

# Celebrating Boys

The Pitch

Volume 32, Issue 5, 15 February 2005

There has been much educational research on the neurological and social differences between boys and girls, and on how best to work with each. On the evening of January 27th, the Calgary Boys' Choir – Intermediate, Touring and Alumni Choirs – sang at the start of a Calgary Regional Consortium conference about teaching and mentoring boys.

We had been asked by conference organizer, who felt that our choral presentation was the ideal way to begin – with talented boys excelling at something that is all-too-often considered non-masculine. The boys sang beautifully and also contributed strongly to the ensuing open discussion with keynote speaker, Barry MacDonald, of Vancouver.

MacDonald interviewed the boys about why they enjoyed singing, about whether they were ever teased by schoolmates about their involvement in the choir, and moved on to ask the boys about how schooling might be improved. Having read-up a little on these issues, I can tell you that he had excellent input - direct from the source - and I am sure it was strong raw material for the weekend's conference.

MacDonald later stated: "The Calgary Boys Choir helped to set just the right tone for the conference... that boys are capable of being reasonable and sensitive with appropriate support. The combination of the singing and everyone's comments

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worked together to convey how parents, teachers, choir directors can counteract the boy code and help boys to achieve. It is clear that you, the choir master, have a wonderful manner with them. Thank you for all your efforts to help kick off our conference!”

Garry Jones, a conference organizer, added: “The boys' conference was a smash! We had a large group, more than were expected, and they loved Barry's talks. The breakout groups seemed to work well and Calgary Boys' Choir were amazing!”