

Ensemble Royale

Maura Crawley Piazza '81 holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from California State University, Northridge. She has been Louisville's choral director for the past 11 years. She is also the cantor at St. Bernardine of Siena and St. Mel Catholic Churches. Ms. Piazza credits Louisville High School for her discovery of a musical career, both as a choral conductor and a vocalist.

To be a member of Louisville's advanced choir group, Ensemble Royale, is to be exposed to much more than just the beautiful art form of choral singing. Under Ms. Piazza's direction, Ensemble Royale has performed in some of the most beautiful venues in the world: California's first Cathedral, Old St. Mary's Catholic Church in San Francisco, the Church of St. Paul the Apostle in New York City and St. Patrick Cathedral in Dublin, Ireland, to name a few. Ensemble Royale has performed on KCET's Christmas Eve Program at the Music Center, as well as showcased on the stage of the Los Angeles Disney Hall at the Los Angeles Master Chorale High School Festival. Other notable tours included performances at venues such as: Florida's National Shrine of Mary Queen of the Universe; St. Ignatius Catholic Church in San Francisco with the Cross Border Orchestra of Dundalk, Ireland; Stephen S. Wise Temple in Los Angeles; Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles; and the Los Angeles Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Mount St. Mary's Choral Festival, Loyola University's Choral Festival and Los Angeles Master Chorale High School Festival are a few of the many events that are included in the group's exciting experiences.

The majority of students in Ensemble Royale enter with no choral experience. Most have heard about the group and are enthusiastic to be a part of a community. Ms. Piazza notes that her students gain poise, confidence, respect and the ability to learn from their mistakes.



Ensemble Royale performing at the annual Christmas Concert

In her classes, she instructs young singers on the importance of practice, exercise and teamwork. She believes that singing should be encouraged more in our schools and at home.

Ms. Piazza's efforts have proven to be very successful and Ensemble Royale has received numerous awards and honors. Most recently, the group brought home a "gold" ranking from San Francisco's Choral Heritage Festival. The choir performed a Christmas piece, "Salvation is Created," by John Rutter and "Old Joe Clark" with fiddle solos by senior Samantha Moraes. Adjudicators rated Ensemble Royale as Superior, scoring the choir in the 90-100 range, or Gold level. Additionally, Samantha Moraes was awarded the Maestro Award for her fiddle performance. Ensemble Royale repeated this performance on the stage of the prestigious Disney Hall last May after auditioning for Maestro Grant Gershon, conductor of the Los Angeles Master Chorale.

Last year, the choral director of El Camino High School in West Hills was so enthusiastic about the Louisville group's sound that he suggested to Ms. Piazza that their groups perform together. Ms. Piazza invited the young men from El Camino's Camarata group to perform at Louisville's Spring Concert. (No objections were voiced by the girls!) Together the two groups created a perfect melodic blend which was enjoyed again at this year's Christmas Concert.

Studio L

PRODUCTION TEAMWORK

Now in its eleventh year, Louisville's Media Production course continues to develop teams of young women producing their own video projects. In October, one team completed an election-day project informing students of the campaign issues and partnering with the campus club Junior State of America to help eligible new student voters register for the election. A second team is producing a piece on relationships and dating. Some of the boys from our brother school, Crespi Carmelite High School, are participating in this project.

In each class, the participants function as a single production team of approximately twelve girls. The teams create their own project ideas, then develop them from pre-production planning through production and post-production and, finally, screen the completed projects for the student body. The course is a facilitated learning environment where participants learn to collaborate with fellow team members to produce video projects.

The teams use Panasonic DVX digital cameras to capture their footage. Four work stations equipped with Mac computers allow the teams to edit their projects. Students compose much of the music for their projects in GarageBand.

PROJECTS

Since 2006, the teams have produced a number of projects:

- A program on student relationships for the Guidance Department.
- A project focused on boy-girl relationships, now used in sophomore religion classes. This piece featured an interview conducted by one of our students with author and talk-show host Greg Behrendt. Several students from Crespi also participated in the discussions.
- A parody of an old-time western, shot off campus at Paramount Ranch in Agoura.
- Parodies of *Harry Potter*, *The Hills*, and *High School Musical*.
- Music videos featuring collages of videos done by popular artists from the 90s until now.



Hannah Gray '09 and Lauren Jacobs '09 gain hands on experience

The teams screen their work during lunch hour in St. Louis Hall. The production teams also, on occasion, show behind-the-scenes footage of their projects and then take questions from the audience.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS

The production teams take on "clients" by partnering with other departments and classes to produce projects for Earth Day, the annual Malibu beach clean-up, school service projects, and the athletic programs. The French language class and the Speech class borrow Studio L equipment to tape some of their classwork for playback and discussion.

INTERNSHIPS

Several members of the Media Production teams have participated in summer internships between junior and senior year. Alumna E.B. Richardson '06 attended Northwestern University's National High School Institute for Film and Video and senior Alyssa Kramer '09 attended the NYU's Tisch School of the Arts summer program as well as interned at Warner Music Group and CNN's Los Angeles office.

Graduates from the program have gone on to study film, communications and broadcast journalism at schools such as CSUN, USC, UCLA, LMU and Arizona State. Two years ago, Shannon Connolly '99 won two regional Emmys for television journalism. Another alumna, Megan Romero '06, after working at Louisville Media Production and in Computer Graphics, earned film credits in computer graphics for *Pirates of the Caribbean II* and for *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events*.