

A 'NATIONAL' HONOR

WCJC Choir members to perform with Mormon Tabernacle Choir

WHARTON, TEXAS – Several members of the Wharton County Junior College Choir have joined the ranks of an elite group of vocalists representing the most talented singers in the nation.

Of the 3,300 singers auditioning for the 2015 National Honor Choir, only 230 – some seven percent – made the final cut. Eight WCJC vocalists – including one alternate – were named to the group.

“They competed against college, university and community vocalists from across the nation,” said WCJC Choir Director Eddie Vandewalker. “This is the highest honor a college or community-based choral singer can achieve in the United States. I had no idea so many of our students would make it.”

The tryouts were held back in September of 2014, with the finalists named in late November. WCJC Choir members earning a spot on the 2015 National Honor Choir include the following:

- Tabitha Cook of El Campo
- Bryan Kelly of Richmond
- Roddrinskee Johnson of Houston
- Adrean Weaver of Bay City
- Lindsey Reeves of Wharton
- Melody Jenkins of East Bernard
- Lindsey Phillips of Palacios
- Keny Melendez of Houston (alternate)

Singers recorded songs and sent them in for the selection process. Vandewalker said his students practiced at home and did rehearsals after their regular classes. Three takes were allowed, with the best one sent in for the audition.

Vandewalker said it is rare for so many singers from one group to make the National Honor Choir. He believes it is a testament to his students’ talents as well as to their training – and that includes the foundation that was set prior to their arrival at WCJC.

“The students are so dedicated and they are always more than willing to put in the necessary time,” he said. “And I have to share some of the glory with the region’s public school music teachers because they are sending us well-prepared vocalists.”

The students won't get to rest on their laurels for long. Over the next two months they'll have to sharpen their chops and learn new songs in preparation for the choir's upcoming performances, which will be part of the American Choral Directors Association's Bi-Annual National Convention. The convention is scheduled for Feb. 25-28 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Honor Choir will perform three times during the convention. During one performance, they'll share the stage with the world-renowned Mormon Tabernacle Choir. They'll also have the chance to present an original piece of music composed for the event.

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