

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION PROJECT:** Successful High School Show Choir Directors: Their Perceptions About Their Teaching and Administrative Practices

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The typical high school choral director of today is expected to know a great deal about the various types of music that exist as well as the appropriate techniques to create those genres in such a way that their student's performances are realistic and stylistically accurate. What most undergraduate students are taught in pursuit of a choral music education degree misses the mark in that the show choir genre is nearly ignored throughout the curriculum. Yet, the nation's new teachers are expected to strike out into the world of teaching and often find themselves in very large, competitive programs with the show choir at the very center.

This study begins by identifying a number of questions that a first year teacher with no show choir directing experiences might ask, identifying the "how and why" of the daunting task of creating an artistic product in this new American modern choral genre. These questions also served as a guide to formulate a profile of the ideal show choir director. Then utilizing the established profile of the ideal show choir director, several experts – those who

have an established reputation for a high level of success – were interviewed and their responses were documented, studied, and organized into categories that correspond with those found in the profile of the ideal show choir director. The correlation of these elements provided an in-depth look into the processes of these successful directors that have proven to be effective over the course of many years, giving the reader a revealing look into how to build a program from the beginning, and to see it through to the end with ultimate success.

As young teachers attempt to create musical experiences that are appealing to their students, they often find themselves competing with an idea that singing in choir should be like what can be seen on television in shows such as GLEE or American Idol, and other similar programs. While this is not an entirely real reflection of what choral music education is about, there is some truth to what is shown, and to a degree, what can be done. The focus of this project is to provide our new teachers a knowledge base to draw from that can assist them in their own development toward becoming a truly well balanced musician and educator. This project can assist these young teachers in developing into those who have knowledge of the show choir art form, and know how to teach the various techniques necessary to engage students and keep them interested in singing choral music.