Music school’s ‘best kept secret’

By Sherri Blank
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A group of 24 talented OSU students including engineering, education, business and music majors sing and dance in performances throughout the country. They are all members of the Scarlet and Gray Show, one of the School of Music’s best kept secrets.

"I don’t think the group is seen and known by OSU students because a lot of our activities are closed, off-campus shows," said producer and director J. Eugene McKinley.

The group puts on about 50 shows per year, usually for alumni groups, school assemblies and conventions, he said.

"We’re trying to have something in our show for every age group we perform for," McKinley said.

Songs for this year’s Scarlet and Gray Show include selections from "A Chorus Line," a medley from "The Wizard of Oz" and "Summer Nights" from the movie "Grease."

The show evolved out of requests from OSU alumni for a group to perform at the 1975 Rose Bowl game, he said. Since then, the group has shared the stage with performers such as Bob Hope and Phyllis Diller.

Any student is eligible to become a Scarlet and Gray Show member, McKinley said. "I’m looking for good singing and showmanship on stage. "We’ve had people on stage who have never even danced before," he said.

The group practices five days a week for two hours a day, sometimes on weekends. Production of the show begins before the first week of school in September.

"It’s a lot of work, but it’s worth it," said Jim Foster, a freshman from Reynoldsburg.

Sue Sundvall, a freshman from Strongsville, said, "I wouldn’t have traded this year for anything."

OSU students will have a chance to see the Scarlet and Gray Show on April 20 and 21 at 8 p.m. in the West Ballroom of the Ohio Union. Tickets are $2 and are on sale at the Mershon Ticket Office and will be available at the door.
Show set for Scarlet and Gray

By Carrie Sue Trbovich
Lantern staff writer

Put campus fight songs and Broadway show tunes together and you’ve got the 22 members of Scarlet and Gray high-stepping in their annual spring show.

This OSU show choir will also be performing selections from the ’50s, a tribute to Gershwin, as well as some pop tunes.

Scarlet and Gray’s members are directed by James S. Gallagher, and their choreographers are Joan Walton and Andy Haines.

Although some of the members are music majors, the majority of the group is in various other majors, Gallagher said.

He also said they practice about two hours a day, four days a week, and perform about once a week.

The spring Scarlet and Gray Show will be held 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday in Drake Union’s Thurber Theatre.

Members of Scarlet and Gray line-up to rehearse songs and high-steps for their annual spring show. Thurber Theatre will set the stage for Friday and Saturday nights’ performances.
Spring sing

Members of the OSU Scarlet and Gray Show relax between songs Tuesday during a rehearsal for their spring show being presented at 8 tonight and Saturday night in Weigel Hall. The performances will feature popular numbers from many Broadway musicals such as "Dream Girls" and "A Chorus Line." Admission is $5 for adults and $4 for students.
Show choir ready for energetic debut

By Elizabeth Schuster
Lantern staff writer

This weekend, the Scarlet and Gray Show Choir opens the new quarter with two performances at Mershon Auditorium. The shows begin at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

The show choir consists of 20 singers and four instrumentalists all auditioned from the OSU student body, said James Gallagher, choir director.

"It's a different kind of a show than you'd expect to see on Broadway, but I think the talent is excellent and the dancing is sensational," he said.

The assistant director and choreographer for Scarlet and Gray, Andy Haines, creates all the dance in the numbers. Haines and Gallagher have both been involved with the choir for six years.

Haines said his three years working as a member of Scarlet and Gray opened his ability to set music to motion. "I think because of my training first vocally, choreographically there's a better understanding of what singers can and cannot do and how far they can be pushed as movers who also have to maintain a vocal sound," he said.

Gallagher said during pauses in singing, the intensity of the dance maintains the energy in a piece.

Besides its own choreography, Gallagher said Scarlet and Gray sings various original arrangements. Eric Delson, a student assistant, has arranged several pieces on this weekend's program such as "City Lights" and "I Got Rhythm."

"Energy, That's the name of the game," said Jim D. Stevenson, a sophomore from Marion who sings second tenor in Scarlet and Gray.

Like most members, Stevenson is not a music major. He said the daily practice brings a break from the books, and performing enhances his experience as a student.

Gallagher said Scarlet and Gray averages 35 performances a year. Many of these are at high schools around the state. In the past the show choir has gone to California and the East Coast.

The director said each January the group hosts 1,000 to 2,000 high school students and show choir conductors. During this "Scarlet and Gray Festival," the choirs perform and receive vocal and dance coaching.

Few Scarlet and Gray members had dance training before joining the group. "They learn quickly because they have to," said Haines. After learning the music by heart, the singers master the steps that accompany the music.

Stevenson said being in Scarlet and Gray can be a challenge. "Our task is to make 20 people do the same thing at the same time." This means keeping the face expressive as well as the body in motion. He said choir members often coach one another in small groups.

Gallagher said a special factor in handling Scarlet and Gray is its size. Stevenson said members must sing with the force of soloists to project the volume necessary and yet be able to blend as members of a group.

The shows this weekend consist of two acts. Haines said the group uses two kinds of costumes to reflect the difference between the acts.

For various elevations, the choir uses square blocks of different heights, he said.

The first act he described as "a collegiate Scarlet and Gray -- strait-laced." He said the show then becomes more "glitzy." The opener for the second act will include tap dancing, a first for the choir.

The act will include "Everything Old and New," Gallagher said this medley of popular tunes from the early 1900s to 1980 is a favorite for the audience, because people know what is being sung and give a warm response. Stevenson said the choir also enjoys this arrangement and learning the period dance genres it involves.

For ticket information, call 292-2354.
ARTS

Scarlet and Gray forced to hit the streets

By TRACY BRECKENRIDGE
Lampoon staff writer

Lack of a scheduled rehearsal room has members of Scarlet and Gray, Ohio State's performing ensemble, literally dancing on the sidewalk.

The ensemble was left without a rehearsal room last March, when construction of the $25 million Weigel Center for the Visual Arts called for the two major rehearsal rooms at Weigel Hall to be torn down.

Since the group's routines were already set for spring quarter, there wasn't any problem.

Conflict arose when the members returned after summer quarter and found they had not been scheduled a practice room.

Andy Haines, choreographer and producer of Scarlet and Gray, said, "They had the summer to get us scheduled. Everything was supposed to be set."

He said the lack of a rehearsal room has members frustrated.

"It's an intense enough situation without having to pick up and move all our equipment," Haines said. "There's a set that's involved. There are instruments involved, including a drum and synthesizer, that we have to keep moving."

"Losing 10-15 minutes three and four times a day, we've lost quite a bit of time," he said.

Other music groups, including bands and choral groups, were also inconvenienced by the destruction of rehearsal rooms.

These groups, however, had rooms scheduled for them before classes began. The groups are all affiliated with the School of Music.

Sarah Singer, a freshman majoring in education, said, "One day last week, we were moved from Weigel Hall to the sidewalk, to Hughes Hall, and then to the sidewalk again."

Scarlet and Gray members were upset because $1000 worth of mirrors, purchased by the group, were destroyed with the rooms. The group used them to perfect their routines.

Haines said, "The past week we've been rehearsing outside, facing the glass windows of Weigel Hall, so at least we can see movement."

The group practices in Hughes Hall or Mershon Auditorium when the rooms are available, but those rooms do not have mirrors.

Tom Battenberg, dean of the School of Music, said all bands and choral groups had to be moved and were scheduled in Weigel or Hughes halls.

"We don't have a permanent room for Scarlet and Gray, but they will always be indoors," Battenberg said.

Battenberg also said he had heard no complaints.

Rick Chitty, Scarlet and Gray's director, said he received a memo on Wednesday, Sept. 23, placing the group in Mershon Auditorium on certain days. The schedule was in no particular pattern and extended only through Oct. 2.

Members of Scarlet and Gray audition in the spring and take a two-credit-hour class during the following year. They perform at various functions both on and off campus. Haines said the group is the third largest student recruiter, next to the football team and the band.

Chitty said, "The students are upset because they have deadlines to meet and because of the loss of mirrors. In that way, they have a particular inconvenience. Mirrors are important to the group."

Maureen Kinear, a senior majoring in Music Business, said, "We're just trying to produce the best product for our school."

While the group would like the situation resolved soon, they see the inconvenience as a lack of school support and a result of the Weigel Center committee's poor planning.

Chitty, however, remains optimistic the problem will be resolved quickly.

"I have ambivalent feelings," he said. "Everybody is pitching in to get through the Weigel Center's construction. There are going to be conflicts and we're just short two rooms. It's an unfortunate situation."
Buckeye show choir unites for serious kidding around

By Larra Reed
Lantern staff writer

Laughs, hugs and tomfoolery abound in the afternoon rehearsals of the Scarlet and Gray Choir. However, when the performing show choir takes to the Mershon Auditorium stage Saturday night for its annual Spring Show, all that should remain of the earlier frivolities will be smiles and enthusiasm.

Andy Hanes, the group's choreographer for seven years, first began working routines in his final year as a member of the group. He stresses energy and attitude to his members, so their moves; when well-executed, are more than mere motions.

Hanes also works with approximately 32 high school show choirs, and together with Scarlet and Gray, travels to various schools across the state, to perform and offer advice.

Karen Faistl, a second year member of the group, came to the Ohio State University because of Scarlet and Gray. Faistl had worked under the choreography of Hanes with the Grandview High School show choir and wanted to continue performing in college.

"I couldn't imagine not doing this," Faistl said. "I love to perform and combine singing with dancing. OSU was the perfect choice because there is no group in the state of Ohio which can top Scarlet and Gray."

Faistl auditioned for the group spring quarter before her freshman year and was selected to be in the 20-member cast.

The Spring Show is a compilation of all these performances. This year's show combines two medleys, arranged by an OSU graduate, with one set each of jazz, Broadway and gospel pieces. A solo will follow each medley.

Unlike past years, the 1988 Spring Show will be performed on one night only. Tickets may be purchased in advance from the Mershon Ticket Office and are $5 for students and $6 for the general public.