

AllSTATE draws South Carolina's brightest musicians

By Amanda Thompson, SCBC Communications

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(Tom Eggleston was the consultant for this event.)



The AllState Celebration Orchestra and Chorus performed at Martha Franks.

The 2007 Baptist AllSTATE Celebration Orchestra and Chorus held rehearsals, classes and performances Jan. 5-7 at White Oak Conference Center, as some of the best young musicians in the state gathered to hone their skills.

Youth in grades 9-12 in South Carolina Baptist churches are eligible to audition for the weekend event. Several performance pieces are selected for students to learn before attending the weekend. The combined chorus and orchestra then rehearse together prior to performances around the state at Martha Franks Baptist Retirement Community, New Heights Baptist Church, and St. Andrews Baptist Church.

The weekend is a time for students to not only delve deeper into their music, but also in their relationship with God.

“The biggest thing I learned at AllSTATE is that worshipping God is not a performance, but rather a time to give God your all and allow him to work through you,” said Jordan Kelley, a 10th grade student from Riverland Hills Baptist Church, Irmo.

The Baptist AllSTATE chorus was lead by Clark Sorrells, minister of music at First Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C. The orchestra was directed by Allen Hendricks, associate professor at Charleston Southern University.

“Mr. Sorrells shared his views about faith and how our music is an offering to God, not just a performance. That really meant a lot,” commented Whitney Templeton, an 11th grader from First Baptist Church, York.

Former AllSTATE students also echo the impact on individual lives and ministries.

“As a past member of Baptist AllSTATE, I am encouraged to see a large group of students stand before a crowd and sing and play in unison from their heart that the Lord will take “their heart and seal it for His courts above,” said Michael Sapp, associate pastor to students at First Baptist Church, Dillon.

Leanna Coyle of Chesterfield Baptist Church, a returning AllSTATE choral student, summed up her experience.

“The biggest thing I am reminded of every year is for whom I’m singing,” she said. “God is so much a part of AllSTATE. He is the reason behind all our practice and achievement . . . I believe God uses music to bring us closer to him and closer to one another.”