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Choral Workshop Stars Luboff, Ericson

by S. Francis Marie Gnader

Milwaukee had a Summerfest with its stars, a Vienna Operetta Carnival with Viennese artists, and Alverno College had its Choral Workshop with Norman Luboff, Eric Ericson and other choral specialists who created a musical spectacle in size, sound and scintillating sessions.

From August 5 to 12 "the halls were alive with the sound of music—with songs that were sung for a thousand years." Music from chant to a composition sent directly from the press was sung by 220 choral musicians who came from 24 states, Canada and Korea. The free-flowing chant, Renaissance polyphony, conventional hymns, and half-spoken, half-sung contemporary sacred music found an appropriate setting in the college chapel under the direction of Paul Salamunovich and Richard Westenburg, as each morning the over-sized Schola Cantorum was trained in the art of interpreting the particular styles of choral music.

Frank Pooler, author of the recent publication, *Modern Choral Notation* (and teacher of *The Carpenters*) deciphered the avant garde scores to the amazed and sometimes amused singers who performed the unconventional sounds from scores that promise to be concert favorites. From the twelve "stuffed" packets of music that each participant received, Don Razey, workshop dean for Choral Associates, chose dozens of scores that he directed in the reading sessions to familiarize them with the latest in choral music. Representing the "Kool Aid generation," Eva Mae Struckmeyer, delighted her audience with her wiry wit and wisdom, as she took them through the paces of Junior High activities that might be called "Loosen to Learn."

Highlights of the Workshop were the Luboff and Ericson sessions, which came up to and surpassed everyone's expectations. Both men are masters in their art of conducting and interpreting. Luboff concentrated on his own originals and arrangements with the expertise and enlightenment that only the composer can bring to a work. The rhythmic drive, harmonic richness, and subtle nuances that mark his work were enticed from his massive chorus resulting in performances that would delight any audience. Adding to the vocal sound was the skill of Jackson Berkey, accompanist par excellence, who supported and artistically enhanced all performances of every composition sung throughout the workshop.

Eric Ericson, the well-known Swedish conductor of the famed Swedish Radio Chorus and the Stockholm Chamber Choir brought to his American choral colleagues several compositions of Scandinavian composers which proved to be challenging "reading material" for them. He also worked with practical conducting techniques and rehearsal techniques. He was pleased to discuss the state of choral music and composing in the Scandinavian countries to so many musicians. The standing ovation Ericson received after his sessions was truly indicative

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Alverno Introduces Competence Based Learning

Walking down the Alverno halls these days you're very likely to hear one new student ask another what she did in the Assessment Center last week.

"Competence seven, contemporary events," she might answer. "We discussed everything from the Brewers to Cambodia." Or she might say, "Part of the communication competence. I wrote a speech and they video-taped me presenting it so that my assessment team could evaluate me later."

These new students are talking about another innovation at Alverno College. **Competence-Based Learning (CBL)**, which makes the achievement of competences rather than the accumulation of credit hours the basis for awarding a degree.

"In our effort to produce graduates who are practically as well as theoretically grounded in their liberal arts education, Alverno College has seriously questioned the validity of credentializing based upon exposure and retention of prescribed materials," said Sister Joel Read, Alverno president. "Liberal arts education, while offering the richest source of information and background to college students in past years, has not always produced graduates with marketable skills. In developing a competence-based curriculum, Alverno College is working toward a credible and responsible solution to this problem."



Sister Joel Read

The competences Alverno students will work toward mastering in the context of the curriculum are in the areas of communication, analysis, problem solving, value judgments, social interaction, the environment, the arts and humanities and awareness and understanding of the world in which they live.

"Alverno College believes an important aspect of the learning process is concerned with the student's ability to make decisions, develop initiative, and to acquire confidence and responsibility for implementing these abilities," said Sister Joel.

To test and evaluate her proficiency in these competences, an Alverno student uses the **Competence Assessment Program (CAP)** which provides assessment teams selected from faculty, advanced students, alumnae and the Metropolitan Milwaukee business and professional community.

Assessment is part of every new student's orientation and will be an ongoing process throughout her years at Alverno.

The **Competence-Based Learning** program requires continued development of specialized service centers, including assessment, advising, learning, career services and faculty development. Funding assistance has been awarded to Alverno College by the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education in the amount of approximately \$100,000 for 1973-74. In addition, a Ford Foundation Venture grant in the amount of \$120,000 over a three-year period will also be used for CBL program development.

In its first year of application the CBL program is limited to new students. Later it is anticipated that all Alverno students will enter the program.