to discover the actual extremes of their range. I have them vocalize a bit for me. Then I have them turn their back while I strike a few tone clusters and ask them to isolate sounds, and so on. I see how far they can go. This sounds like quite an ordeal, but it only takes about ten minutes.

**Glenn** Do you feel that your groups are equally capable in all style periods?

**Hirt** My better groups are, but I think there are limitations with a high school choir or even a high school all-state. The singers just are not mature enough to handle some music. I would not overload them, for instance, with Bruckner or Mahler. I do not think they are ready for it. Our young high school people can sing almost anything note-wise, but they do not have mature enough instruments to negotiate the heavier sonorities. There are certain sounds and literature that are best fitted to certain groups, but that seems to be increasingly less true with more selective groups such as Chamber Singers.

**Glenn** How did you happen to make music your career?

**Hirt** I can't remember when I had any other intention. I always knew music would be my career; but I did not always know that it would be music education. I thought I might be a solo singer or an instrumentalist. I played violin through my junior high school days, and then I changed to trumpet. I worked my way through high school and my first years of college in a pop band. I knew that music would always be my first love and my profession.

At Occidental, I earned a teaching credential in addition to my degree. I was able to get it at the same time without additional tuition expense. Then, I fell in love and I found that I could get a job teaching. In other words, my first incentive to go into music education was to get enough money to marry Lucy. Later, I did background music for a couple of films at Warner Brothers and had an opportunity to get out of teaching, but I found that my incentive had become not the making of money, but the joy of working with young people.

When I began university work, I discovered a third motivation: music became pre-eminent. I have not lost my love for the young people with whom I work, and I don't mind the monthly paycheck, but the music is my chief incentive now.

**Glenn** What criteria do you use when you choose repertoire?

**Hirt** I am concerned about giving Chamber Singers as broad a stylistic experience as I can. This includes what I call the square: Classic, Contemporary, Neo Classic, and Renaissance music; and the freer, more subjective styles of Romantic, Baroque, and Gothic music. And this wild period we are in now is in my circle. It is the most subjective of all. I feel that we must sing a good amount of Contemporary music. I am not so sure that some of it is permanent, worthy, or a monument to eternity, but this does not always matter. We should experience what is going on today. I am not greatly taken by all of it, but at least we need this exposure. This music needs to be appraised and to be given a hearing.

**Glenn** How do you go about building concert programs?

**Hirt** Program building is fun. I probably spend as much time building a program as I do selecting repertoire. It is like composing. It must have form like a musical composition and it must include change of pace. It should have feeling of tension and resolution.

So, I am organically involved in program building all the time I am rehearsing. I have, for example, changed the order for concerts innumerable times. As I experience the songs, the key relationships, the contrasts, I begin slowly to arrive at what I feel is a good program order for a given performance.

Most often, if I start with any particular period, it is Baroque. Somehow it is like a vocalise to me: there is melisma and there is excitement. It gives the choristers a chance to reorient into the performance environment—the stage, the acoustics, the audience relationship. I often follow with more exposed, unaccompanied, sensitive Renaissance pieces. Then I might intersperse the Romantic with the Contemporary with the Classic: usually without concern for chronology.

**Glenn** What are the most important musical and personal qualifications for a successful conductor?

**Hirt** It is hard to answer a question about the priority of qualifications for a conductor

without sounding too idealistic. There are certain things that one hopes to be able

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to grow into—like being a better person. The process should be objective so that the conductor is not motivated by ego. I know too many highly talented teachers who get in their own way in that regard. When this happens, the music comes off second best; it becomes a vehicle to satisfy certain drives.

I am not concerned about ego when I find it in youth: it is what brings them into choral music. But, as they mature, they should begin to develop a philosophy and affection for the instrument with which they are working. As music educator, they must transition from ego motivation to a more selfless idealism. Ultimately then, the music takes precedence. One must be enamored by the music, and the music must become the validation of almost all that one does. The selflessness is sublimated, love for the people grows, and it all merges to make music.

There are several stages of growth. I know where I would like to grow, but it will take more than one lifetime to get there. I cannot expect my young people to be selfless right off, and to love the people they are working with immediately. This has to grow, and so I am quite patient with them. People were patient with me, and I had a lot of the same problems to work out.

**Glenn** Do you feel that it is important to communicate with your singers on a non-musical basis?

**Hirt** Again, it depends on the group. I travel a great deal with Chamber Singers. If you sit on a bus, fly in a plane, sit in a dressing room waiting for a performance, go back to the hotel, or go out after a concert, you don't have to try to know your singers, you just do. When they start telling you all their problems you know that you are acquainted.

I'm probably at fault in not trying to get closer to singers in my large groups. I do not know how I can. How can one know the singers in an all-state choir; for instance? One cannot know them individually so one must communicate through the music. The music is the common ground. I feel a rapport with the individual in a large group without ever having met them individually, but I could not tell anyone how or why. We have one common objective: the forthcoming concert and all the intervening experiences that it will bring about. If one looks deeply into the music and how it relates to what the composer is trying to communicate, one can derive a great deal experientially that will bring the musicians closer together.

**Glenn** What changes in choral philosophy and procedures have you noticed in the past 20 years?

**Hirt** There have been a great number of changes in the last twenty years. The practice of emphasizing a specific choral methodology has all but disappeared. The Christiansen method, the Williamson method, and the Father Finn method all have merged. We now ask our students to be eclectic enough to draw that which is good from all methods, and develop a method that is uniquely their own.

But, actual teaching practices can vary, depending on the age of the student. For example, I teach methodology to my undergraduates: I still have to. My students come into the conducting class and say, "How do [you] do it?" I cannot go into some rhetorical flight about finding ourselves through music. I'll say, "This is a downbeat," and so on. "Now, do it, and do it, and do it, until it's a reflex."

When they have acquired basic, fundamental skills without any adornment of philosophy or frills they will go into the advanced class. There I will say, "Now you can do it the way that is best for you." Ultimately as they go into higher levels of conducting they will go through a similar metamorphosis: they will change and become more individual.

So the change over the past twenty years has consisted of a maturing of our national concept of choral music. It is a great thing. Still, it has happened because of these men (Christiansen, Williamson, Father Finn, etc.). We needed that kind of arbitrary methodology at one time, but now I think we can let go of it and find our own. If we don't, we're in trouble. I have some students who come from areas where the choral director has said, "This is the way to do it." These students come into our Choral Development class and find that there are also other ways, and they feel insecure. If they still hold on to the way they were taught, they will stay at that level. Some people can throw their notebook away, be eclectic, and find their way. Others tend to drop out.

We have grown a great deal in the past 20 years, not in spite of, but because of these arbitrary methods. They were sort of

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a launching pad for where we are today. I am excited about this today. I am even more excited about where we can go with a more creative and individual approach.

**Glenn** What trends do you see for the future?

**Hirt** I see continued maturation. In my college days we were involved with the glee club movement where we dressed in tuxedos with ribbons across our chest and sang, *Pass the Bowl and Light the Pipe*. Then came the A Cappella movement where choirs wore robes and sang unaccompanied literature. Now we see choirs replacing their

robes with formal dress, singing more varied repertoire, oftentimes with orchestra or various types of instruments. The madrigal singers have become chamber singers, which means that they have extended their repertoire to include all style periods.

With the advent of aleatory and avant garde music I see our choir proliferating into smaller groups as well. I call this our Neo Baroque period, which followed our previous Neo Classic period with Schoenberg and Stravinsky. We can see more division into groups, such as the concerto grosso of the Baroque, with one consort of instruments playing in dialogue with others—songs for men, songs for women, songs for small

groups in dialogue, antiphonal sounds, various kinds of instruments.

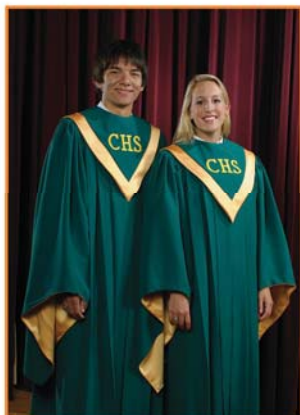
All this diversity makes greater demands on the choir: I think we will ultimately lose the idea of a choir as such. Perhaps we will have a chorus capable of breaking into smaller groups that can handle the contemporary musical genre that is responsible for these demands. I can't see beyond that point, but I think I see it coming.

Choirs are going to have to be more adaptable to changing notation, to speech choruses, to new sounds. The chorus of the future is going to have to be facile and versatile. Still, the chorus must be able to sing music of all periods. Many of the same

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# THE CHARLES HIRT PAPERS

demands posed by period music will still be there. The conductor must be able to communicate these demands, a challenge both exciting and frightening.

**Glenn** What aspects of music are of particular interest to you at this time?

**Hirt** I have been thinking about ACDA more than any other thing. I would like to see the choral people in our nation begin to become a wholesome influence in a society which needs it badly. I think we can, because music has that kind of magic. Music as an art is not moral or amoral. It can be used for good or evil like any other great power.

I believe we have matured, and I believe we are ready to make a contribution to society through music. I don't mean to minimize the idea of art for art's sake. A wonderful experience through a masterpiece beautifully performed can never be surpassed. But, music can also serve as a tool to help us in contributing as citizens. ACDA is just growing to the point where it can have a telling effect. We are dreaming about it now, but I think eventually we will do something about it. If I didn't think it were so, I wouldn't have said

yes to my present office [national president] in ACDA.

Earlier I said that I feel that the process is as important or even more important as the product. That was one way of saying that both the rehearsal and the performance are critically important to the whole. Each is an entity in itself with its own goals. At the end, I ask myself, "Did we achieve any of these short-time goals? Are my people leaving a little happier? Do they love music more? Do they love each other more? Have they acquired certain skills?"

## Conclusion

Bill Denning aptly characterized Charles Hirt as "the single greatest living representative of all that is powerful and formative in our art, our work, [and] our profession."<sup>39</sup> The papers held in Hirt's collection largely support the notion that Hirt was, by any estimation, at least one of the greatest representatives. But, with the exception of cursory tributes to him following his death, Hirt's contributions have not, as of yet, become the subject of sustained inquiry.

Historians have not, for example, chronicled Hirt's remarkable tenure at the University of California, nor have they looked at the impact of his seminal USC DMA in choral music. Other contributions such as his work with Disney, his choral arrangements, and his many writings about choral pedagogy also remain uninvestigated. Such work, perhaps aided by the papers in this collection, arguably, would serve to contribute to a better understanding of Hirt as a musician, as a human being, and as a dominant force for promoting and sustaining the choral art in the second half of the twentieth century.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> "In Memoriam: Charles C. Hirt," *Choral Journal* 41, no. 9 (April 2001): 63.
- <sup>2</sup> Christina Prucha, personal communication to author, January 30, 2012.
- <sup>3</sup> Marvin E. Latimer Jr. and Christina Prucha, "ACDA International Archives for Choral Music: Past, Present, and Future," *Choral Journal* 50, no. 7 (February 2010), 20–30.
- <sup>4</sup> Charles C. Hirt, Biographical Sketch, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.
- <sup>5</sup> Charles C. Hirt, State of California Diploma of Graduation from the Elementary Schools of Glendale City District, June 19, 1925, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.
- <sup>6</sup> Charles C. Hirt, Glendale Union High School Diploma, Glendale, CA, June 20, 1929, ACDA Archives. "Charles C. Hirt: A Founding Father," *The Journal* (July/August 1986): 3–4.
- <sup>7</sup> "Charles C. Hirt: A Founding Father," *The Journal* (July/August 1986): 3–4.
- <sup>8</sup> *Oregonian*, June 6, 1928.
- <sup>9</sup> *First Transcontinental Tour: The Smallman A Cappella Choir*, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.
- <sup>10</sup> Leonard Van Camp, "The Rise of American Choral Music and the American A Cappella 'Bandwagon,'" *Music Educators Journal* 67, no. 3 (November 1980): 36–38. John Smallman died in May 1938. *In Memoriam, John Smallman* (1986–1937), First Congregational Church, Los Angeles, CA, May 22, 1938, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.
- <sup>11</sup> *First Transcontinental Tour of the Smallman A Cappella Choir*, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.
- <sup>12</sup> Hartley, also an organist, came to Occidental College in 1926. He earned a music degree

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- from Yale and studied with Charles-Marie Widor in Paris. *Choral Program*, Occidental College, accessed January 4, 2012 from <<http://college.oxy.edu/choral/glee-club/history/>>. After his mandatory retirement in 1971 he taught at California State Fullerton and UC Irvine. Howard Swann: Choral Director; Author; *Los Angeles Times*, accessed January 16 from <[http://articles.latimes.com/1995-09-21/news/mn-48395\\_1\\_choral-director](http://articles.latimes.com/1995-09-21/news/mn-48395_1_choral-director)>.
- <sup>13</sup> Charles C. Hirt, *Biographical Sketch*, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives. Charles C. Hirt, *Teaching Credential*, California State Board of Education, June 11, 1934, ACDA Archives. On July 26, 1937, he was granted a "Special Certificate" to teach "all music subjects" in Los Angeles County, California. Charles Carleton Hirt, Special Certificate, The County Board of Education of Los Angeles, California, July 26, 1937, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives. On April 1, 1941, he was granted a Life Diploma from the California State Board of Education, which authorized him to teach "all music subjects" in any public school in the state of California. Charles Carleton Hirt, Life Diploma, The California State Board of Education, April 1, 1941, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.
  - <sup>14</sup> Charles C. Hirt, *Biographical Sketch*, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives. Charles C. Hirt, Glendale Unified School District Contract, Glendale, California, August 7, 1940, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.
  - <sup>15</sup> Those courses often ran for three weeks during the month of June and July. *Summer Music Courses Open*, San Diego Union, June 6, 1928.
  - <sup>16</sup> Charles C. Hirt, *Biographical Sketch*, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives. Letter, Board of Education of the City of Glendale to Charles C. Hirt, May 8, 1941, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.
  - <sup>17</sup> "In Memoriam: Charles C. Hirt," *Choral Journal* 41.
  - <sup>18</sup> He took his final exam for the degree, June 3, 1946. University of Southern California Graduate School Final Examination Record, June 3, 1946, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.
  - <sup>19</sup> J. Perry White, "Significant Developments in Choral Music Education in Higher Education Between 1950–1980," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 30, no. 2 (1982): 121–28; and Marvin E. Latimer Jr., "The Nation's First DMA in Choral Music: History, Structure, and Pedagogical Implications," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 32, no. 2 (2010): 19–36.
  - <sup>20</sup> Among the choral groups he organized were the USC Chamber Singers, the Madrigal Singers, an a cappella choir; the University Chorus and men's and women's glee clubs. "Charles Hirt; Pioneering Choir Leader," *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 2001.
  - <sup>21</sup> "In Memoriam: Charles C. Hirt," *Choral Journal* 41.
  - <sup>22</sup> *Disneyland, Let the Memories Begin, Candlelight Ceremony*, accessed February 1, 2012 from <<http://www.disneywebcontent.com>>. The ceremony includes members from local communities who carry lighted candles through the Disneyland Park and form a human Christmas tree followed by the reading of *The First Christmas* by a celebrity narrator. Hirt also conducted the combined choruses and bands for the official opening of Disneyworld in Florida in 1971. Charles C. Hirt, *Biographical Sketch*, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.
  - <sup>23</sup> Scott Richter, Charles Hirt: The Miracle of Squaw Valley, *Disney News*, 1993.
  - <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>25</sup> *The Olympics: Bartner, Hirt chosen to lead the Olympic Band, Honor Choir*, newspaper clipping, unknown source, ACDA Archives.
  - <sup>26</sup> "In Memoriam: Charles C. Hirt," *Choral Journal* 41.
  - <sup>27</sup> Charles C. Hirt, *Biographical Sketch*, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.
  - <sup>28</sup> William Denning, *Charles Hirt Presentation Address*, ACDA Western Division Convention, Pasadena, CA, March 15, 1996, ACDA Archives. A handwritten comment at the bottom of the second page read, "Charles and Lucy—I hope it sounded better than it looks; punctuation is my weakness. Love, B."
  - <sup>29</sup> Other sizeable private collections include the Harold A. Decker Collection, 24.45 linear feet; the Elaine Brown Collection, 27.4 linear feet; and the Colleen J. Kirk Collection, 12.9 linear feet. ACDA Archives web page at <<http://acda.org/archive>>.
  - <sup>30</sup> A Finding Aid is a written description of archival collections that provides information about the collection. Information typically includes the collection's provenance, a listing of the contents, and where items can be found within the collection. Christina Prucha, ACDA Archivist from 2006–10, described the Hirt Collection in the fall of 2010. See ACDA Archives web page at <<http://acda.org/archive>>.
  - <sup>31</sup> Some materials are in Russian, Hungarian, Romanian, Czech, Polish, French, German, and Chinese. Materials are primarily textual, however, other formats include photographs, microfilm, records, cassette tapes, and award plaques. Charles C. Hirt Papers, ACDA Web site Archives Page, accessed December 12, 2011, from <<http://acda.org/archive/finding-aids/Hirt-Charles#box1>>.
  - <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>33</sup> Carole Glenn, personal interview with Charles C. Hirt, transcript, undated (c. 1970).
  - <sup>34</sup> Carole Glenn, personal communication to author; February 2, 2012. Presently, Glenn lives in Silverdale, WA, where she is a certified music practitioner employed by Franciscan Hospice of Tacoma and Good Samaritan Hospice of Puyallup. Glenn received a BA in music education and elementary education from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA. She earned an MA in music education from Occidental College in Los Angeles, CA. Carole Glenn, Biography, accessed February 24, 2012 from <<http://www.lifeharmony.com/>>.
  - <sup>35</sup> Carole Glenn, personal communication to author; Thursday, February 02, 2012. Gordon Paine, *The Choral Journal: An Index to Volumes 1–18* (Oklahoma City, OK: American Choral Directors Association, 1978) 60–62. The series was published in *Choral Journals* between 1974 and 1976. Contributors included Richard Cox, Harold Decker, Eph Ehly, Rodney Eichenberger, Joseph Flummerfelt, John Habermen, Jane Skinner Hardester, Iva Dee Hiatt, Margaret Hillis, Lara Hoggard, Joseph Huszti, Kenneth Jennings, Colleen Kirk, Allen Lannom, Jameson Marvin, Douglas McEwen, Albert McNeil, Daniel Moe, Don V. Moses, Donald Neuen, Weston Noble, Robert Page, Lloyd Pfautsch, Paul Salamunovich, Hugh Sanders, Leland Sateren, Norman Scribner, Robert Shaw, Howard Swan, Roger Wagner, Dale Warland, Lois Wells, Ralph Woodward, and Larry Wyatt.
  - <sup>36</sup> Carole Glenn, *In Quest of Answers* (Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Music, 1991).
  - <sup>37</sup> Charles Hirt, personal letter to Carole Glenn, July 12, 1987, original in possession of Carole Glenn, transcript in possession of author.
  - <sup>38</sup> Scott Dorsey, personal communication to author; December 19, 2012.
  - <sup>39</sup> William Denning, *Presentation Address*, March 15, 1996, ACDA Western Division Conference, Pasadena, CA, Charles Hirt Collection, ACDA Archives.

