Ed Gig: March 13, 2018

I think there were probably 20 kids in 7th-8th choir on Monday morning and maybe 30 kids in the 5th-6th choir on Tuesday morning. I think a bit over 40 sang with us in the presentation, a few sat out or weren't there.

I'd guess there were maybe 250 kids total in the assembly.

- The ed gig this morning went very well. For those of you who didn't know this, I went in to Achieve yesterday and today to teach part of a chant from the Benedict show to the choir students in 7th-8th (yesterday) and 5th-6th (today) with the plan that they would sing it with TRE as part of the presentation. Because some of them only learned the song today, Ms. Schramke and I were okay with the students sitting out the performance if it made them too nervous to sing in front the their classmates.

The kids both mornings were great. I was unaware before yesterday that choir at Achieve is hit-or-miss - rehearsal happens during homeroom and the kids only get to go if they don't have other academic stuff they have to do at that time. The kids were SO EXCITED to learn they were going to have an opportunity to sing WITH The Rose Ensemble. SO EXCITED. They were great about learning the chant by rote and were patient in doing the lines over and over and over. I had about 20 minutes to work with each group and we got through 3 lines of the chant in that time, which I think was pretty good.

For the ed gig itself, I was a little concerned about making the presentation/music (all from the Benedict show) exciting enough for them, but Ms. Schramke reminded me that these students have never seen instruments like this before (theorbo and viola da gamba) and don't ever hear unamplified singing, certainly not chant and polyphony and Baroque stuff like this. So I tried to just let the music speak for itself and tell them one or two things to listen for in each piece.

The kids were great. They paid really close attention and clapped appropriately and only seemed a little bored when I forced the entire Concinant linguae on them, and then it was only at the end of the piece that I was losing them.

The best part was when I asked who from the choir kids felt comfortable getting up to sing the chant with us and over 40 kids got up. Pretty much every choir student I worked with, including all the kids who had only learned the music at 8:30am that morning. This really was remarkable that they were comfortable enough to get up in front of hundreds of their classmates and sing with us. And they did an amazing job and were so proud of themselves.

I gave the kids a pretty extended Q&A time at the end (about 12 minutes) and they had awesome questions for us about how long we'd been singing, why Scott & Patty picked their instruments, what our favorite songs are, how old a person has to be to sing with TRE, if we are famous, etc. They were really engaged and interested.

So the moral of this long email is: this worked and it worked better than I was expecting. I would really encourage us to use this model going forward for ed gigs at our partner schools as a starting point for more involvement. It was easy for me to go in and work with the classes in advance on just the one piece and that little bit of extra effort brought really great results and a super positive experience for the students at Achieve.

Also - our colleagues were great and super flexible and let me be bossy and pretty much run the ed gig, which was helpful for me with Jordan under the weather and unable to join us. And they were involved and said great things and talked about their experiences as musicians in great ways.

Over and out. That was all mostly for Holly & Jordan, I wanted to get it down before I forgot anything.

-AA