

Temple U. prof to lead Bel Canto choral music teachers workshop

[Monday, March 25, 2019](#) by [KATHY LAUER-WILLIAMS Special to The Press in Focus](#)

Internationally-renowned choral-music clinician Dr. Rollo Dilworth will work with Allentown School District teachers and other area choral directors in a “Choral Music Teacher Workshop,” presented by the Bel Canto Youth Chorus of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem.

“In the choral music field, everyone knows Rollo [Dilworth],” says Joy Hirokawa, artistic director of Bel Canto. “He is a leader in choral music education. We are really excited about him coming.”

The event includes a free concert open to the public featuring Allentown school choirs, 7 p.m. March 29, South Mountain Middle School, Allentown.

Hirokawa says the workshops are an extension of the Bach Choir’s community development through teaching that includes its “Bach to School” program.

She says Choir officials hope the workshop becomes an annual event.

“The goal is to provide professional development in choral music education,” Hirokawa says. “We want to provide support and education to area choral directors.”

She says a lot of school music departments have been hit hard by budget cuts and teachers may not have the opportunity to travel to workshops for professional development.

“So we brought it here,” Hirokawa says.

Hirokawa says she worked with Allentown School district choral music teachers to design the workshop content.

She approached them during a spring teacher in-service day last year about what they would want in a professional development workshop.

Surprised that the workshop had their needs as a priority, the teachers told her they wanted a workshop focused on working with diverse populations and emphasizing rehearsal techniques, rather than performance.

Hirokawa says Allentown teachers were concerned about how they could best serve an underserved population when they had limited time with students.

“It is very teacher-led,” Hirokawa says. “They asked, How can we get kids excited?” and [they] were looking for best practices for working with kids in an urban population.”

Hirokawa says the open rehearsal is available to choral teachers who will see Dilworth's rehearsal techniques as he conducts a group on his own composition.

Hirokawa says Dilworth will be "teaching a song from the ground up."

"This is not for a performance but to model the process," she says. "This is what teachers do every day."

Dilworth is Professor of Choral Music Education and Chair of the Music Education Department at Temple University's Esther Boyer College of Music and Dance, Philadelphia.

In addition to teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in choral music education, he is conductor of the Singing Owls, a university-community choir.

Prior to Temple, Dilworth was Director of Choral Activities and Music Education at North Park University, Chicago, for 13 years.

Dilworth has written and arranged more than 150 published choral works. His choral compositions are a part of the Henry Leck Creating Artistry Choral Series with Hal Leonard Corporation and Colla Voce Music Company, and he has also published pieces with the Santa Barbara Music Publishing Company as part of the Mary Alice Stollak Choral Series.

The workshops are open to choral directors working in any setting and with any age group.

Schedule

6:45-8:45 p.m. March 28, Lehigh Valley Charter Arts High School, 321 E. Third St, Bethlehem

"Rehearsal Techniques": Dr. Dilworth will rehearse the Concert Choir of Bel Canto Youth Chorus for his composition, "No Ways Tired." The open rehearsal provides opportunities for teachers to observe rehearsal techniques appropriate for choirs of any level.

Masterclass: Teachers who want to hone their conducting skills are invited to apply to conduct the ensemble in a Masterclass. Three spots are available, each lasting 20 minutes. Interested teachers will choose a piece from the Bel Canto Youth Chorus Concert Choir repertoire to prepare and conduct, with Dr. Dilworth coaching.

7-8 p.m. March 29, South Mountain Middle School, 709 W. Emmaus Avenue, Allentown

The Allentown School District presents Young Voices of Allentown, including performances by the Dieruff High School Choir, and a combined choir comprised of selected singers from Trexler Middle School, South Mountain Middle School, Harrison-Morton Middle School, and Francis D. Raub Middle School. The program will feature works coached by Dr. Dilworth during workshop time with the students earlier during the day. The performance is open to the public. A free will offering is suggested.

9 a.m.-3 p.m. March 30, Community Music School, 1544 Hamilton St. Allentown

9 a.m.- noon, “Rehearsal Techniques”: Following time for refreshments and networking, the session, “Building Community in the Choral Setting and Choral Pedagogy,” will focus on working with diverse students.

1-3 p.m., “Applied Rehearsal Technique”: A group of Elementary-Middle School Singers from the Allentown School District students and the Bel Canto Youth Chorus will be a lab chorus for Dr. Dilworth. He will model introducing and teaching a composition brand-new to the students, followed by a conversation with Dr. Dilworth, with a Q&A and discussion.

To register: bach.org/belcanto; 610-866-4382, ext. 116