

Fall Choral Festival



Union High School Concert Choir captured the attention of the audience.

As the Union High School Concert Choir began its last song, they immediately commanded the attention in crowded Gaiser Student Center. Three students set the pace by pounding a staccato rhythm on djembe drums. The singers swayed to the rhythm, their voices clear and joyful. They moved to the music—smiling and clearly enjoying themselves. Some singers held cupped hands to their mouths and whooped. People in the audience bobbed their heads and smiled. The room's atmosphere was electric.

This enjoyable, immersive performance was one of many when choirs from 13 high schools and middle schools from the region performed at the Clark College Eighth Annual Fall Choral Festival on November 17 at Clark College. The choirs came from as far away as Ilwaco, Washington (106 miles) and Aurora, Oregon (60 miles).



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Five choir clinicians with experience teaching at University of Portland, Oregon State University, Whitworth University, Pacific Lutheran University, and Portland Community College listened in the back of the room and then took turns offering useful advice to the choral students.

Each choir performed for 20 minutes. Then a clinician came onto the stage and spoke to the student musicians to offer useful suggestions about their performance. For example, one

choir had sung a song that included Russian words, and the clinician offered pronunciation tips for the words, then had the students and the audience practice enunciating the words.

Dr. Funk added, “The schools come from all over because they know it’s a supportive atmosphere and they know we have amazing clinicians. Our festival is at a time of year when not many other festivals are happening, so it gets their choirs out there singing. It’s just a real joy to see it all come together and to get so many high school students on our campus.”



Clark College Concert Choir performs at the Choral Festival.

Participating choirs from Clark

County:

- *Clark College: Concert Choir and Treble Ensemble, Director Dr. Jacob Funk*
- *Camas High School: Select BassChoir and Select Treble Choir, Director Ethan Chessin*
- *Heritage High School: Concert Choir and Select Treble, Director Billy Buhl*
- *La Center High School: Select Treble Choir, Director Rhonda Catchpole*
- *Ridgefield High School: Concert Choir and Treble Choir, Director Bob Meek*
- *Union High School: Concert Choir and Women's Ensemble, Director Joel Karn*
- *Vancouver School of Arts and Academics (VSAA): Vocal Rep Ensemble and Vocal Style & Tech Ensemble, Director Joel Thoreson*

Participating choirs from other counties:

- *Arts & Communication Magnet Academy, Beaverton, Oregon: Synergy Choir, Director Lauren Craig*
- *Dexter McCarty Middle School, Gresham, Oregon: Concert Choir, Director Ron Neighorn*
- *Ilwaco High School, Ilwaco, Washington: Concert Choir, Director Rachel Lake*
- *Kelso High School, Kelso, Washington: Hilander Concert Choir, Director Brent Liabraaten*
- *North Marion High School, Aurora, Oregon: Concert Choir, Director John Haddock*
- *R.A. Long High School, Longview, Washington: Chor Diem, Director Alison Askeland*
- *Woodland High School, Woodland, Washington: Choir,*

Director Patrice Lins

Clinicians who offered constructive advice to the choirs were:

- *Dr. Samuel Barbara*, Director of Choral and Vocal Studies at Portland Community College, Rock Creek Campus
- *Dr. Tina Bull*, Emeritus Professor of Music, Coordinator of Music Education at Oregon State University (1996-2015)
- *Dr. David De Lyser*, Director of Choral Activities and Professor of Music, University of Portland
- *Dr. Xiaosha Lin*, Assistant Professor and Director of Choral Activities at Whitworth University in Spokane
- *Dr. Tiffany Walker*, Visiting Assistant Professor of Choral Music at Pacific Lutheran University

Piano faculty members were Dr. Jeongmi Yoon, who serves on faculties at Clark College and University of Portland, and Yena Lee Halsel, who accompanied the Clark College choirs.