

Starting a choir from scratch

by Sarah Blevins
staff writer

In the fall of 2010, when Dr. Ellie Jenkins first came to Dalton State College, course offerings in her area of expertise were slim to say the least.

Jenkins taught five classes that semester, each a section of the same course—Music Appreciation, the only music course DSC offered at the time.

Since then, Dalton State’s first and only assistant professor of music has continually expanded course offerings in the field. First came American Music, then World Music, then Concert Band.

Now, beginning this semester, there’s Choir.

“I’m glad it’s coming to fruition,” Jenkins said. “It’s a course that we’ve needed for a long time, and I’m looking forward to going to rehearsals and seeing it all come together and then hearing the first performance.”

MUSC 1090’s journey from proposal to Dalton State’s 2014-2015 course catalog took roughly a year. As the catalog listing describes it, the course involves the study of choral music from several sources, traditional as well as contemporary, and features performances both on and off campus.

The one-hour course may be repeated up to six times, with credits going toward Area F for the A.A. in general studies or the B.A. in interdisciplinary studies.

If the School of Liberal Arts wins approval of its proposed associate’s degree in music, MUSC 1090 will also count as a large ensemble credit in Area F for a maximum of three credit hours.

Large ensembles, like band or choir, Jenkins said, are primary parts of any music degree and will help students planning to transfer into a bachelor’s program in music.

Jenkins said one of the bigger challenges in getting MUSC 1090 ready for this semester was staffing it.

“The hold-up,” she said, “was finding someone who was willing to take on the challenge of starting a choir from scratch. We had talked to a couple of people, and for one reason or another those fell through, so I sort of put it on the back burner.”

Then, toward the middle of last semester, a musician in the Dalton/Whitfield Community Band told her, “Hey, you should really get in touch with Adam Burnette. I think he might be interested in starting a

choir as quickly as we could to get Choir on the books to be offered this spring.”

Burnette comes to Dalton State with a wealth of professional experience. A native of Chatsworth,

national and international levels. He’s conducted the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra and has conducted operas including Henry Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* and Stephen Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd*.

As a pianist, he has toured and recorded with famed soprano Sylvia McNair and accompanied several other well-known performers. Burnette is also an active composer and arranger and was recently commissioned by the city of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, to compose an original score for a theater production.

Luckily for DSC, Burnette recently returned to north Georgia and accepted a position as director of music and organist at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Dalton.

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— Dr. Ellie Jenkins

choir at Dalton State.”

Jenkins liked the idea and sent word for Burnette to contact her if he was interested.

“He called me the next day,” Jenkins said, “and we were off and running. He got all his paperwork in, and then we pushed everything

he earned his bachelor’s in music from Shorter College, then moved on to Indiana University, where he studied choral, orchestral, and opera conducting.

He’s spent the last several years conducting orchestras and accompanying operas at the



staff photo by Tanner Blackton

Interim president arrives on campus

Dr. Margaret Venable, second from left, speaks with students on the deck outside the Pope Student Center. Venable is the former provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Gordon State College and assumed the Dalton State presidency Jan. 1.

A visit from *Long-Lost Relatives*



by **Tanner Blackton**
editor

Comedy, romance, mystery . . . what more could you ask for on a Friday night?

Dalton State's THEA 2100 presented the play *Long-Lost Relatives* Nov. 20-23 and had the audience in stitches every night.

Written by Barbara Tucker, interim assistant vice president for Academic Affairs and associate professor of communication, and directed by Jackie Daniels, assistant professor of communication and theater arts, *Long-Lost Relatives* tells the story of the Kendricks, a southern family that reminds you of either your own or one you've encountered here in northwest Georgia.

The play opens on Merilee, the overbearing but well-meaning mother (senior Katherine Fromm), as she trills on about wedding arrangements in a twangy, sweeter-than-molasses Georgia accent. There's a nervous energy buzzing about her and her household as, one by one, her children make their entrances.

We learn that Meredith, the irresponsible younger sister (freshman Mollie Crawford), is soon to marry Tony Hawkins, the quintessential frat boy (junior Lowell Chappell). Meredith is far from over the moon about either the groom or their impending wedding, but the rest of the Kendricks eagerly await the big day.

Madison, the meek middle sister (sophomore Hannah Fromm), isn't all that fond of "Tony the Phony" herself, but she supports her younger sister nonetheless. Meanwhile, when protective older brother Bryant (freshman John Harrelson) appears, Madison is shocked but thrilled to see that her old flame Kevin Sutton (junior Sean Self), has tagged along.

Kevin and Madison soon sneak tender moments alone, but the shy librarian is hesitant to revisit their relationship, fearful that it will end as it had their senior year at UGA.

Once all the children arrive, patriarch John Ross Kendrick (senior Scott Reese) announces that he has huge news for the family: after careful consideration, he has decided to run for state senate.

Everyone is overjoyed—but then three scroungy newcomers come knocking and spoil the moment for everyone.

Jasper, Luza, and Cherry May Dubose—played by freshman David Moss, sophomore Jamie Steadman, and sophomore Savannah Cross, respectively—introduce themselves as distant cousins to Merilee, but there's widespread doubt as to their kinship.

Not wanting to ruin John Ross's news and Meredith's pending nuptials, the Kendricks brush their doubts aside—all of them, that is, but Jeanne, the seemingly kooky but wise grandmother (Assistant Professor of Spanish Nancy Mason).

What unfolds is satirical, rib-tickling mayhem as the family has to juggle wedding plans with attempts to find out who these "relatives"—and their sketchy cohort Todd (senior Josh Beard)—really are.

The cast was spectacular, with quick timing and deft navigation of the complicated plot. Tucker's characterization of Grandma Jeanne



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ROADKILL

I really appreciate the size of the campus. It's not so big that I can't get from one side to the other in a few minutes, and class sizes are small enough that I can really get to know my professors.

Campus lights need to stay on until 10 p.m. or at least until most students have left. I'm in class until around 9:15, and it's so dark outside that just walking to my car freaks me out. I know the campus is supposed to be safe, but more lighting would make me feel safer.

Sitting in the library in a darkened study room listening to an iPod like a reclusive vampire does not constitute studying.

The Department of English needs a writing concentration. I want to write professionally and don't think another class in literature is going to help me all that much.

Why do I have to log back in to campus wifi every time I enter a different building?

The stoves and dishwashers in the dorms are unspeakably old and don't work.

Classes should meet where their schools are housed. English classes should meet in Liberal Arts, nursing in Sequoyah, etc.

Why does GeorgiaVIEW keep changing? By the time we get used to one version, we have to learn another.

Dalton State should have more history courses—one on the African diaspora, for instance.

All the rooms in each building need to be set at a common temperature. As it is now, one classroom is freezing, the next one broiling.

Dalton State has resurfaced several sidewalks around campus but has neglected the track around the tennis courts far too long.

I'm sick of having to flush campus toilets because the person before me "forgot" to. Gross!

Why do classrooms change at the last minute and then give me only 10 minutes to make it from Tech to Sequoia?

Why is it that, just when you're about to graduate and need only upper-division courses, they seem to disappear?

Why do so many people seem to like standing in doorways and at the bottom of stairs? Get out of the way!

I hate how the campus bookstore runs out of required textbooks every semester. Don't they know how many students are registered for every class?

How to begin your career while still a sophomore

I'm a DSC sophomore, an accounting major, and part of the cooperative education program at Shaw Industries Group, Inc.

Two years ago, I didn't even know what cooperative education is, but while looking for a job in the fall of 2013, I found a listing of co-ops on the Shaw Industries website.

The site explained that co-op programs offer exactly what I was looking for—and then some: college credit, a salary, and on-the-job experience in fields that, up to then, I'd only studied in classrooms.

So I applied. A month or so later, I found out that I'd been accepted, and I started at the beginning of spring semester 2014.

First came orientation. There, I learned about Shaw Industries and that the co-op program I was now a part of works with more than a dozen different colleges and universities to help business, engineering, and design majors make the transition from the classroom to the real world.

Soon thereafter, on the job, my first assignment was in financial services, where I worked in claims.

I was in charge of viewing new claim forms sent in by customers, entering key information into the system, and routing each claim to administrators for review.

Later in the semester I job-shadowed the general accounting department, where I learned first-hand about the day-to-day demands of corporate accounting, corporate manufacturing accounting, and contract accounting.

The next semester I worked in corporate assets, where I applied in a professional corporate setting much of what I've learned in my accounting classes here.

I helped with the accounting and financial management of records and processes associated with the corporation's property, equipment, and other assets.

I also had the opportunity to job-shadow the internal audit department, which, in that it involves all aspects of the company, taught me much I wouldn't have learned otherwise.

Even at the outset, I knew I would learn a lot from my co-op experience. I now know exactly what to expect from a job in my field.

Instead of book-knowledge alone, I have on-the-job experience. I have learned what my strengths are, uncovered a few weaknesses, and now know how to improve upon both.

In addition to the on-the-job experience, the Shaw Industries co-op also includes a range of other activities. The co-op team took part in several events scheduled throughout the semester: plant tours, a teambuilding event, and an outing.

The plant tours taught me how other areas of the company work together. Ordinarily, I have little to do with manufacturing, but I enjoyed seeing how carpet and laminated flooring are made, how raw materials become a finished

product, ready to ship. It was instructive to see other areas of the company that I would not have seen otherwise and learn how they interact with one another.

During the teambuilding events I was able to meet other participants in the program, which is a great way to network and learn names and faces from other departments. Knowing others throughout the company was especially helpful when I needed outside assistance to solve the occasional problem.

For our spring outing, the co-op group visited Whirly Ball in Atlanta and spent the entire day there, playing and having fun.

Last fall, we went to Rock City and the Enchanted Maze in Chattanooga. Both events were catered, and we all had a lot of fun.

At the end of each semester, co-op students deliver a presentation covering what they

learned from the program.

Because presentations are delivered in front of all co-op students, human resources personnel, and hiring managers, they're a great opportunity to become a known quantity throughout the corporation.

I was a little nervous but excited to share what I learned my first semester, in financial services. I was less so when I delivered my second presentation, this past fall, which covered what I learned in corporate assets.

As a co-op student and employee at Shaw Industries, I know I can ask questions when I have them and that everyone there will help me to the best of their abilities. I have never felt belittled or been treated like someone hired to make coffee.

I am truly in a position where I am challenged every day to learn and better myself, and I am respected for that.

I have no doubt that I made the right decision when, more than a year ago, I applied for and accepted the Shaw Industries co-op.

I have gained experience in the field that I can add to my resume, and I now know what path I want to take after graduation, whether that be at Shaw Industries or a similar corporation elsewhere.

I know many students who devote a lot of their time away from school to jobs that have nothing to do with their fields of study. Many of them work to pay for school and living expenses, but after graduation they will quit those jobs and only then start trying to find a job related to their majors.

I would say to those students, "Why wait until then? Start now."

The benefits I've gained as part of the Shaw Industries co-op are greater than whatever benefits might have come from working anywhere unrelated to my major.

I highly recommend that every student take the time to research and work for a company that offers such a program.

GUEST COLUMN

Adriana Salaises

Choir

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“It’s to our great benefit that Adam chose to return to our area,” Jenkins said, “and that he has such a great enthusiasm for choral music. He’s a wonderful musician with great experience, and I think he’s going to mold a terrific choir at Dalton State.”

Jenkins confessed that she would have been happy if 10 students had registered for MUSC 1090 during its first semester, but 10 registered in the first 24 hours, and enrollment now sits at 30—just five students shy of being full.

Still, all those voices won’t make Burnette’s job easy, Jenkins said.

“First, Adam’s going to have to figure out who he’s got,” she explained. “Every singer in

the choir this time around is something of an unknown quantity.

“Who has a strong voice? Who has great pitch? Do we have enough men? Who can really read music and who can only sort of read music and who can’t read music?”

“There are a lot of questions to be answered. Then he’s going to have to pick a repertoire that’s manageable for that kind of group. I’m sure it will be a building process over the next few semesters, but I can’t wait to hear this first group sing.

“There will be a concert on April 21 in Goodroe Auditorium, so people can start looking forward to that,” Jenkins said.

Jenkins also said that, even though it’s good to have some knowledge of music beforehand, prior experience is not an absolute requirement.

“We’re not auditioning anyone this time around,” Jenkins said. “The main thing is that students feel comfortable performing in public and are open to advice from the director.”

With a bright future for the choir at DSC, Jenkins can’t express how much she’s looking forward to seeing what the choir has to offer.

“I think it’s going to be a great addition to the college and to the community as a whole. I think it’s going to change the atmosphere and really provide another bright spot for Dalton State in the eyes of the public.”

Play

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was particularly engaging, and Mason’s off-the-wall delivery made the part that much more adorable.

Between Moss’s wild energy, Self and Hannah Fromm’s chemistry, Beard’s adeptness at playing the baddie, and freshman Travis Ford’s expert portrayal of the obsessive reporter, there was hardly a misstep the whole night.

The moment that elicited one of the heartiest guffaws, however, wasn’t scripted. When Chappell, as Tony, made his final exit of the play, he accidentally knocked over a side table as he headed for the door.

As it went crashing to the floor—a gaffe that would have rattled a less assured actor—Chappell, without missing a beat, bent down, scooped up the glass tabletop, and sauntered off, proclaiming “This is mine.”

Backstage and behind-the-scenes participants deserve recognition as well. In addition to Daniels, the *Long-Lost Relatives* production crew included junior Ryan Thomason, assistant

director; sophomore Malik Barton and junior Amber Deal, lighting; sophomore Noah Corbin and Library Assistant Laurie Raper, costumes; freshman Hannah Badger, hair and makeup; and Thomason, Badger, senior Joan Cate, and sophomore Evan Kennedy, set design and construction.

DSC alumna Jessica Brinkley came to the Nov. 21 production to support Katherine and Hannah Fromm and walked away a fan of DSC’s burgeoning drama program.

“The Fromm girls were adorable!” Brinkley said. “It makes me proud to be a Dalton State grad. The show was a great satire of the way southerners treat big events like weddings.”

Long-Lost Relatives was also a great experience for those involved in it.

Chappell, a newcomer to the drama program, said he enjoyed working with the cast and crew.

“We’re constantly cracking jokes and laughing together,” he said. “We’ve all become fast friends.”

Moss, a veteran of THEA 2100 productions, saw the play as another opportunity to grow as a performer and bond with his fellow actors.

“The cast was a lot of fun,” he said. “We always keep it light backstage.”

Moss also had high praise for his director. “Ms. Daniels is wonderful,” he said, “and she always makes sure everyone is on-point. The main thing she’s taught us is, whenever you go on stage, try to better yourself.

“You always want to think, ‘What’s my objective? How am I going to better myself? How am I going to make this scene more convincing?’”

Hannah Fromm’s favorite part of the production was getting to perform in front of a live audience after weeks and weeks of rehearsals.

“The feedback has been incredible,” she said. “You practice, and you get used to silence, but all of a sudden you have people laughing, and it’s like, ‘This is so fun!’”



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