

ISU choir offers children a chance to shine

Written by Kristen Bahler, Daily Vidette Staff Writer
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As far as choir directors go, a person would be hard-pressed to find one that loves her job as much as Melissa Miller.

A former ISU student, Miller's weakness for everything music is more than apparent. Her face lights up at the mention of rounds and sheet music. Her adoration for the children she teaches is evident, which is the reason Miller has decided to direct an ISU children's choir beginning Sept. 11.

The ISU Singing Redbirds Children's Choir, (which is open to all children 9-12 years old and in fourth-grade through sixth-grade) will have its first practice from 6 to 7:15 p.m on the third floor of Cook Hall.

"It's really important for kids to learn how to sing instead of watching TV or listening to the radio and trying to mimic that, because they can do a lot of damage in a short amount of time," Miller said. "Like anything, it's a lot easier to make good habits than to erase bad habits."

Miller said children are her favorite age group.

"From my experience it is impossible to work with kids in this range and have a bad day. Even if they are, ... they are willing to just let it go. The older we get, we sometimes aren't as able to do that," Miller said. "There's just something about that excitement and love that they bring to it, and it's very contagious."

The school of music has been working very hard to give children an opportunity to sing in a welcoming, helpful environment, as there is currently no children's choir in town.

"In Bloomington-Normal there seems to be a need for this. From what we've researched . outside of churches and schools there's not really a children's community choir," Miller said.

Karyl Carlson, the director of choral activity at ISU, agrees that there is definitely a need in the community for this type of program.

"A quality music education can really impact [children's] lives," she said.

According to Carlson, the children's choir will be performing with many ISU vocal groups, including the Civic Chorale.

"The neat thing about this concert is that people in choir that are 70 years old will be singing next to nine-year-olds," Carlson said.

The music department is hoping around 35 students make it to the Sept. 11 rehearsal.

"It's a healthy environment for someone who likes to sing," said Miller, who added that the children will not only be singing, but will get to learn basic instruments (such as xylophones and shakers), dance and even play games.