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JUNE & JULY 2021

PERFORMING RELIGIOUS MUSIC OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

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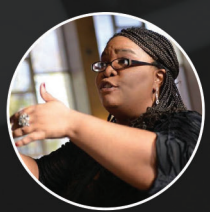

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HALLELUJAH, AMEN!

A section focused on Music in Worship

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ADVOCACY STATEMENT

The human spirit is elevated to a broader understanding of itself and its place in the world through the study of and participation in choral music. Singing in a choir produces more active and involved citizens. It affects self-worth in youth and adults. It builds connectivity throughout communities. Society benefits from the aesthetic beauty and community of singers created by choral programs within schools, houses of worship, and community organizations through involved citizenry, connectivity throughout communities, and feelings of personal self-worth. The American Choral Directors Association and its membership resolve to ensure the survival of choral programs for this and future generations by:

Actively voicing support for funding at local, state, and national levels of education and government; collaborating with local and national organizations to ensure the distribution of arts funding data and arts-related activism opportunities; advocating for full access to choral singing and inclusion of all singers in a choral program; and ensuring the distribution of advocacy statements and data regarding choral programs.

From the INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hilary Apfelstadt

Our choral culture is undergoing enormous change. Since the pandemic shut-down began in earnest in the U.S. in March 2020, we have adapted our work in multiple ways, learning to teach online, producing virtual choir offerings, adapting our space to accommodate CDC and other research-based guidelines about physical distancing, wearing masks, rehearsing in shorter segments, ventilating and sanitizing spaces. Depending on where you live, the rules vary, so some people have been face-to-face for most of the year, whereas others have not. Many churches have shifted to virtual worship, or held outdoor gatherings, and their choirs have not been in session for over a year. They may have continued to connect on Zoom, however, and music worship leaders have been challenged to find ways to adapt musical offerings to fit new paradigms.

At our recent ACDA virtual conference, we saw the results of people's ingenuity and creativity in their performance videos. Not only was the singing stellar, but the videos were inspiring with breathtaking scenery, shots of the groups taken in their hometowns, schools, or places of worship, and sometimes with vignettes of speakers overlapping the background. I was especially moved by the latter in the GALA choruses' combined piece that ended their concert. Watching the concerts was inspiring, uplifting, and encouraging, and the positive comments flooding the chat showed that we were drawn together in a community of choral rejuvenation.

Not only has the pandemic affected our choral culture, but other events in society have also had a profound impact. Racial tensions came to a head with the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis last May, giving rise to civil unrest, and among other things, considerable soul-searching extending to our profession. For centuries, music has been a balm to generations; it has been a healing force; it has created community. At the same time, by not embracing music by people of color or by women or from cultures different from our own where each of us is comfortable with the familiar, we have narrowed our experiences. Beginning last spring, we had many opportunities to attend meetings and webinars, not only about dealing with the pandemic, but also about broadening our view of repertoire and how to engage in it with the musicians we affect. As state ACDA chapters went online with summer events, they incorporated sessions on accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion. They offered workshops with fine choral musicians exploring music by BIPOC composers, for example, and we had several similar interest sessions at the national virtual conference in March. There are multiple states across the country with committees working on diversity issues, and our national Diversity Initiatives Committee is very active. As I write, their Facebook page has over 2500 members.

The awakening to music by underrepresented composers is not meant to result in rejection of the choral canon many of us grew up with, and we need not "throw the baby out with the bath water." Carefully crafted programs indicated that our conference conductors were very intentional about their repertoire selection, often balancing style and genres. And the singing was glorious!

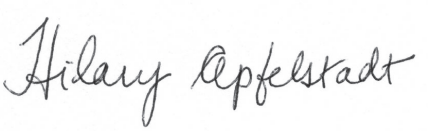
By "drawing the circle wider," as one of my clergy friends says, we involve musicians in a broader community than we might have done previously. Some choral musicians have been thinking this way for many years, and others of us are looking through a new lens.

One concern I have heard recently is that this changing choral culture requires that we re-define excellence. Having given that a lot of thought, I disagree. ACDA's mission is "to inspire excellence and inspire lifelong involvement in choral music for everyone through education, performance, composition and advocacy." Our vision is "to create powerful artistic experiences and be advocates for cultural and educational change that we might transform people's lives." Who among us has not been transformed by choral music? That is at the heart of why we do what we do. Excellence and perfection are two different things: while we may strive for perfection, we know it is unattainable, but excellence is within reach.

Here is one possible model that might apply to choral ensembles working from scores, as opposed to improvising: excellence comprises accuracy and artistry. That foundation of accuracy (e.g., knowing the rhythm and pitch and additional musical elements, navigating technical challenges, doing justice to the composer's score) serves to underpin artistry (e.g., musicality, expressivity, delivery of text meaning, stylistic appropriateness). It is challenging to imagine a highly artistic performance that is filled with inaccuracies such as wrong notes or rhythms, poor intonation, and so forth. We build the solid foundation of accuracy and embed it with artistry. Many of us educated in a western art music context grew up with those components of excellence drilled into us.

To position that excellence model of accuracy and artistry—two A's—in the current choral climate, what if we add another A—advocacy—as we did in our vision for ACDA? For whom do we advocate and how do we do that? Our Advocacy Statement, recently updated by our Standing Committee on Advocacy and Collaboration, gives us a framework. Find it in every *Choral Journal* and on the website. Excellence then comprises accuracy, artistry, and advocacy. Our goal is to provide opportunities for everyone to sing and to experience a wide range of repertoire, and to show that music can bring people together in community and be used as a vehicle not only for artistic expression but also to support social justice issues.

For some types of ensembles, that third A is the primary reason for existence; their members are there to sing their way to the end of someone's life (e.g., a hospice choir), or to use singing as a way of enhancing self-worth and expression (e.g., prison choirs or homeless choirs), or to raise money for various causes. Yet those same groups can experience accuracy and artistry, expressing themselves through singing. Excellence does not need re-definition; it simply needs to "draw the circle wider."



THE PURPOSES OF ACDA

- To foster and promote choral singing, which will provide artistic, cultural, and spiritual experiences for the participants.
- To foster and promote the finest types of choral music to make these experiences possible.
- To foster and encourage rehearsal procedures conducive to attaining the highest possible level of musicianship and artistic performance.
- To foster and promote the organization and development of choral groups of all types in schools and colleges.
- To foster and promote the development of choral music in the church and synagogue.
- To foster and promote the organization and development of choral societies in cities and communities.
- To foster and promote the understanding of choral music as an important medium of contemporary artistic expression.
- To foster and promote significant research in the field of choral music.
- To foster and encourage choral composition of superior quality.
- To cooperate with all organizations dedicated to the development of musical culture in America.
- To foster and promote international exchange programs involving performing groups, conductors, and composers.
- To disseminate professional news and information about choral music.
- To foster and promote choral singing in the pursuit of peace and justice that enhances social and emotional well-being.
- To foster and promote diversity and inclusivity through active engagement with underrepresented choral musicians and potential choral participants.

—ACDA Constitution and Bylaws

From the PRESIDENT

Lynne Gackle

As I write this article, it is difficult for me to believe that I began writing my thoughts to you, the ACDA membership, in June of 2019. In looking back over this period of time, I realize that so much has transpired. During this time, ACDA has sponsored two wonderfully successful National Conferences—one in person in Kansas City, celebrating Community and Legacy; and one held virtually, which celebrated Diversity in Music in all its many forms. There were also six hugely successful Regional Conferences hosted in a year that would prove to be unlike anything that we have seen in the past 100 years.

Our world could not have changed more over the past eighteen months. We have collectively felt the gripping fear as we watched choral music become maligned and viewed as a "threat." This human activity that has traditionally brought people together in unity to share in times of celebration, pain, sorry, joy, worship, and community very quickly became something dangerous to our very existence and, consequently, was taken from us, almost in an instant. Our hearts broke as we realized that there would be no singing—for how long, we didn't know. For many of us, our world became one that was silenced and isolated on many fronts. Our profession was threatened, yes, but as the months wore on, our minds and our inner beings began to face a sadness that seemed endless.

However, as stated in the introduction of the ACDA COVID-19 Response Report, "Choral directors are resilient, resourceful and exemplary leaders… we were asked to make enormous adaptations to our instruction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In many cases, we were asked to do so with as little as one week of preparation. Directors passionate about their students/parishioners/community worked tirelessly to serve their singers and to keep them engaged with the choral art." The conclusion of the document states the hope that "we will emerge stronger…as a profession with a new commitment to self-study and growth."

I believe that we have emerged stronger as a profession and our minds are open to new possibilities as never before! As people, we rediscovered the importance of showing grace to each other and to ourselves, and we have supported each other as we faced our individual challenges. It was inspiring to see this support evidenced through groups such as ChorAmor and others, as they reached out to hundreds of conductors and choral musicians to help train, encourage, and support each other through technology. Informational webinars still abound, and each of us has been forced to think more "outside of the box." In doing so, that which was TRULY important became very clear, and that which we THOUGHT was important was found to be not so important after all. Our priorities changed and greater clarity of purpose began to take shape.

As the country faced the crisis of pandemic, we also experienced social tension and turmoil. As a result, we have begun to be more reflective, more aware, and more committed as a profession to the importance of making the

choral art accessible and more inclusive for all. As an organization, we have added new purposes to our mission, which encourage us to foster and promote peace, justice, diversity, inclusivity, and enhance social and emotional well-being through choral music.

We have been through much, both personally and professionally, during these months. I think that most of us can attest to the fact that we experience the greatest growth in our lives as we reflect, adapt, and make positive change during times of greatest challenge and, often, discomfort. We, as an organization and as a people, have come through the darkness, and now, rays of light and hope shine in countless directions around us, pointing us to new possibilities and a bright future.

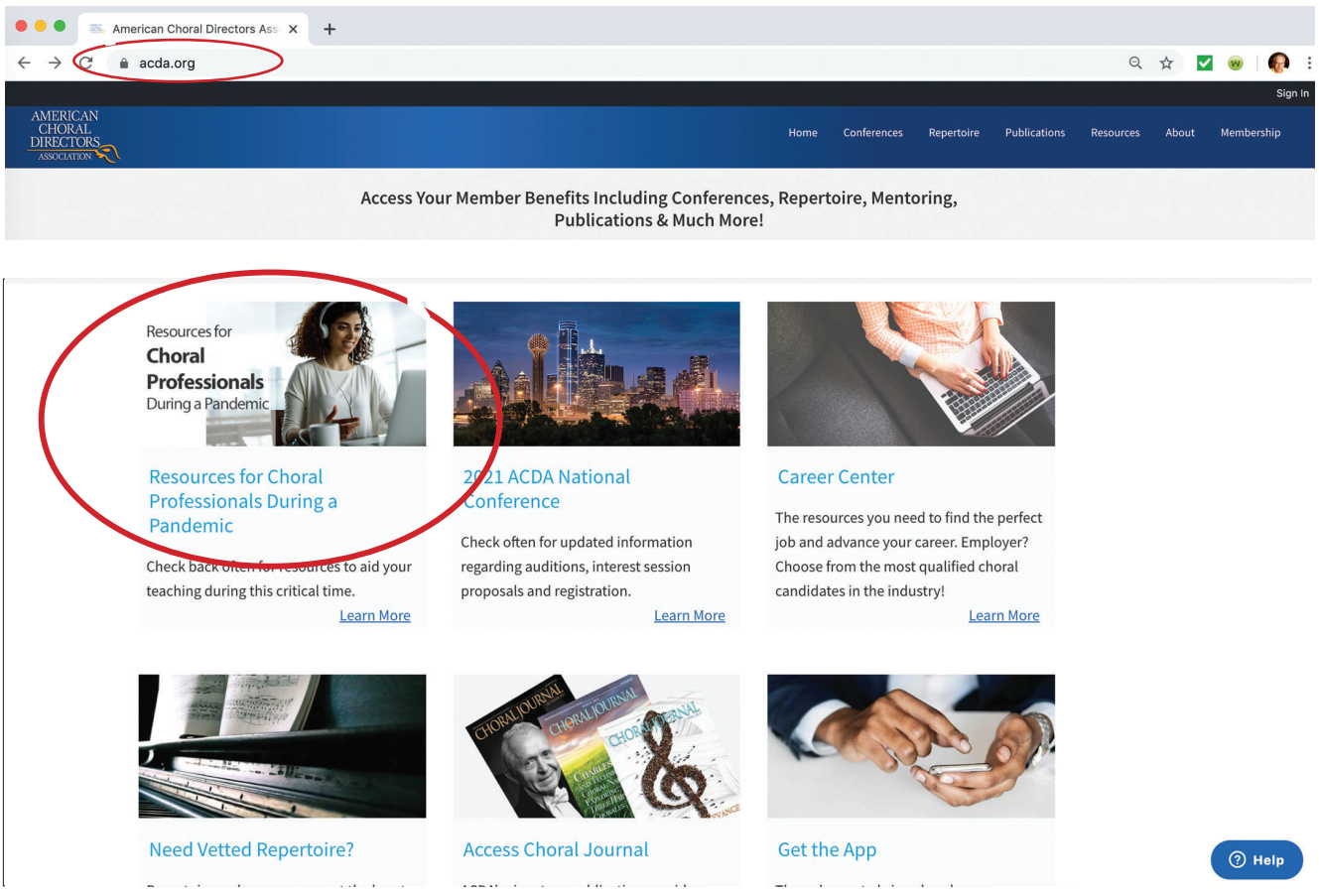
It has been my great honor and privilege to serve as National President during this most unique time. I appreciate your support, your encouragement, and all that you do each day to change lives, one by one, through sharing the gift of singing with those who are placed in your life.

Lynne Gackle

CHORAL RESOURCES FOR THESE TIMES

ACDA is hosting a webpage that is updated daily containing resources that are particularly useful for choral professionals:

Resources for Choral Professionals During the Pandemic.



From the EDITOR

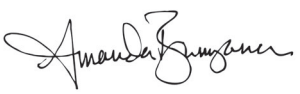
Amanda Bumgarner

This June/July summer issue of the *Choral Journal* completes Volume 61. The past year was challenging for everyone for so many different reasons, but I did not anticipate how much the pandemic would impact our editorial calendar. I am so encouraged and inspired by the creativity and passion shown over the last year, and I was honored to be able to share some of that through the pages of *Choral Journal, ChorTeach* (ACDA's teaching publication, online quarterly), and the *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing* (ACDA's scholarly research journal, online).

In Volume 61 we were able to include a focus issue from two of ACDA's standing committees: Education and Communication (September 2020; Jamila McWhirter, guest editor); and International Activities (May 2021; T. J. Harper, guest editor). We are hoping to include two more focus issues from Standing Committees in the 2021-2022 volume year.

January and March 2021 were issues related to ACDA's National Conference, a first this year as a virtual event. The conference's theme celebrated diversity in music. My job as Publications Editor is to serve ACDA's wide and diverse membership base through the pages of our publications. Everyone has something they care passionately about. Everyone has more they can learn about the choral art and, I believe, everyone has something they can teach others. It is my hope that you can find at least one article in every issue that interests or inspires you, but if you feel that a topic is underrepresented or missing, write it or ask someone to write it. Our submission guidelines are online at https://acda.org/publications/choral-journal/submission-guidelines/.

Though we cannot immediately implement all desired topics due to the nature of our press schedule, page count, and the vast interests of our thousands of members, we are always open to feedback and suggestions. My email is abumgarner@acda.org if you have questions, comments, concerns, or positive feedback to share about how an article inspired you in your daily work. We have internally been discussing how we can better serve our membership through our publications. One goal is to expand our practical teaching publication, *ChorTeach*, in 2022, so watch for more details in the coming months.



Editor's Correction: The April 2021 issue included a review of Joan Szymko's piece *Arise My Love* (p. 83). The reviewer states, "The tune is *At the River*, a traditional hymn tune." One line of lyrics was adapted from the hymn tune. All of the melodic material is original.

Theory of Choir
(Why Choir is Essential)

It's the breathing,
we go deep to push notes upward.
The diaphragm does its proper job,
restoring balance after we limp in for rehearsal
beaten down by the shallow breathing
of rushing from one thing to the next.
We focus on music, this night,
the ebb and flow of dynamics, text,
breathing, and more breathing,
where nothing else could possibly
clutter our heads except
the lissom line of black notes
running up and down the page,
and words catching us off our guard
as we press the two together
turning both into music.
Singing transposes us from
demanding bosses,
final exams, ridiculous deadlines,
that nagging pain in the curve of the back,
We are made whole again in music.
We seek the rhythm of our hearts,
find harmony in the sum of our parts,
We chant our stories one note upon another
and another, we blend as one,
a collective "everyone"
sitting side by side, row upon row.
Like bricks on a path, carefully laid down
one next to the other, one journey of sound
one interlocking message, as we crescendo upward,
assembled at the seam of Here and the Hereafter,
our scores held firmly to our chests.

Annette Langlois Grunseth,
Green Bay, WI

PERFORMING RELIGIOUS MUSIC OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

M. Roger Holland II

M. Roger Holland II
Teaching Assistant Professor, Director, The Spirituals Project
Lamont School of Music, University of Denver

The fervor of sensitivity and attention to issues of justice and equity concerning the Black community may have subsided somewhat since the summer of 2020, but the importance of these conversations and the issues themselves have become no less crucial, important, or relevant. Racial injustice for the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) community still exists. Inequity at the workplace, institutions of higher learning, and within the realm of professional music still occurs. Many of my colleagues in the choral field are concerned about how they might be perceived if they perform music of the African American experience, wanting to "get it right" and not be viewed as appropriating music from another culture in this age of political correctness and a sensitivity to Black culture. It is within this context that this article will address questions and concerns of the appropriation of Black music primarily by white performing ensembles.

To be clear, when I speak of African American sacred or religious music, I speak of those musical forms created by African Americans and not those of other origin that have been adopted or adapted by the Black Church. This includes Euro-American hymns, anthems, and CCM music. While Christian Rap/Hip-Hop was birthed by African Americans, this and the previously mentioned forms fall outside the scope and purpose of this article. I shall confine myself to the two primary sacred artforms that have their origins in the African American community and are the source of most of American music, sacred and secular.

PERFORMING RELIGIOUS MUSIC OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

The Negro Spiritual

If we are to fully understand African American religious music, we must trace its roots and beginnings to Black people on these shores. When I refer to Black Americans or Black music in this article, I refer to those Americans of African ancestry who are the descendants of chattel slavery in America and the music they birthed. Sister Thea Bowman states, "In the crucible of separation and suffering, African American sacred song was formed."[1] Of all the slave songs this community created, it is the religious folk music of the enslaved African that would first become known as "sorrow songs" and, eventually, "spirituals." These religious folks songs—these "Negro Spirituals"—would not have emerged without the convergence of three factors: African culture or idioms, Christianity, and slavery.

The influence of African culture is seen in the ways the enslaved created music and found new ways to create community once reaching these shores. The oral tradition—a means by which history and culture is maintained though the telling of stories and the singing of songs orally—is one of the many African retentions that survived the Middle Passage. The primacy of community, antiphony (call-and-response), improvisation, and the centricity of rhythm are other retentions that remained part of the cultural expression of what Wyatt Tee Walker terms "New World Africans."[2] Evidence of these African retentions is found in the music, in the call-and-response of the verses of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," and in the import of community of "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder."

Missionaries who believed that Africans were heathens and savages in need of salvation exposed them to the Christian religion and, consequently, to stories of the Bible, both Old and New Testament, as well as Protestant Christian hymns. The stories of Joshua, Daniel, Samson, and Jesus found their way into the religious folk songs of the slaves. Perhaps the most influential and impactful story of all was the Exodus of the Hebrews and the figure of Moses. The enslaved Africans heard of a God that was concerned about the plight of slaves and liberated them from their bondage. Surely, such a God that delivered the Hebrew slaves could and would deliver them. Harriet Tubman, arguably the most well-known conductor of the Underground Railroad, was given the moniker of "Moses," because, like the biblical figure, she led her people out of bondage into freedom.

Finally, the songs of the slave community gave voice to their social condition and their preeminent desire to be free. James Cone says that the spirituals are historical documents, giving testimony to the suffering the enslaved African experienced at the hand of their slave masters (oppressors).[3] What the slaves could not say explicitly was communicated implicitly through song and allowed them to comment on their social condition. The lyrics not only served as coded messages to "those in the know," but they also gave voice to the aching spirits of the oppressed. "I'm gonna tell God how you treat me" and "I'm troubled in mind" articulated the suffering of the oppressed. Coded lyrics such as "Everybody talkin' 'bout heaven ain't going" called out the hypocrisy of the so-called "Christian" slave masters.

While "Steal away to Jesus… I ain't got long to stay here" literally meant one was bound for heaven, it also could signal a secret meeting or a cue for escape. Many associated this spiritual with Nat Turner, famous for the rebellion he led in Southampton County, Virginia, in 1831. When the slaves sang "I got a robe," or "a crown up in-a the kingdom," this was "good news" for several reasons. It meant that in the kingdom of heaven they would be welcome. It meant that God had prepared a place for them. Their humanity would be affirmed after being ignored on earth by their oppressors. And not only affirmed, but valued, as evinced by the trappings of royalty (a crown, a royal robe). When performing this music, one must take into account these factors and never forget their overwhelming grounding in the suffering of the enslaved community. If suffering does not factor into a performance or rendering of this music, it has missed the mark.

Gospel Music

As the Negro Spirituals are music of the antebellum south and reflect the social condition of slavery in which Blacks found themselves, so, too, does Black gospel music reflect the post-civil war social condition of African Americans in urban settings, emerging during the Great Depression. Ethnomusicologist Mellonee V. Burnim

defines Black gospel music as "the twentieth-century form of African American religious music that evolved in urban cities following the Great Migration of Blacks from the agrarian South in the period surrounding World Wars I and II."[4] The religious folk songs of slavery were sung in fields, cabins, and the hush harbors of the invisible church. This new religious music (that would later be called "gospel" music) evolved from the spiritual and the blackenized Euro-American "hymns of improvisation," developing in urban centers such as Chicago and Detroit.

Walker describes this music as "Euro-American hymns whose message of hope and inspiration spoke to Black Christians and whose original musical and poetic forms lent themselves to Black 'improvisation.'"[5] "It is these "Euro-American hymns" that were adapted by the Black religious community by injecting Black cultural idioms such as changing the original, written rhythms, use of syncopation, melodic embellishments, harmonic substitutions, tempo adjustments (either faster or slower), and even the interjection of vocal affirmations such as "yes" and "oh." In the case of the hymn "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior" with text by Fanny J. Crosby (1820-1915), the prompting line (or call by a leader) of "I'm crying/I'm calling" appears before the refrain.

One cannot ignore the influence of the blues. Thomas A. Dorsey (1899-1993), a blues musician whom many acknowledge as the "Father of Gospel Music," ushered in a new era of Black sacred song that was a melding of the blues with religious hymns that resulted in this emergent sound. Dorsey's impact on this new genre was so great that early on, all gospel songs were referred to as "Dorsey songs."

During the period of the Great Depression, Black people were economically affected disproportionately to whites. Thomas Dorsey famously said that this music should be called gospel, which means "good news." There certainly was a need for "good news" in the Black community at the time. Indeed, the subtitle of writer Anthony Helibut's book *The Gospel Sound* is "good news and bad times." Walker in his book *Somebody's Calling My Name* states, "A survey of the musical content of the Black religious experience can serve as an accurate commentary of what was happening to the Black community and its response to those conditions. Simply put, what Black people are singing religiously will provide a clue as to what is happening to them sociologically."[6] When Black gospel music emerged in the first part of the twentieth century, Blacks were faced with several challenges, both sociological and economic. It is no wonder that songs like "The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow" by Dorsey and "Trouble In My Way (Jesus Will Fix It)" by Clifton Jones resonate with the struggles of the Black community.

Musically, one must recognize the evolution of gospel music as having its roots in the spirituals tradition and hymnody, and later influenced by the blues. The music grew out of African and African American traditions of call-and-response, adaptation, improvisation, and communal engagement. As Walker points out, as early as the music of Negro Spirituals, Black sacred song comments on the social condition of the Black community. Even today, gospel music largely reflects the socioeconomic state of the Black community, as evinced by Grammy Award-winning artist Kirk Franklin's 2016 hit "Wanna Be Happy?" While the song may be targeted primarily toward a secular audience, one cannot and should not ignore the themes of frustration, disappointment, and hopelessness present in the lyrical content that the religious audience contend with as well.

Gospel music, too, serves to praise and honor God. Scriptural text is foundational to good gospel music, and entreats God to save, heal, comfort, deliver, and conquer that which oppresses and suppresses God's people. While this is certainly true, from its inception, a universal theme that Black gospel music conveys is hope: hope in the midst of despair, as the Black community wrestles with financial, social, political, and health challenges in the midst of a society that disenfranchises and oppresses us perpetually. As did the Negro Spiritual before it, Black gospel music serves to encourage a community that faces daily struggles, and from the music, the people gain strength and inspiration to face another day. To understand Black gospel music, one must never overlook its cultural origins or its sociohistoric placement as music for those in need of hope in a time of great despair.

Performance Practice for Concert Spirituals and Black Gospel Music

It is perhaps Zora Neale Hurston who first definitively made a distinction between what she terms the "real," "true," or "genuine" spiritual and the "neo-spiritual."[7] The neo-spiritual is the arranged or concert iteration of spirituals; compositions that individuals have set for glee clubs or concert artists of formal, classical training. The first of these "glee clubs" was the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who toured nationally and internationally to raise money for their school. Initially, the young students, some of whom were former slaves, were reluctant to sing the songs of their ancestors in public. In truth, never before had these songs been sung for an audience, but only for the enslaved community, and at times, in the presence of the slave masters. Later, concert artists such as Marion Anderson, Paul Robeson, Roland Hayes, and many others began including arrangements of spirituals on their solo recitals. Many composers such as H.T. Burleigh, Hall Johnson, William Dawson, Evelyn La Rue Pittman, Margaret Bonds, and John W. Work began arranging these religious folk tunes for choral groups in the manner of the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

These arrangements, patterned after Western European composition, were more formal in their setting, and every rendering would undoubtedly be the same, adhering to the notes in the score. However, according to Hurston, a genuine Negro Spiritual is not intended for solo, quartet, or choral presentation.

> The jagged harmony is what makes it, and it ceases to be what it was when this is absent. Neither can any group be trained to reproduce it. Its truth dies under training like flowers under hot water. The harmony of the true spiritual is not regular. The dissonances are important and not to be ironed out by the trained musician. The various parts break in at any old time. Falsetto often takes the place of regular voices for short periods. Keys change. Moreover, each singing of the piece is a new creation. The congregation is bound by no rules. No two singings are alike, so that we must consider the rendition of a song not as a final thing, but as a mood. It won't be the same thing next Sunday.[8]

What Hurston describes is the freedom experienced in community. It lends itself to the authentic African practice of improvisation as integral to the oral tradition. Though Hurston states that she finds value in the arranged spiritual as "good and beautiful," she is clear that these compositions that she deems "neo-spirituals" are not *the* spirituals.[9] Therefore, when performing the concert or arranged spiritual, the music should be approached as one would a formal composition, in the same manner as other music written in the western classical style. In most cases, the composers who set these Negro folk melodies were trained in the style of western, classical music. Their arrangements reflect that training and should be regarded as such.

Gospel music encourages improvisation by both singer and pianist (or other accompanying instruments). In fact, it is expected. The concert spiritual, however, is a different matter. The arranger of the concert spiritual expects that his/her music will be performed as written, in the same way other composers of the Western tradition would expect. André Thomas in his book *Way Over in Beulah Lan'* states, "Some conductors will impose rhythm and blues, gospel, and jazz techniques on all performances of spirituals in an effort to create a 'black' sound… All of this may be full of good intention; the result, however, is often an experience fraught with stylistic abuse and, ultimately, a mockery of the intentions of the arranger."[10]

The performing of Negro Spirituals may be met with all manner of trepidation that includes fear of appropriation and blackface caricature. I encourage my colleagues in the field of choral conducting to approach this music with the same care you do music of the Western tradition; research the history, culture, and style of the music and seek to render a musically authentic performance that honors the intent of the composer (arranger). But please, do not "gospelize" concert/arranged spirituals unless the arranger has so indicated in the score. Two examples of gospel arrangements of the spirituals are "Guide My Feet" arranged by Avis D. Graves, and "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder" arranged by Horace Clarence Boyer. Both are published by GIA Publications, Inc. Boyer's arrangement explicitly states in the score, "Gospel arrangement." While Graves's arrangement does not explicitly state it is a

gospel arrangement, if one is familiar with the gospel idiom, this becomes apparent within the first few measures, especially if one listens to the recording GIA also makes available.

There is a universality to the spirituals that makes their message and appeal relatable to those outside of the African American community. Some of the themes that are present in the spirituals that are not unique or particular to the Black community are hope, joy, sorrow, mistreatment, disappointment, and affirmation of the humanity of a person. One of the first times a non-Black audience heard the music of enslaved Africans was when the Fisk Jubilee Singers of Nashville, Tennessee, sang the music of their ancestors in the presence of a gathering in Oberlin, Ohio. While at a religious conference in Oberlin, during a pause in the program, the young people from Fisk University began to sing the slave songs. Perhaps they wanted to forget the painful history of slavery, or maybe because this music had previously only been sung in community and never for an audience, there was reluctance on the part of the singers to sing this music aloud for others. Well, the response was undeniable. In his book *Wade in the Water: The Wisdom of the Spirituals,* Arthur C. Jones describes the incident this way:

> History had now been made. The singers, encouraged by the positive audience response, sang on and on, one spiritual after another. Contrary to their apprehensions, there was no sign of ridicule. The extraordinary power of music, much of which had not been heard before in a public arena, appeared to counteract the prevailing negative racial atmosphere. Momentarily forgetting that these were African American singers, many of the listeners cried, obviously touched by the music. Although created by African Americans in slavery for exclusive use within the African community, these songs nonetheless touched something deep in the psyches of this predominantly non-African audience, providing one of the first affirmations of the archetypal and transforming power of the spirituals outside of the context of slavery.[11]

Not only does this music have a universal appeal, but the archetypal and transforming power of the spirituals is not restricted to performance by African Americans. Jones asserts that it is possible for this transformative power to be conveyed by those outside of the Black community. He recounts an instance where a non-Black choir accompanies opera singer Jessye Norman in a recording of this music.

> In an interesting kind of irony, African American conductor Willis Patterson is directing the Ambrosian Singers [of London] to sing background choral accompaniments for Norman. In the process Patterson has shown that indeed this music can be performed effectively by singers outside of the African diaspora. In his unique demonstration Patterson has also affirmed the accessible, archetypal core of the spirituals, which have the ability to speak to broad human issues far afield from the specific context of African American slavery.[12]

What I will add to this statement is that one must study this music and convey to the performer the many attributes necessary to sing the spirituals authentically, even when singing concert/arranged spirituals. No matter the subject matter of the music, whatever the apparent mood of the piece, spirituals are grounded in the pain and suffering of an enslaved people. Spirituals are rhythmic, rooted in the functionality of the drum, central to African culture. Wendell Whalum states, "The rhythm is most important, and that according to research of John W. Work, 'may be slow and pounding' or 'hard and driving.'"[13] James Cone asserts "The spiritual is the community in rhythm, swinging to the movement of life."[14] There are other considerations such as tone and whether or not to use dialect. I recommend omitting the use of Negro dialect unless one does the necessary research to understand dialect and can perform it effectively without it coming across as minstrelsy. Lastly, the spiritual inevitably conveys the enslaved community's desire for freedom, and in the midst of suffering, an abiding hope and belief that "trouble don't last always."

Black gospel music is a delicate balance of sacred and secular elements. There is a theological grounding in sacred scripture and the acknowledgement of God's sover-

eignty, saving power, and omnipresence. Though held in tension with the profane, from its inception, Black gospel music reflects and is influenced by secular music. The reverse is also true. From its beginnings gospel reflected the qualities of the blues. Later, the music of rock, rhythm and blues, country, jazz, new jack swing, and hip-hop found their way into gospel music. Gospel artist Richard Smallwood has successfully merged classical music with Black gospel, resulting in a hybrid that has become his signature sound, earning him awards and deserved acclaim.

African retentions, those qualities that harken back to African culture, may be found in every aspect of African American music. One such retention that is essential to the performance of Black gospel music is improvisation. Mellonee V. Burnim states, "At the heart of the Black esthetic is the acceptance of and the expectation of individual or personalization of the performance (most commonly referred to as 'improvisation')."[15] She identifies three technical aspects that factor into the execution of improvisation: time, text and pitch. Burnim goes on to say, "These factors form the basis of a unified structural network, subject to constant interpretation and reinterpretation by individual performers."[16] Performers must constantly be in the moment, engaging with these qualitative factors, manipulating them in their performance (in a tasteful way), so as to engage the audience, resulting in a new performance each time of any particular song.

Especially those who are new to the Black gospel aesthetic, I strongly recommend referring to what I call the "aural score" to learn how to interpret this music. Rather than the written, ocular source of information and guide to interpreting music of the western classical tradition, music rooted in the oral tradition requires a different authoritative source from which to glean information. This may be found in the recordings of the music, often made by the composers themselves, or a live performance at a church or concert venue. Herein lies the authoritative source for answers to tempo, phrasing, articulation, chord substitutions, vocal inflections, feeling, and style.

Gospel composers have historically been what some would deem musically illiterate in the ocular tradition of written scores. Some reasons for the inability to read music may be lack of economic resources and the privilege of opportunity for some type of formal study. This should not be taken as a deficiency in musical ability, as many gospel musicians are extremely skilled artists and have spent an incredible amount of time perfecting their craft. Over time, written scores for gospel music have become available, and more and more composers trained in western classical music have begun publishing their compositions. However, for many reasons, even when a written, ocular score is available, I recommend consulting the aural score in tandem with the ocular score to check for inconsistencies between the two. Where the two sources do not agree, you are usually safe to give preference to the aural score, especially when the aural source is rendered by the composer.

Appropriation

Appropriation has been defined as "the action of taking something for one's own use, typically without the owner's permission" and "the artistic practice of reworking images from well-known paintings, photographs, etc. in one's own work."[17] If we substitute "sounds" and "musical aesthetics" for "images" and "songs or other musical works" for "paintings, photographs, etc." we begin to have a clearer picture of what can be called cultural appropriation. James O. Young addresses this difficult topic of cultural appropriation by dissecting the topic into several types of appropriation, framing the discussion as an interrelationship between insiders and outsiders, resulting in what he calls subject appropriation.

> Subject appropriation is controversial precisely because outsiders draw upon their own experiences of other cultures. Since outsiders do not have access to the experiences of insiders, one might argue, outsiders are bound to misrepresent the culture of insiders. Since the works of outsiders distort the insider's culture, they may be thought to have aesthetic flaws. Since artists could misrepresent the culture of others in a harmful or offensive manner, subject appropriation could also be morally objectionable.[18]

This insider-outsider dynamic is a crucial element in understanding subject appropriation and why many

Black people are uncomfortable when those outside the culture, particularly whites, perform music of the African American experience. Historically, there have certainly been times when Black music has been misrepresented by those outside the culture that has resulted in harm and has been offensive.

When we think back to the period of the post-civil war, whites performed music known as pseudo-spirituals, "carry-me-backs," and coon songs. These songs denigrated Blacks, reinforced negative racial stereotypes, and promoted racist values and pro-slavery ideology. Samuel A. Floyd Jr. states that these various types of coon songs:

> portrayed the African American male as a fun-loving dandy, a chicken- or ham-loving glutton, a razor-totin' thief, gambler, or drunkard, or an outrageously unfaithful husband or lover. The [black] female was presented in these illustrations either as a very black, fat, large-lipped mammy or carouser, or as a beautiful light-skinned "Yaller Rose of Texas," showing the white male's ostensible preference for exploiting fairskinned females as well as the African American's indoctrination into the preference for white ideals of beauty. In the late nineteenth century, the advertising of musical products became the primary means of developing, perpetrating, and communicating the negative images of [black] people in American society. The coon song was the vehicle for repeating these messages in American society.[19]

A performance by Sister Rosetta Tharpe in the Cotton Club in 1938 arguably thrust gospel music (and spirituals, to some degree) into the mainstream. Not only did this highly public performance further blur the perceived lines between sacred and secular music, but her performance before a mostly white audience caught the attention of industry professionals, who saw the commercial potential of Black sacred music. The consequent commercialization of Black gospel music became a great concern for the Black church and gospel musicians. Although Thomas A. Dorsey had been working to promote gospel and grow its potential for commercial viability, having white promoters and other industry players involved in Black gospel in many ways usurped complete control of the music from the Black community. The commercialization and commodification of Black gospel was interpreted by the African American community as secularizing Black sacred music, and therefore sacrilegious and disrespectful to the Black community. Leaders in the Black gospel community, still in its infancy, sought to regain control and influence in the gospel industry. Dorsey, founder of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses (NCCGC) established procedures and rules of conduct for gospel singers that affirmed their spirituality and would distinguish their conduct and behavior from gospel singers who were more flamboyant in their dress and performance. His partner, Sallie Martin, issued a statement that rebuked the behavior and conduct of more commercially minded gospel performers:

> Recently the enormous growth of gospel and Evangelistic singing in our churches has been widespread and self-evident. This is due to the enormous popularity and public reception of this type of music… It is sad to note though that even though Evangelistic and gospel singing is based on the highest type of songs conducive to the greatest spiritual values, the recent advent of "Followers after Fishes and Loaves" has reduced the effectiveness of this type of music and has brought down upon it the finger of scorn and derision. Too many of our contemporary Evangelistic or gospel singers are in it "for what they can get out of it or for purely commercial reasons."[20]

Historically, white-owned record companies have cheated Black artists out of royalties, from the time of race records and the blues to rock and roll and rhythm and blues. There have been several instances where white artists have re-recorded the music of Black artists and thus blocked them from receiving their due, financially and otherwise professionally. White artists have mimicked the style of Black performers while neglecting to give the artists credit for their artistry. Rock and roll legend Little Richard has articulated this claim on many occasions, frequently stating that he is the "originator" and architect of rock and roll.

> The dialectic of miscegenation and segregation surrounds the appropriation of black music by whites. Borrowing and mixing are normal aspects of musical development, but in the case of rock 'n' roll, white appropriation of black sound and style was devastating to many of the music's originators. Music producers and promoters recognized that it would be easier to sell white artists to a segregated, majority white nation. At the same time, bias against blacks encouraged and protected the use of unfair business practices that have always been a part of the American recording industry. White and black were mixing at a significant cultural level, but racial hierarchy was still very much in effect. Overall, access and opportunities were better for white performers. Black performers struggled to get a fair chance and were confined to inferior contracts, resources, and opportunities. In the end, with their greater visibility and a growing white fan base, white artists took over rock 'n' roll. From ragtime to swing to rock 'n' roll, this cycle of black innovation and profitable white appropriation has been repeated in American musical history.[21]

The fear of harm, insult, and appropriation of Black culture is well documented, practiced, and prolific. The Black community is understandably wary of whites, in particular, singing our music, resulting in harm and/or injury to us. Does this mean that white choirs should not sing Black music? No. This means that white choirs and their conductors should be cognizant of the history of Black music in America, the historical context in which this music is situated, and the ways this music has been appropriated. Educate yourselves. Learn the history. Do the research. Acknowledge the source community. Perform the music in a sensitive, informed, and respectful manner that is authentic to the Black aesthetic. CJ

NOTES

[1] Sr. Thea Bowman, "The Gift of African American Sacred Song," in *Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal* (Chicago: G.I.A. Publications, Inc., 1987).

[2] Wyatt Tee Walker, *Somebody's Calling My Name: Black Sacred Music and Social Change* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1979), 19.

[3] James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues.* Paperback ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1972), 30.

[4] Mellonee V. Burnim, "Gospel," in *African American Music: An Introduction,* ed. Mellonee Burnim and Portia Maultsby (New York: Routledge, 2006), 189.

[5] Walker, 111.

[6] Ibid., 117.

[7] Zora Neale Hurston, "Spirituals and Neo-Spirituals," in *The Negro in Music and Art,* ed. Lindsay Patterson (New York: Publisher's Company, Inc., 1933), 15.

[8] Hurston, 15-16.

[9] Ibid., 15.

[10] André J. Thomas, *Way Over in Beulah Lan': Understanding and Performing the Negro Spiritual* (Dayton: Heritage Music Press, 2007), 87-88.

[11] Arthur C. Jones, *Wade in the Water: The Wisdom of the Spirituals,* 3rd edition (Boulder: Leave a little Room, 2005), 140-141.

[12] Ibid., 137-138.

[13] Wendell Phillips Whalum, "Black Hymnody." *Review & Expositor* 70, no. 3 (Summer 1973), 353.

[14] Cone, 31.

[15] Burnim, "The Black Gospel Music Tradition: A Complex of Ideology, Aesthetic and Behavior," in *More Than Dancing: Essays on Afro-American Music and Musicians,* ed. Irene V. Jackson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 162.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Miriam Webster Dictionary

[18] James O. Young, *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 9.

[19] Samuel J. Floyd, Jr., *Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 60.

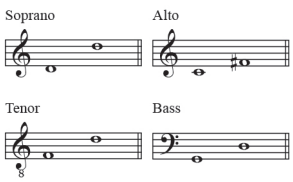
[20] Jerma A. Jackson, *Singing in My Soul: Black Gospel Music in a Secular Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 119; Kenneth Morris, *Improving the Music in the Church* (Martin Morris Music, 1949.

[21] Maureen Mahon, *Right to Rock: The Black Rock Coalition and the Cultural Politics of Race* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 148.

Sacred Music Choral Reviews

Entrance Antiphons for the Easter Season
Text: Roman Missal
Arr. by Maureen Briare
SATB, cantor, organ, congregation, optional handbells
Oregon Catholic Press, OCP 3014664
https://ocp.org

Performance demonstration: https://www.jwpepper.com/11316912E.item#.YFyOm2RKhQN



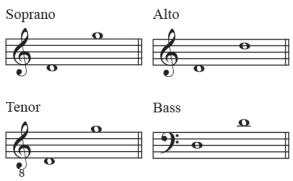
Composer and pastoral musician Maureen Briare has provided a wonderful, well-written worship resource for the weeks of Easter in her *Entrance Antiphons for the Easter Season.* This brief arrangement provides significant flexibility of instrumentation, and with it the ability to vary the presentation of the liturgical material for each Sunday in Easter, Pentecost, and Ascension.

The arrangement is set for cantor and SATB choir, with keyboard accompaniment. Optional handbells supplement the arrangement, while a convenient chord progression with guitar-friendly alternatives for capo use allow for the expansion of the consort.

Utilizing a simple chant on "alleluia" introduced by the cantor, the choir or choir and congregation responds antiphonally utilizing facile harmonies. The *alleluia* response remains the same for all the antiphons, which helps to minimize rehearsal time—a bonus! Over the course of the Easter season, a terraced approach to the musical presentation adds excitement, as well as breeds familiarity within the congregation. Briare's work is succinct, yet she adroitly moves from the minor to the Major in a way that launches the congregation into the opening of worship.

How Firm a Foundation
Tune: FOUNDATION (anon.)
Text: "K." from Rippon's "A Selection of Hymns, 1787)
Arr. by Tom Trenney
SATB, organ, optional congregation
MorningStar Music Publishers, MSM-50-5180
www.ecspublishing.com/how-firm-a-foundation-satb-tom-trenney.html

scrolling performance demonstration: https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/media-player.jsp?&type=video&productID=11316654



Tom Trenney's fantastic arrangement of the beloved hymn *How Firm a Foundation* is set for choir and congregation. What distinguishes this arrangement from a plethora of others is Trenney's lilting organ introduction and interlude, which dances

between each verse, calling to mind the rustic roots of the anonymous tune.

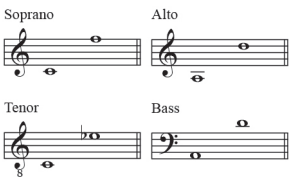
The syncopated and spritely opening strongly ushers in the congregation and choir in unison. The second verse features the altos on the hymn melody with a delicate descant in the sopranos. Trenney continues a similar treatment in the tenors and basses for verse three, though he varies the descant in the tenors to provide contrast. This hymn's lengthy text has a tendency to bog down in many arrangements—not so in this gem, whose brisk tempo and syncopations drive the musical momentum ever forward.

Trenney combines the full chorus in a three-part canon over a pulsing organ obligato, separated by two beats. Choirs may choose an SAB division, or perhaps divide more evenly and include the congregation. The interlude launches out of the final canonic echoes into the last verse, featuring the altos and the basses in unison on the tune with the tenors and sopranos soaring over in energetic descant. He adds excitement on the final measures in the thickened organ accompaniment over simple and celebratory harmony in the upper voices.

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Tune: Coronation by Oliver Holden (1793) and Diadem by James Ellor (1838)
Text by Edward Perronet (1780)
Arr. by Michael Burkhardt
SATB, organ, brass quintet, and timpani
MorningStar Music Publishers, MSM-60-4040
e-address: www.ecspublishing.com/composers/b/michael-burkhardt.html?p=2

scrolling performance demonstration: www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/media-player.jsp?&type=video&productID=11316669



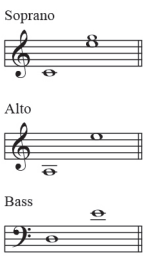
Michael Burkhardt's arrangement of the beloved hymn *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name* effectively combines the two tunes most closely associated with this text. Burkhardt wisely provides the congregation with the more familiar and accessible Diadem to open the arrangement. James Ellor's only known hymn tune perfectly captures the majesty of Perronet's soaring text. Burkhardt alternates each congregational stanza with a choral treatment of Coronation, a rollicking shape-note tune revered by choirs for more than two hundred years for its almost orchestral, Handel-like celebratory refrain on the word "crown."

In the third verse, the *a cappella* congregational texture is punctuated by a sudden brass fanfare, as if the instruments cannot or will not be contained, enthusiastically joining the voices in full-throated harmony. Coronation returns *a cappella* as well on the next stanza in the choir, though the organ joins the famous accented "crown him" figures similarly to the brass on the previous stanza. Burkhardt moves the musical tension forward through each verse with subtle rising modulations and *piu mosso* tempos.

The final verse returns to Diadem and features a soaring soprano descant and full instrumental ensemble to accompany the congregation. This arrangement will complement any festival occasion, but specifically could make Christ the King or Trinity Sunday memorable.

The Lord's my Shepherd
Text: Psalm 23 from the Scottish Psalter (1650)
By Bob Chilcott
SAB, descant, keyboard
Oxford University Press
OUP 9780193365711
e-address:
https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-lords-my-shepherd-9780193365711?cc=us&lang=en&

performance demonstration: https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/media-player.jsp?&type=audio&productID=11315630E



Bob Chilcott's setting of the beautiful Psalm 23 psalter from 1650 is accessible and yet beautifully written. Originally published in Oxford's *Book of Flexible Anthems,* this SAB anthem will be a lasting part of any choir's repertoire. The piece could function as a small trio or quartet ensemble with piano, but could also soar as an organ-accompanied choral work with larger choir appropriate for almost every season of the church year. Its ease is welcome in a time when singers are not always able to be in rehearsal and performing forces are often depleted.

Chilcott's iconic use of pop-inspired suspension harmonies and gentle keyboard accompaniment conservatively paint each verse under a singable *cantabile* melody. The third verse features a rising duet between the SA voices and the baritone, providing contrast to the melodic content, and leading into the final verse, which is distinguished by a beautiful, flowing descant.

The most effective moment is actually at the very end of the piece. Chilcott includes a lovely accompaniment figure in A minor as a coda, that seems to symbolize a flowing stream. It is a subtle and nostalgic touch, that along with Chilcott's facility with voices make this easy anthem a winning addition to the choral library.

Daniel Friderici's *RULES* FOR CHORAL SINGING

Sion M. Honea

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After four centuries, Daniel Friderici's (1584-1638) rules for choral singers and directors still offer valuable advice on a variety of subjects relevant to the choral practice. What makes Friderici's rules exceptional is their practical orientation, breadth of coverage, and relatively succinct formulation. They impart a wealth of information on a wide variety of subjects including aspects of choral training, singing, conducting, performance practice, and music interpretation.

Friderici first published his book, *Musica Figuralis, oder Newe Klärliche Richtige und Verständliche Unterweisung der Singe Kunst,* in 1618.[1] The book saw seven subsequent editions, the last being in 1677; remarkably, this last came almost forty years after Friderici's death in 1638 as the result of an epidemic. In the year of his death, the fifth edition of 1638 appeared, containing what can only be considered the author's "last words" on the subject, which clearly had developed since earlier editions. In fact, the earliest edition available for this article, which is based on the 1638 edition,[2] was the 1619 edition, and there are substantial modifications between the earlier and later edition that concern additions, expansions, clarifications, and reordering. The changes themselves are occasionally almost as interesting as the rules and receive attention here when appropriate.

Virtually nothing is known about Friderici's family and early life except that he came from a very poor family; the articles in neither *Grove Dictionary* nor *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* expand on this. The name would seem to indicate an ultimately Italian origin, and certainly there was migration of musicians both ways between German and Italian lands. In the fifteenth and well into the sixteenth scentury, German wind players had dominated in Italian cities, but in the later sixteenth century the direction of migration began to reverse,[3] making it at least possible that Friderici was from a poor family of Italian musicians, but this is not known.

Martin Ruhnke begins his biographical article on Friderici with a startling, indeed shocking, piece of information.[4] He informs us that Friderici while still a young boy left his home in the small village of Klein Eichstedt to earn his living in the town of Querfurt as a *Kurrende* singer and later became a member of the *chorus symphoniacus.* The *Kurrende* was a band of indigent beggar boys loosely associated with a school and church who were often officially licensed by towns to sing and beg in the street in order to survive. Klaus Niemöller rejects the conventional etymology of the word from Latin *currere,* to run, and argues for *corradere,* "to scrape together," or those who scrape together a living by singing for their bread.[5] These were the poorest boys with the least musical training who were allowed to course through the streets singing simple monophonic songs, in exchange for which they received alms, but mainly food.

That Friderici later became a member of a *chorus symphoniacus* also tells a tale. The *Kurrende* boys' utterly impoverished state usually prevented them from receiving much education or advancing in musical skill; thus, they usually remained at a low level of training because of their poverty and need to provide for their own survival. Some few, however, by what must have been exceptional effort managed to advance in training and enter the more highly trained *chorus symphoniacus,* which performed "figural" [i.e., polyphonic mensural] music[6] and were employed in the more lucrative performances at weddings, funerals, and other celebrations. In this chorus the boys received a small stipend and additional tips for extra performances. Friderici managed such an achievement from such a background and then went on to earn the master's degree, become a composer, choir director, pedagogue, and author, which amounts to an almost Herculean achievement. It is certainly humbling to many of us today, and makes his relatively early death at about the age fifty-four all the more tragic. It also goes far to justify the impatience with mediocre choral directors and lazy boys that occasionally emerges in his writing. In 1618, Friderici settled permanently in Rostock as cantor of Marienkirche and ultimately became capellmeister of all Rostock's churches.

The book as a whole is a solid but rather typical example of the pedagogical texts for the Lutheran Latin schools of the time, presenting the basic music fundamentals of the day. The title of chapter seven of the book in which his rules appear is somewhat misleading, "*Von etliche Regulen zierlich zu singen*" [On Some Rules for Singing Elegantly], for the rules cover far more than vocal aesthetics and are equally directed to directors as to the typical chorister, *symphoniacus,* in training. Florian Grampp calls this chapter the *eigentliche Neuheit* [real innovation] of the book.[7] This depends on the definition of "innovation," for Conrad von Zabern had certainly provided a more extensive coverage of aesthetics for monophonic chant choirs as early as 1474,[8] and Hermann Finck had provided some of his own in his *Practica Musica* (1556); indeed, such lists, usually small ones, are fairly common in the literature of the time, especially for the German Protestant Latin school tradition.

What makes Friderici's rules exceptional is their practical orientation, breadth of coverage, and relatively succinct statement in imparting a wealth of information. They vary from advice on vocal production, aesthetics, and pronunciation to organization of the choir, deportment, conducting, and performance practice. Of the many points related to performance practice, among the most important is his confirmation of Vicentino's earlier (1555) assertion that the tempo of a performance must vary according to the text. Judged on the criteria of vocal aesthetics, performance practice, and interpretation, Friderici would seem rightfully to claim the laurel for the finest set of such rules up until his time, and arguably for some time beyond.

This article provides a translation of the twenty-two rules that appear in the 1638 edition of the *Musica Figuralis* along with occasional comments in comparison with the earlier statement of the rules in 1619, when that would seem to offer some value for consideration.[9] The music examples present a problem; like the rules themselves, the illustrations in the 1619 edition available on IMSLP Petrucci[10] are good quality but differ in details from the 1638 edition. It is also desirable to use the original examples in their earlier notation because modernization of the notation somehow diminishes the effectiveness. Fortunately, IMSLP Petrucci comes to the rescue, for it also offers the 1677 last edition, whose examples are not only identical to the 1638 edition but also high quality for reproduction.[11]

As a practical matter of organization, when the wording or sense of the rule requires explanation, I provide it so far as possible in a footnote. A commentary on specific rules appears at the end of the rule, in which I draw attention to influences, explanations, and connections that are relevant but external to the rules themselves.

Some individual rules raise interesting issues, either practical or historical, that deserve at least brief attention. In many cases these issues suggest connections among the primary sources, both earlier and later, that constitute some degree of a tradition of practice in the field of choral training and conducting. I make no pretension of an exhaustive survey of the literature of German choral pedagogy and conducting in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; rather, some of Friderici's rules have simply "jogged" my memory into associations that seemed worth communicating.

The primary sources I refer to are Conrad von Zabern, *De Modo Bene Cantandi* (1474); Herman Finck, *Practica Musica* (1556); Cyriaco Schneegass, *Isagoges Musicae* (1596); Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum* (1619); Christoph Bernhard, *Von der Singe-Kunst* (ca. 1650); Johann Beyer, *Primae Lineae Musicae Vocalis* (1703); Johann Sperling, *Principia Musicae* (1705); Johannes Quirsfeld, *Breviarium Musicum* (1717).[12] In order to avoid a needless, tedius, and space-wasting series of footnotes, I simply refer to authors by name. All translations are my own.[13]

On Some Rules for Singing Elegantly (1638)

Rule 1: Any boy who wants to learn and practice music above all things must have a desire and love for it, busying himself to control and support his voice well and skillfully, and to give and use his breath regularly, especially if the song goes high, and be able to sing without frustration and labor. For this reason, those boys make no service to music, whom one must drive to it with blows and strikes; also, the ones who shout and cry till they are dark red in the face like a *Kalekunscher* rooster[14] and who open their mouths so wide, that one could drive a cartload of hay into it, so that they let their breath go completely at one stroke and for each note, indeed, often must take one, two, three, or four new breaths.

Commentary Rule 1: Straining the voice and proper breathing are issues that concern almost all the authors. Conrad initiates the concern in print, while Finck seems to have been the exemplar for Friderici himself with his comment that the fault of forced voice may be observed by "a changed color and darkened face" in the singer. He also alludes to failing breath, gaping mouth and shouting. Praetorius remarks on the need for steady breath, and Bernhard covers the issue of a mouth too far open. Sperling addresses both the issues and adds that proper breathing is especially critical at cadence points. The issue of the strained voice is still very much alive with Quirsfeld.

Rule 2: Immediately from the beginning the boys should be accustomed to form the voice fine, natural, and when possible trembling, wavering or pulsing in the larynx, the throat, or neck.[15] Accordingly, one should diligently prevent them from singing through the nose, much less biting the teeth together, by means of which the song is shamefully deformed and burdened.

Commentary Rule 2: Friderici's description of the desirable voice quality as "trembling, wavering, or pulsing," which was not present in the 1619 edition, seems to have come straight from Praetorius's "lovely, trembling, and throbbing voice." Clenching the teeth and singing through the nose are perennially condemned vices in Conrad, Bernhard, Beyer, Sperling, and Quirsfeld.

Rule 3: A cantor ought to give diligent attention to the boys that they do not become accustomed to improper habits, since some play with their hands, some want to keep the tactus with their hands, some with their feet. Some hold their hand before their mouths, some put them behind their ears, some nod their head on every note they sing, and whatever of the same nonsense, all of which is shameful, and above all things the boys must be restrained.

Commentary Rule 3: Conrad initiates the theme of proper deportment of the choir in order to create what would today be called a "professional" demeanor. Friderici concurs, as also do Bernhard, Beyer, and Quirsfeld. Many music classroom teachers today would also agree when looking out upon an ocean of apathy and poor posture with only occasional promontories of energy and engagement!

Rule 4: In singing one ought to use his voice joyfully and energetically. There is a great difference between singing energetically and shouting. Energetic singing in music is entirely necessary and is so much as joyful, nothing sluggish, foul, or weak, so long as one doesn't let the voice fall. Shouting, however, is forbidden in music. Cantors bring their great folly no less to light who bid the boys to shout with power and to open up the throat as wide as ever they can; thereby a fine, noble, and pure voice often is entirely ruined.

Commentary Rule 4: Perhaps closely related to deportment is the issue of energetic singing that does not transgress in either direction into weakness or shouting. Conrad addressed the same issue from the side of weakness that produced something "more in the manner of a groan rather than a song," adding the adage "*zu lutzel und zu vil verderbt al spil*," too little and too much spoil all pleasure.

Rule 5: In setting the pitch, one and no more should be heard, on which account it is wrong when as many set the pitch as so desire, or when the boys are allowed to intone all together with the cantor and an inopportune, unlovely, and improper bawling is raised whereby the entire remainder of the song is deprived of its beauty.[16]

Rule 6: Also, the cantor ought to develop the habit of not setting the pitch for all voices individually; rather, when possible only give the main pitch, and his boys and the other singers[17] accustom themselves to take it as guide, since it is a great impropriety to deprive a good song of its beauty with many starting pitches, just like a bagpipe.

Commentary Rules 5 and 6: Friderici addresses suitable practices for setting pitch for the choir, but his description is not entirely clear. He seems to be saying that the director should give one pitch, which only one choir member should reproduce, and singers of the various parts are to derive their own from it. Presumably, if this is the correct interpretation, the other voices set their own pitches mentally so as to avoid the vividly expressed "bagpipe" effect that Friderici warns against. Conrad addresses a different issue of pitch-setting but one so important as to merit attention here. He observes that a monophonic choir possesses members of a variety of vocal ranges and so needs to sing in a range that accommodates all in a "happy medium." This means that modes with their characteristic intervallic structures were transposed, more or less unconsciously, to different pitch levels. Further, this required a far more conscious transposition for the organ in the common practice of *alternatim* performance from the Middle Ages on, in which the organ and choir alternated verses of the psalm. This had important consequences for the development of transposed modes, psalm tones, and the ultimate development of tonality and key.[18]

Rule 7: In singing, the dot in a foregoing or previous note must be performed tastefully and be sung without any pronunciation. They are wrong who would sing [thus][19] (Figure 1).

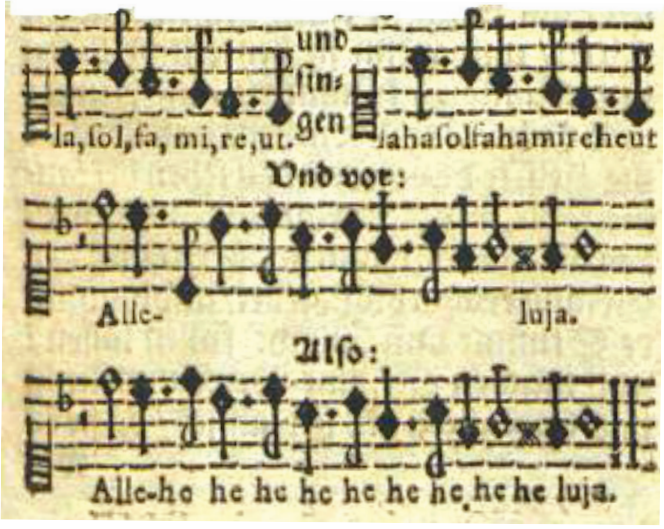

Figure 1

Commentary Rule 7: Once again, Friderici's concern with proper performance of dotted rhythms finds a slightly different anticipation in Conrad. For Friderici, the issue is that of making a slight breath impulse on the dot (such as beginning students today are sometimes taught to do on subdivisions, and which can later prove to be difficult to eradicate). Conrad's is the broader issue of applying breath impulse to subsequent syllables of a text, especially in polysyllabic words, instead of singing with one smooth, continuous flow.

Rule 8: In singing, the text must be pronounced and performed as it stands and be carefully observed, so that the words issuing from a vowel not be spoiled with an "N." Those are wrong and have a great vice when in singing make an a into au, or e into æ, or Latin i into Greek η, or an o into ou, or u into o, as when they sing aumen for amen, Aulleloja for Allelujah, *spηrητus* or *spærætus* for *spiritus*; likewise, *nallein Gott* for *allein Gott, narbeit* for *Arbeit, nehrlich* for *ehrlich, nohr* for *Ohr,* and similar things.[20]

Commentary Rule 8: The greatest concerns among the sources, except for Finck, are proper vowels, diphthongs, and singing through the nose. This latter may be related to what seems the particularly strange practice of nasalization of initial vowels by "n," mentioned by both Friderici and Beyer, all the more interesting because it does not appear in Friderici's 1619 edition. A hint as to the nasalization may be suggested in the dialectical phenomenon John Waterman describes. He says that the characteristic is widespread in both German and English, from Old High German to modern midwestern American English.[21] In general, the concern seems to have been simply for correct and clear pronunciation and not for the implications of differing sound qualities for aesthetics.

Rule 9: In singing, one must not rush but sing regular and steady and sing without any apprehension or hesitation. For which reason they are wrong who in singing rush as if they chased a rabbit. If they come to some *fusas* or *semifusas,*[22] [they are] swept away with fear and haste, so that they don't receive half the correct value, much less sing correctly. Also, they are wrong who, when they hear that the song goes wrong, immediately stop singing out of fear and drop out and often make a disruption and confusion of the song, when they certainly could have let it continue.

Rule 10: In singing, one should also listen to the other voices, how one may sing with and agree with them. Those are wrong who continually shout and cry for themselves alone and think it is enough if they consider only their own voice, the others may do as they please.

Rule 11: So that each one [*jeglicher*] can hear how he matches with the others, the voices should be properly placed and each [*jegen*] of the singers stand turned together.[23] For which reason it is a mistake when one turns his mouth here and another there like Samson's foxes,[24] or so that the entire group is mixed up and confused, so that one can't hear who raises his voice or who stops.

Rule 12: When there are different choirs, they should not be placed and arranged alone, but rather with the same voices on each side. Further, the foundation voices should be a little farther from each other, so that the resonance can come better to the listeners. Such as in 8-voice songs: (Figure 2) But this must be understood as the order of a church choir. In other regards the *Chorus Musicus* is to be ordered each at the discretion of its own home situation.[25]

Figure 2

Commentary Rule 12: The *chorus musicus* is a somewhat shadowy organization that existed in some places either in addition to or instead of the chorus *symphoni-*

acus. There is still dispute as to how it relates to the *Kurrende, chorus symphoniacus,* and the *Cantorei.*[26] It also seems to have possessed a more inclusively "civic" character, at least in some instances, and was related to the *Cantorei.*[27] This latter was usually a group cooperatively created by school, church, and town with members provided from each source, directed by the church's cantor, and supplemented by honorary members whose main function, discreetly implied, was mainly to provide financial support.

Rule 13: In a *Privat Musica,* it is not proper that two sing one part when the other parts are set singly. It may happen in the Bass or in the Discant with appropriate instruments and in particular, appropriate tonal qualities.[28]

Commentary Rule 13: I find no help for translating Privat Musica, not even in *MGG.* Since *Privat* can refer to a private home, a pure speculation is that it may refer to one of the different types of external performances, such as weddings, at which members of the *chorus symphoniacus* performed. Another alternative is that the term refers to a private concert such as was usual at certain times for a *cantorei* to produce for and by its membership, which included the chorus director, members of the chorus and the town instrumentalists and featured the new "concerted" style of music combining voices and instruments even as early as the first half of the seventeenth century.[29] This rule seems worded particularly vaguely so that it isn't clear whether Friderici offers the specific doublings as examples of violation or of acceptable exceptions.

Rule 14: In no voice must the lower octave be sung. At times the octave may be allowed to the Bass, but done in a suitable manner. Those careless cantors go no less wrong, who when the Discantists cannot sing in *ficta voce* [falsetto],[30] immediately [have them] sing the octave and create a Tenor out of a Discant, and it is no less a vice to introduce fifths. The Tenors are grossly wrong when they sing the lower octave and upset the foundation and form false consonances like fourths and sixths under the Bass.[31]

Rule 15: In the Bass there must be no more coloraturas made than those set by the composer.[32] Otherwise, the foundation of the song is destroyed and the other voices remain without support and nothing is then heard except a horrible dissonance.

Rule 16: The other voices should make coloraturas so that they introduce no faults. They could distinctly prevent such if they stop on the pitch on which they began (Figure 3).

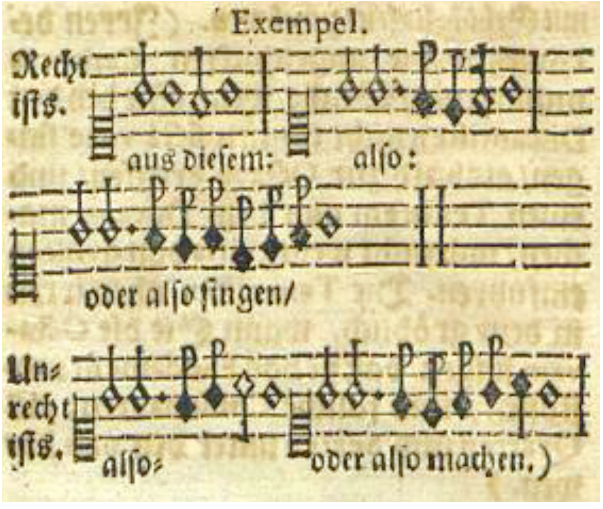

Figure 3

Commentary Rule 15 and 16: In 1638 the diminution technique of improvising florid passages in small note values by breaking up long notes in the composition seems still to be sufficiently alive in choral practice that Friderici feels the need to address it. The issue of performing such a *passaggio* in the Bass voice is a matter of contention among the German authors. Friderici accepts it when it has been written by the composer but not otherwise. Finck explicitly accepts the improvised practice in the Bass as well as the other voices, as does Bernhard implicitly. The usual objection to Bass diminutions by both Germans and Italians is that they disrupt the harmony.

Rule 17: In singing, the *tactus*[33] throughout should be seen not heard, or when possible only observed and marked. Accordingly, cantors reveal themselves clearly ignorant and their great foolishness recognizable and that they know no properly trained music, those who beat with a baton till pieces of it fly off and think it is a proper *tactus* if they only give a manly downbeat just as if they had straw to thresh.

Rule 18: When the *tactus* must be beaten, it should not be beaten by only two or three boys but be beaten by the entire choir.[34] Thus, those cantors are wrong who have only one or two boys stand before them to whom the *tactus* is beaten and let the other singers be drawn along behind just like a shepherd draws along his hounds behind him.

Rule 19: In singing, not one *tactus* only should be felt throughout, but be according to the words of the text, and thus the *tactus* be guided. Those cantors are wrong who cut up the *tactus* as regularly as a clock does minutes, and observe absolutely no decorum and appropriateness of the text and the harmony, since at one time a faster and at another time a slower *tactus* is demanded[35] (Figure 4).

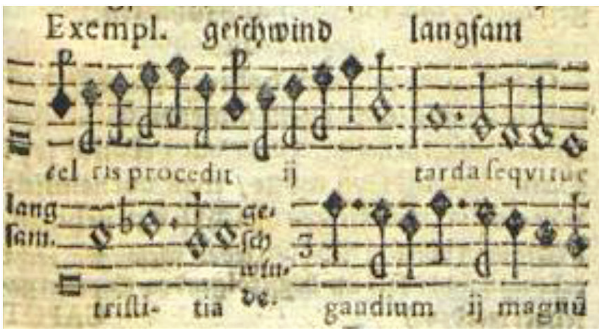

Figure 4

Commentary Rule 19: This rule presents what is possibly the most interesting information on performance practice that Friderici states. He confirms Vicentino's (1555) statement that the speed of the *tactus* must vary according to the meaning of the text.[36] Attitudes in the recent past held that the *tactus* had to be maintained strictly. Schneegass, otherwise a conservative author, supports Friderici and Vicentino. The older rigid practice may have been an exaggeration from later in the period of mensural music when the notational system's complexities had grown so great as to cause considerable confusion, especially in triple meters, and practical knowledge from experience was beginning to fade. Ruth DeFord's recent book demonstrates both that the tactus was variable and that directors had considerable discretion in interpretation.[37]

Rule 20: Anyone who sounds the end of the song on a penultimate consonance, that is, without one of the last notes, should await all voices and make a clear, fine, appropriately drawn out *confinal*[38] and not immediately adhere to the *finalis* of the song. Such a thing strikes the listeners as ugly and unattractive and deprives the song of a good part of its beauty and charm when one immediately breaks and tears off the song.[39]

Rule 21: The bass, however, particularly well ornaments the song when he draws out a little longer beyond the other voices, both on the *confinal* as on the correct *finalis* and especially may be heard a little at the end, though fine, mild, and pure. Accordingly, a cantor should not allow his boys in the Discant and Alto to delay for a long time.[40]

Commentary Rules 20 and 21: These two rules provide additional important information as to performance practice. Many Renaissance compositions have one voice that drops out at the end, perhaps to afford the others more aural space for cadential patterns, and appears to remain silent. Friderici explains what may have been a standard practice of having that voice supply a note for the sake of completion. His remarks about the slight continuation of the Bass voice after the others fall silent is supported by both Finck and Schneegass.

Rule 22: A cantor must properly also take care that the mode of the selected song be known to his singers, so that there may be known what especially is to be paid attention to for a *clavis* [key] in singing. How one can correctly recognize the mode of each song must be learned in the following chapter.

Commentary Rule 22: This raises a major issue of seventeenth-century theory. At this time *clavis* [key] refers either to (a) the letter name of the note or to (b) the letter name plus the Guidonian *vox* syllable(s); the clef is *clavis signata.* In Chapter 8 on the modes, the two factors that Friderici considers most important are the *B-durus* (B-natural) versus the transposed *B-mollis* (B-flat) forms of the modes, which he calls respectively regular and irregular, and the fourth/fifth division of the range. The authentic form of the mode has its range divided with the fifth on bottom and fourth on top, whereas the plagal is the reverse. Friderici may also mean something so simple as he states in Chapter 8, Observation I (Div^{v}), that in order to find the mode you look at the last note of the Bass voice at the end of the piece.[41] The one thing *clavis* cannot refer to here is our modern concept of a key, which developed only slowly throughout the seventeenth century.[42] German theorists and pedagogues persisted in trying to understand music within the modal system till the eighteenth century after the French and English had developed the concepts of key, tonality, and even the beginning of the Major-Minor system.[43] As an aside, Friderici also gives characteristic modal affects in his discussion of the modes, as do many seventeenth-century authors. As early as his comments in the 1619 edition on the character of Mode I, Dorian, he remarks that it is good, among other things, for *Epithalamia* (wedding songs). This same affect appears in Otto Harnisch's *Artis Musicae Delineatio* (1608). It seems unlikely that both authors would independently connect Mode I with the ancient Greek-inspired genre of wedding poems, which suggests either an influence on Friderici from Harnisch or that both were influenced by a third source. The connection at least is another piece of evidence that Friderici was consciously working within a tradition of German music pedagogy and theory.

Concluding Observations

Friderici's rules for "elegant" singing go beyond their ostensible aesthetic purpose and address a variety of issues useful to modern choral directors, including both fairly commonplace information and much more subtle or erudite factors. Among the more commonplace issues is one that can too easily become lost to sight—the attitude of the singer toward learning and performing (Rule 1), a subject particularly critical for choral educators. Other details such as stage deportment (Rule 3), setting pitch (Rules 5 and 6), controlling breath impulse in less advanced singers (Rule 7) and matching pitch (Rule 11), might provide a useful pre-rehearsal or pre-concert "checklist." Remarks regarding shouting and excessive opening of the mouth (Rule 1) are related to the more advanced issues of functional freedom in vocal pedagogy. Proper pronunciation (Rule 8) and avoiding stridency (Rule 10) are, in the author's personal observation, concerns particularly for choral educators and church choir directors. Some of the rules address concerns relevant for both vocal and instrumental practice, such as proper rhythmic execution of small note values (Rule 9) and listening to others (Rule 10).

Friderici also raises some issues of considerable historical interest. Following Praetorius, he assumes that the choral singer will use vibrato, not the straight tone common today (Rule 2). His restriction of displacing a vocal range at the octave (Rule 14) is perhaps most striking in revealing that it was apparently a common practice at the time. His remarks on *clavis* "key," though somewhat ambiguous today, seem to concern an issue important at the time and possibly often overlooked today, melodic organization of the authentic and plagal forms of a mode into an upper or lower fifth and fourth structure. The extension of the last pitch where a voice apparently falls silent too soon is probably an issue resolved silently or overtly by modern editors. Friderici's complete acceptance of the practice of improvised diminution of the upper voices is a practice that modern sentiment would most probably wish to avoid! Arguably the most historically important evidence for performance practice is the author's clear, emphatic support for the variation of the speed of the tactus according to the sense of the text, a practice that fairly recent attitude often rejected. In all, it seems both humbling and, in a sense, heart warming

that musicians can span centuries and, so to speak, communicate with each other on shared interests. CJ

NOTES

[1] *Figural [i.e. mensural] Music, or New Clear Correct and Comprehensible Instruction in the Art of Singing.*

[2] Friderici's book appears in facsimile along with works by Johann Herbst and Johann Crüger in *Deutsche Gesangstraktate des 17.* Jahrhunderts, ed. Florian Grampp (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2006). Unfortunately for readers, the original copy from which the facsimile was made is in poor condition with much discoloration and bleed-through of the printing. The publisher had little choice, RISM B VI reports only two surviving copies! All the more reason that the rules should appear in some form more accessible, legible, and in translation from the sometimes rather obscure, early seventeenth-century German.

[3] Victor Coelho and Keith Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture, 1420-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2016), 3-4.

[4] Martin Ruhnke, "Friderici, Daniel," in *Oxford Music Online,* rev. by Dorothea Schröder, accessed February 3, 2020, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/.

[5] Klaus Niemöller gives the best explanation of these choral institutions in *Germany, Untersuchungen zu Musikpflege und Musikunterricht an den deutschen Lateinschulen vom ausgehenden Mittelalter bis um 1600* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1969), 669-674.

[6] Hence the title of Friderici's book *Musica Figuralis.*

[7] *Deutsche Gesangstraktate,* 9

[8] Sion M. Honea, "Conrad von Zabern's De Modo Bene Cantandi and Early Choral Pedagogy," *Choral Journal* 57, no. 10 (2017): 6-16.

[9] The author, though ABD in musicology and former head of Rare Books at Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music, is a trained linguist with a PhD in classical languages and a minor in classical linguistics and has published a variety of articles in peer reviewed journals that utilize his own translations from various languages. He has also produced a Historical Translation Series (https://www.uco.edu/cfad/academics/music/brisch/translation-series) that has been a source for several scholars' dissertations and articles. Friderici's German is generally quite simple, as one might expect for a text intended for schoolboys. There are the orthographical changes typical of the early seventeenth century and a few grammatical and syntactical differences. The most difficult problems are in idiosyncratic terminology, also consistent with the time, and idiomatic expressions, such as the *Kalekunscher Hahn* of Rule 1.

[10] IMSLP Petrucci, https://imslp.org/wiki/Main_Page.

[11] The original of the 1677 edition is in the collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK, which graciously offers the edition for use in public domain and may be accessed at https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht/?PPN=PPN773019987, as well as through IMSLP Petrucci.

[12] Conrad is probably most accessible through my article in this same journal as cited above. The relevant passage in Finck appears on Ssiii^{v} to Ssiv^{v}; Schneegass's are Iiv^{v} to Iv^{r}; Praetorius's in volume 3, 229-231; my English translation of Bernhard can be found at https://www.uco.edu/cfad/academics/music/brisch/translation-series, mostly in Item 40; Beyer's appear on page 65; Sperling's on page 86; and Quirsfeld's on page 27.

[13] An abbreviation of my credentials and experience appear in note 9. Fortuitously, while this article was under revision I received an email from a German scholar complimenting me on the excellence of the Historical Translation Series as a whole and my translation of the Bernhard text in particular.

[14] Grimm says this is a corruption of *kalekutischer Hahn,* offering no further explanation. The entry provides several literary citations, s.v. "*Kalekutischer,*" in *Deutsches Wörterbuch,* reprint, 1991. The assumption seems to be either that this breed had a red head or that it crowed very loudly, probably the former.

[15] This appears to be an allusion to natural vibrato.

[16] The first half is the same as Rule 3 of the 1619 edition. The sense seems to be that only one boy should sing the starting pitch and the rest take it from him mentally. If all try to set the starting pitch, then it would only cause confusion. The second half is new to the 1638 edition.

[17] The rules are directed to boys in training, but there are other adult singers in the choir, the concentores.

[18] Walter Atcherson, "Key and Mode in Seventeenth-Century Music Theory Books," *Journal of Music Theory* 17, no. 2

(1973): 22; also Gregory Barnett, "Tonal Organization in Seventeenth-Century Music Theory," in *Cambridge History of Western Music Theory,* ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 419-421.

[19] The first sentence is Rule 4 of the 1619 edition. The second sentence is new to the 1638 edition.

[20] This is an expanded version of Rule 5 of the 1619 edition, which did not mention the nasalization issue. The Greek η in ancient times was probably pronounced something like the ê in French *tête,* and the Latin i was similar to English short ĭ. Until the twentieth century the tradition was for all to pronounce Greek and Latin in the way of their own vernacular; thus, it is difficult if not impossible to determine how an early seventeenth-century German might have pronounced η. Edgar Sturtevant, *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin,* 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1940), 19.

[21] John T. Waterman, *A History of the German Language,* rev. ed. (Seattle: University of Washington, 1976), 203, 209.

[22] Eighth-notes and sixteenth-notes.

[23] In the same direction. The text presents a slight problem here in the editions with the reading "*die Singenden jegen einander,*" in that there is no known word "*jegen*" according to Grimm's Wörterbuch. I take it as a misprint for "*jeden,*" probably induced by the "*jeglicher*" earlier in the sentence.

[24] Samson tied torches to foxes tails and sent them into the Philistines' grain fields, Jgs. 15:4.

[25] The word translated here as "home situation," *heimgestellet,* is rather obscure. For *chorus musicus* see the comment on this rule. The illustration of the arrangement is quite helpful and did not appear in the 1619 edition.

[26] Niemöller, *Untersuchungen,* 670-673. It appears that no one has succeeded in completely disentangling the nature of these vocal organizations, which varied from town to town.

[27] It is not possible to give a single description that fits all instances of the *Cantorei.* Rautenstrauch gives a good deal of relatively "undigested" information upon which other authors depend, *Luther und die Pflege der Kirchlichen Musik in Sachsen (14-19 Jahrhundert)* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1907). Niemöller also discusses its possible origins, *Untersuchungen,* 673-675. Liselotte Krüger provides a more useful account, though the one she describes at Hamburg is clearly more elaborate than the norm, *Die Hamburgische Musikorganisation im XVII Jahrhundert* (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1981). Her account also has the benefits of being in the same century and in Hamburg, fairly near to Friderici in Rostock.

[28] The word translated here as "tonal quality" is *disposition,* which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries usually referred to a physical capability of the voice, particularly that for throat articulation in singing diminutions. Usage then began to broaden to include something more like a quality of voice. I believe that what is meant here is that the tone quality of the instrument must match that of the voice.

[29] Rautenstrauch, *Musik in Sachsen,* 254, 269-271, 290-291, 294, 334.

[30] I have been unable to find a definition of *ficta voce* but it seems most likely to refer to falsetto. The closest to it that I have found is in Martin Fuhrmann, *Musikalischer-Trichter* (Frankfurt: The Author, 1706), 80, who defines as falsetto the term *voce contra fatta.*

[31] This is nearly the same as Rule 10 of the 1619 edition, with the addition of the comment on the Tenor. Rule 13 of the 1619 edition on the Bass voice has been transferred here to Rule 14. Friderici seems to indicate and deplore a practice of transposing by a fifth instead of an octave, which practice also strikes as bizarre today.

[32] The proscription or strict regulation of coloraturas—passages of improvised diminution—in the Bass is common in the literature for the reason stated, its great potential to confuse the harmony.

[33] The German *Takt* derives from the Latin *tactus,* which refers to the basic organizational unit of rhythm in mensural music. Earlier, the term meant something closer to modern "measure," but later came more to indicate something like "beat." The German word today is ambiguous, meaning both measure and beat, which makes it impossible to translate the word into English without obscuring the ambiguity. For the visible *tactus* see Rule 3 and also note 34.

[34] This refers to the practice, depicted in many illustrations of the time, by which each member of the choir gently patted the shoulder of his neighbor, thus communicating and preserving the "beat."

[35] This is a valuable statement on performance practice. See the comment on this rule. The example indicates that the tempo should be *geschwind,* [fast] over the words "*cel[e]ris procedit,*" [it proceeds fast], and *langsam,* [slow] over "*tarda*

sequitur," [it follows slow].

[36] "The measure should change according to the words, now slower and now faster." Nicola Vicentino, *Ancient Music Adapted to Modern Practice,* trans. Maria Rika Maniates (New Haven: Yale University, 1996), 301.

[37] DeFord's remarks on the issue of performance practice are spread throughout her book, but especially good sections are Chapter 7 on *tactus* and tempo, particularly page 188, and pages 468-469. She observes that three factors determined tempo: nature of the music, text, the director's interpretation. *Tactus, Mensuration, and Rhythm in Renaissance Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2015).

[38] The *confinal* is the fifth above the mode's *finalis.* Friderici apparently considers this so well known as to need no further comment, for I find no mention of the *confinal* in Chapter 8 on the modes.

[39] This is the same as the first half of Rule 17 of the 1619 edition.

[40] This is the same as the second half of Rule 17 of the 1619 edition but expanded and clarified.

[41] Harold Powers articulates a similar system of determining mode by a complex of factors including *B-durus* vs. *B-mollis,* range within the gamut, and lowest note of the final triad, which may approximate what Friderici had in mind. Harold Powers, "Tonal Types and Modal Categories in Renaissance Polyphony," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34, no. 3 (1981): 436-438.

[42] See Walter Atcherson's very interesting article "Key and Mode." Joel Lester's article "Major-Minor Concepts and Modal Theory in German 1592-1680," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 30, no. 2 (1977): 208-253 is particularly valuable for the 17th-century German context. The Barnett summary in "Tonal Organization" makes a thorough study of the relevant elements involved.

[43] Gregory Barnet, "Tonal Organization."

THE CAPITALISTIC MACHINE AGAINST A RADICAL INDIVIDUAL

A Consideration of Marc Blitzstein's Choral Opera, *The Condemned* (1932)

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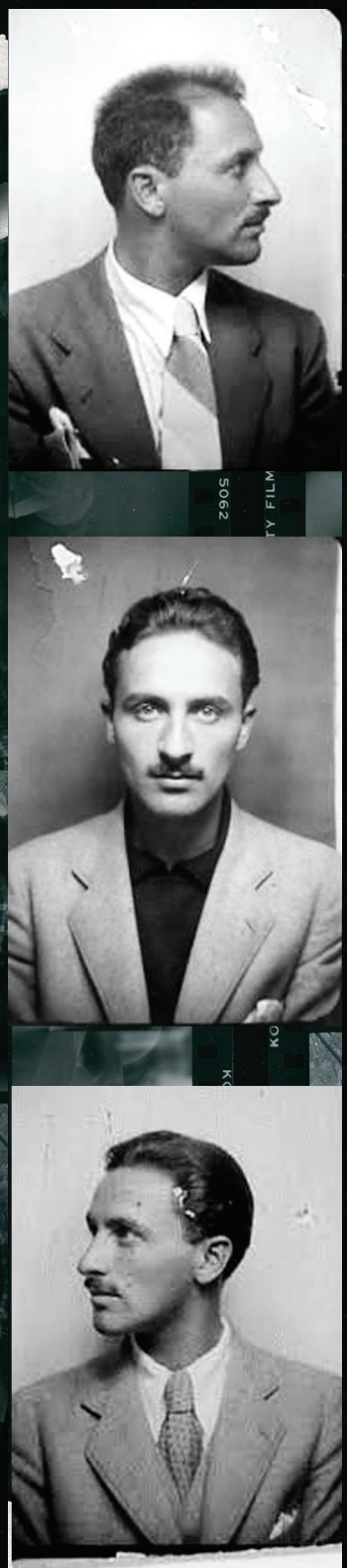
American composer Marc Blitzstein (1905–1964) spent much of 1932 planning and composing *The Condemned,* an ambitious "choral opera" for four choirs and full orchestra, inspired by the trial and execution of the anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. Almost ninety years later, the project, which Blitzstein considered his "best work" to date, has received little attention and still awaits its first performance.[1] The score remains unpublished, despite the enthusiasm of such supporters as Nadia Boulanger, and the composer's own plans for performances in the Soviet Union and England failed to materialize. Even so, *The Condemned* occupies a unique position in Blitzstein's output and in American choral music: it may be the most extensive socially-engaged choral work written by an American composer during the Great Depression, and its themes would continue to occupy Blitzstein's imagination through the end of his life.[2]



"The Idea for the Opera Has Burst Upon Me"

Marc Blitzstein was one of America's most gifted composers, and one of the most underappreciated.[3] A brilliant pianist who studied composition at the Curtis Institute, and later in Europe with Nadia Boulanger and Arnold Schoenberg, his life and career were cut short by a tragic and untimely death.[4] While he would later earn fame as one of America's leading stage composers and lyricists through his celebrated musical theater masterpiece, *The Cradle Will Rock* (1937), and his successful adaptation of Kurt Weill's *The Threepenny Opera* (1954), Blitzstein struggled in the late 1920s and early 1930s to make a mark. His one-act opera, *Triple-Sec* (1928), received 150 performances in 1930 as part of a theater revue; the sketch's clever conceit, in which an increasingly inebriated audience perceives the action onstage, won Blitzstein some early admirers.[5] But his successive attempts floundered. The esoteric *Parabola and Circula* (1929), in which a cast of characters with geometric names explores the complexities of various love relationships, never saw the stage. Blitzstein's next work, the biblically themed ballet *Cain* (1930), faced a similar fate, with conductor Leopold Stokowski abandoning the project after only a few rehearsals.[6] The composer's send-up of mythology, *The Harpies* (1931), would wait over twenty years for a premiere, its commission withdrawn by the League of Composers due to financial problems. Two incomplete opera sketches of the same period, *The Traveling Salesman* and *The Killers,* did not proceed beyond the earliest planning stages.

Such mixed early results did not discourage Blitzstein. With one minor success and several near misses behind him, the composer sensed that he needed to write a new stage work: a choral opera.[7] Blitzstein settled on the idea early on, noting simply in his sketchbook, "new opera—one act, 4 choruses (16 each), full orchestra."[8]

Thematic inspiration came later, after Blitzstein set sail for France to visit his partner and future wife, the author Eva Goldbeck. While aboard the ship, the composer encountered a group of suspected communist deportees. Blitzstein, whose own progressive ideals and sympathy toward working-class concerns would later inspire him to join the Communist Party, jotted his thoughts in a letter to his sister, dated August 9, 1931: "The idea for the opera has burst upon me. It is, I say with confidence, a wow. Everything fits, and it is a great chance for me, although it does at the moment appear that only Soviet Russia would be willing to perform it."[9] Blitzstein elaborated the next day:

> "What strikes me most about the idea I have for the new opera is the perfect way everything fits my original form….I note I have not yet told you the theme. It is a variation on Sacco-Vanzetti: the morning of the execution of a man convicted falsely of murder, with a background of the capitalistic machine against a radical individual. The man, his wife, the warden, and the priest are the characters, each played by a chorus."[10]

Sacco and Vanzetti

While the idea of a choral opera represented a singular innovation on the part of Blitzstein, he was not alone among artists in recognizing the importance of the Sacco and Vanzetti trial as a watershed social event.[11] The armed robbery of a Boston-area shoe factory on the afternoon of April 15, 1920, set into motion a series of events that would later dominate headlines. During the heist, a pair of gunmen stole thousands of dollars of payroll money, killing two employees before fleeing the scene. Witnesses could not identify the culprits, and authorities soon began trolling local Italian immigrants in hopes of catching the robbers. While not originally under investigation, Nicola Sacco (a shoe trimmer) and Bartolomeo Vanzetti (a fishmonger), themselves anarchists and associates of political dissidents from the Italian immigrant community, responded vaguely to questions regarding the robbery. A search during the interrogation revealed that both men carried handguns, hidden within their clothing. This aroused the suspicion of the authorities, who indicted Sacco and Vanzetti for the robbery and murders.

The trial commenced May 1921, with Judge Webster Thayer, a noted anti-anarchist, personally requesting to try the case. Defense attorney Fred Moore, a California socialist who raised the ire of Thayer for his political views and his constant grandstanding, represented Sacco and Vanzetti. As prosecutor Frederick Katzmann questioned the pair concerning their anarchist beliefs, Moore perceived the courtroom's insurmountable prejudice. Choosing instead to emphasize the duo's humanity, Moore's defense depicted Sacco and Vanzetti as innocent immigrants on trial for their anarchist radicalism, rather than for the crime at hand.[12] His tactics made no impact on the jury who, after just a few hours of deliberation, found the pair guilty. Despite several appeals, multiple requests for a new trial, and the confession of a death-row inmate who claimed that the pair did not participate in the crime, the state executed Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927.[13]

The event has been described as "[haunting] the American political psyche, an anguished presence hovering above the nation's conscience like an incubus at the witching hour."[14] Famous intellectuals, including Albert Einstein and H. G. Wells, voiced sympathy with Sacco and Vanzetti, and numerous groups condemned the trial's outcome. As such, most on the political left saw the duo as "innocent dreamers," working-class martyrs devoured by a rigged court system.[15] Those sharing this view accepted a few key points: first, that the trial was motivated by prejudice against immigrants and political radicals; second, that the pair were actually innocent, the evidence having been planted by a corrupt prosecution; and finally, that Sacco and Vanzetti, as anarchists, would have sympathized with the larger world socialist and communist movements.[16]

For all these reasons, the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti galvanized left-leaning artists and writers, including Ben Shahn, Upton Sinclair, John Dos Passos, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and numerous others.[17] Many musicians, similarly moved, spent the subsequent decades mining the trial for inspiration. Composer Ruth Crawford wrote a song for piano and voice titled *Sacco, Vanzetti* (coincidentally in 1932, the same year Blitzstein completed *The Condemned*). Later, folk singers Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie wrote odes to Sacco and Vanzetti, and Joan Baez and Italian film composer Ennio Morricone collaborated on the music for Giuliano Montaldo's 1971 film, *Sacco & Vanzetti*. Blitzstein himself would return to the trial, again choosing the pair as the subjects for a final opera, left incomplete at his death.

Composing the Condemned

Inspired by his encounter with the communist deportees on the ship, Blitzstein proceeded to sketch out the plan for his opera. While naming the trial in his notes, *The Condemned* only refers implicitly to Sacco and Vanzetti. Instead, Blitzstein's first sketch of the plot begins with abstract philosophical ideas, stating that the chorus for each character should illustrate both "human qualities which are universal (not necessarily mass)" and "break-ups within the individual."[18] In avoiding the traditional opera soloist, Blitzstein makes a seemingly obvious nod to Marxian communism, with the collective (a chorus) taking precedence over the individual (a soloist). But Blitzstein's approach reveals more nuance than this, and the reference to the fragmentation of the characters indicates the possible influence of Freud's psychoanalytic theories.

This points to a broader dramatic tension, as Marx is concerned with the materialistic action of history, while Freud's domain is the psychological; each chorus paradoxically serves as an external representation of an individual's internal struggle. Taken together, these contradictory juxtapositions (universal-individual, Marx-Freud, external-internal) along with the various groupings of characters throughout the opera (Wife-Condemned, Priest-Condemned, Friend-Condemned, Wife-Priest-Friend), invite a dialectical reading. Viewed as a dialectic, each opposition, conflict, and contradiction becomes a catalyst, pointing toward the potential change and transformation of the Condemned himself, and of the world and those left behind after his death—a Marxian gesture.

Seeking to link Sacco and Vanzetti's cause with other revolutionary figures, Blitzstein listed some two dozen other characters as possible models.[19] Individuals with obvious historical parallels appear, like Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, but so do others: Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx, Garibaldi, Eugene V. Debs, John Brown, Judas Maccabeus, Socrates, Dostoevsky. Like Sacco and Vanzetti, Blitzstein would have considered these historical figures as standing against tyranny and injustice, many paying with their lives.

Blitzstein's sketch then describes an image: at the rising of the curtain, the chorus lies "scattered about the stage in attitudes of sleep." The chorus, representing the accused, does not comprehend the situation, singing in polyphony, moving disparately. This choral character must then reach a decision, and an internal dialogue plays out between a chorus split in two: "one half 'for,' one half 'against'; the whole thing starting complexly and thinning and purifying down to an issue."[20] Already, Blitzstein presents some of the final product's most recognizable features.

This first sketch continues to describe the rest of the opera. While specifics would change, Blitzstein's burst of creative energy resulted in a recognizable draft storyline, the main characters represented by four sixteen-voice choirs. In the story, a prisoner (named John Joseph Helm in these early drafts) awakens on the morning of his execution. The warden brings in a priest, who attempts to console the prisoner; the prisoner will have none of it (Blitzstein would later replace the character of the warden with that of a friend, supportive of the prisoner's unnamed revolutionary cause). Following a momentary panic, the prisoner calls back the priest, repenting. After the priest leaves, the prisoner expresses regret for his decision, rejecting God and embracing atheism. The prisoner and his wife (Anna, and later Ariana, in the earliest sketches) exchange goodbyes as the warden takes the condemned to his death. After the wife sings of her grief, the priest "happily (not too) recites a sort of childish gloria...he did believe."[21] The

earliest attempts at titling the work sound cryptic and ominous: *The Martyr, The Prisoner, Day, For One Dying, Ascent to Death, The Hour, The Last Hour, The Final Hour, Death Hour.*

Blitzstein halted work on the opera in the months following his return, focusing instead on other musical projects. His *Serenade* for string quartet featured three movements, all marked *Largo*; critics did not embrace the piece.[22] He watched as plans for premieres of *Cain* and *The Harpies* disintegrated. His frustration with the current musical scene nearly overwhelming, he stated early in 1932 that he had become "impatient…to sense the germ of new greatness in a work…. the sound of new compositions no longer startles or shocks… It is a new individuality who is awaited…"[23]

In June 1932, Blitzstein and Eva Goldbeck sought frugal accommodations abroad, settling first in the Croatian town of Dubrovnik, and later in Mlini. Here, the composer could focus on the opera without distraction, and Blitzstein worked rapidly, fleshing out the libretto within two weeks. Around this time, Blitzstein renamed the opera *The Dying*, and finally, *The Condemned.* While Eva noted in her extensive journals from the period that work and stress had put Blitzstein in a precarious psychological state, by July the composer had written most of the music.[24] Blitzstein finished the short score for the choral opera in August, and completed the orchestration and final conductor's score by November 1932.

Musical Analysis

The Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research houses the unpublished manuscripts for *The Condemned* within the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives. Numerous pages of draft notes exist in this archive, in addition to a complete piano reduction, an incomplete piano transcription, an unfinished conductor's score, and two completed conductor's scores.[25] Even at the earliest stages a fair amount of musical agreement exists between each of these drafts and scores, and a comparison of the two final conductor's scores shows that Blitzstein completed his work by the end of 1932.

Blitzstein's one-act opera takes place over eleven short scenes, approximately thirty-five minutes in total. The choral and orchestra forces are sweeping: two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, English horn, three B-flat clarinets, two A clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three C trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, drums, cymbals, harp, piano, full strings, and four choirs: TTBB ("The Condemned"), SSA ("The Wife"), BB ("The Friend"), and TT ("The Priest"). Blitzstein expanded the size of each choir to 48 singers by his final drafts, bringing the total choral forces to nearly 200—a massive undertaking. Perhaps inspired by Bertolt Brecht's epic theatre, or by the experimentation of Soviet directors like Vsevolod Meyerhold, Blitzstein imagined the four choirs on stage standing on a series of ramps, with members of the first choir ("The Condemned") in various positions indicating sleep, or exhaustion, stirring themselves to attention by the end of the first scene.[26] Curtains would obscure the other choral characters ("The Wife," "The Friend," and "The Priest"), revealing each group for their scenes before hiding them again. The only other stage action given is the exit of the Condemned, at his execution in scene nine.

The libretto, written entirely by Blitzstein, contains none of the composer's characteristic humor. Dark and brooding, it became more minimalistic with each revision. This may have been purposeful experimentation on the part of the Blitzstein, or possibly a decision intended to emphasize the philosophical weight of the subject matter. At any rate, the spare libretto lends the opera an air of abstraction and emotional distance, with short utterances communicating the claustrophobic anxiety of the prisoner.

Musically, Blitzstein's choral opera is marked by neo-classical and contrapuntal techniques, with frequent and bold dissonance between chorus and orchestra. Harmonic clashes of seconds, fourths, and sevenths abound, and music historian Howard Pollack notes a variety of possible influences, mentioning similarities to the styles of Beethoven, Stravinsky, Bach, and Milhaud.[27] Table 1 presents the overall musical structure of the work, along with key lines from the libretto to aid in visualizing the opera.

An examination of the beginning of the opera illustrates the harmonic language that Blitzstein employs throughout *The Condemned,* revealing how he handles the opera's various motives and themes. At the opening curtain, the Condemned awaits his execution, the

Table 1.

Scene	Characters	Duration	Tempo Indications	Libretto
1	The Condemned (TTBB)	116 measures	*Tempo moderato* (♩. = 56) – *Allegro* (♩. = 120) – *Maestoso* (♩. = 80)	The Condemned awakes from a dream and finds himself on death row: "This is the day I am to be killed!"
2	The Condemned, the Wife (SSA)	60 measures	*Andante* (♩ = 60)	The Condemned seeks to reassure his wife: "I need you to be strong, I must believe in hope."
3	The Condemned, the Friend (BB)	76 measures	*Giusto* (♪= 132) – *Con moto* (♪= 116) – *Meno mosso* (♪= 100)	The Friend consoles the Condemned: "You shall be our martyr. It is a glorious death." The Condemned states: "I do not want to die."
4	TheCondemned, the Priest (TT)	90 measures	*Commodo* (♩. = 72)	The Priest seeks to comfort the Condemned, who rejects God.
5	The Condemned	91 measures	*Larghetto risoluto* (♩ = 66) – *Allegro non troppo* (♩ = 116) – *Tempo I°* (♩ = 66)	In a soliloquy, the Condemned states emphatically: "There is no God; there is only Man." But he ends the movement expressing his fear of death.
6	The Condemned, the Wife, the Priest	192 measures	*Vivace* (𝅗𝅥 = 120) – *Adagio* (♩ = 63) – *Allegro* (𝅗𝅥 = 100) – *Più allegro* (♩. = 100) *Tempo di Vivace I°* (𝅗𝅥 = 120) – *Tranquillo*	Fearful, the Condemned calls back the Priest, who absolves him of his sins. The wife cries.
7	Instrumental tableau	33 measures	*Cantabile* (♩ = 60)	The Condemned rests, exhausted.
8	The Condemned	72 measures	*Lento Sostenuto* (𝅗𝅥 = 40)	The Condemned again denies God: "I need no heaven. The earth shall one day be enough. All men are my brothers."
9	The Condemned, the Wife, the Friend	24 measures	♪= 80 – ♪= 112	The Condemned and the Wife exchange goodbyes.
10	The Wife	97 measures	*Grave* (♩ = 58) – *Allegro* (𝅗𝅥 = 88) – *Andante con moto* (♩. = 44) – *Strepitoso* (♩ = 144)	The Wife describes the execution: "He lies, beaten, slain by them! They murder him in cold blood!"
11	The Friend, the Wife, the Priest	147 measures	*Allegro assai* (𝅗𝅥 = 84) – *Largo* (𝅗𝅥 = 56) – *Tempo I°* – *Largo* (𝅗𝅥 = 56) – *Tranquillo* (♩ = 66)	The survivors find their own meaning in the death of the Condemned.

choral singers positioned in varying states of exhaustion, representing his fractured state of mind. A soft trumpet and bassoon fanfare in D sounds, followed by an exposition of motives in succession, forming the basis for the movement's development. The most important musical idea, an ascending four-note scale taken up later as the chorus's main theme, appears first in the horn. A few elements already stand out: first, Blitzstein favors polytonality, the hint of D major at the outset being quickly denied by the strings and clarinets (Figure 1). These elements—clashing simultaneous thirds, polychords, modal mixture in the major and minor, and incidental augmented chords—are found throughout *The Condemned,* appearing again at the end of the first and last scenes. The harmonies call to mind the third movement of one of Blitzstein's favorite works, Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* (1930).

Blitzstein uses his choral writing throughout the work to indicate the psychological state of his characters, as illustrated later in the scene. After the Condemned (choir I) sings his first entrance ("Awake"), the choir further develops the horn's ascending four-note scale in counterpoint.[28] An alternating two-note motive appears in the low strings (again, denying D major and implying the minor). The opposition of the low strings against the choir, and the contrapuntal writing, indicates the Condemned's disturbed state of mind: "Dream let go, will you never let go?" (Figure 2 on page 39).

Blitzstein continues with a tightly constructed exploration of these themes, possibly influenced by the style

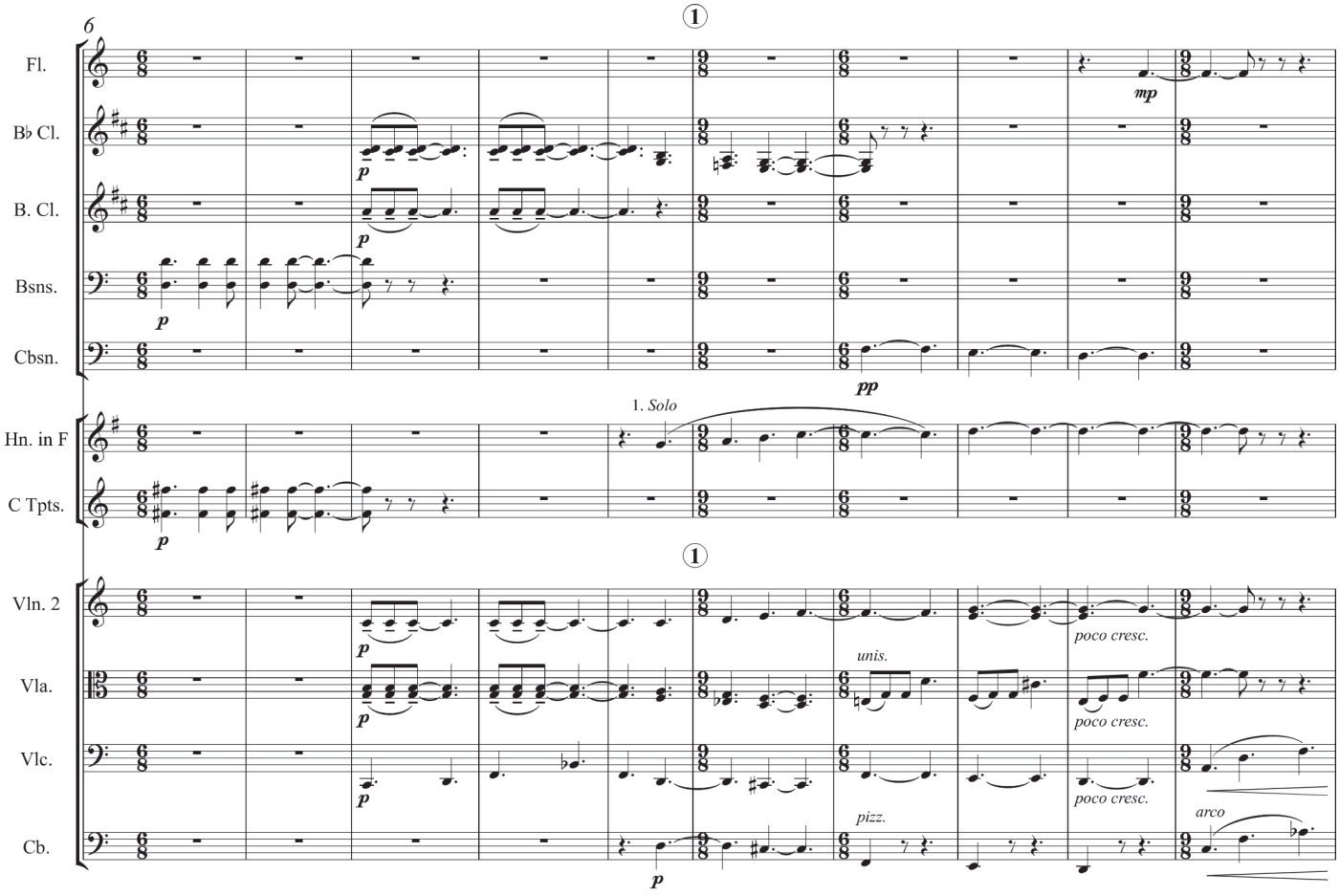


Figure 1. Marc Blitzstein, *The Condemned,* Scene 1, mm. 6–15.
Second fanfare and exposition of themes

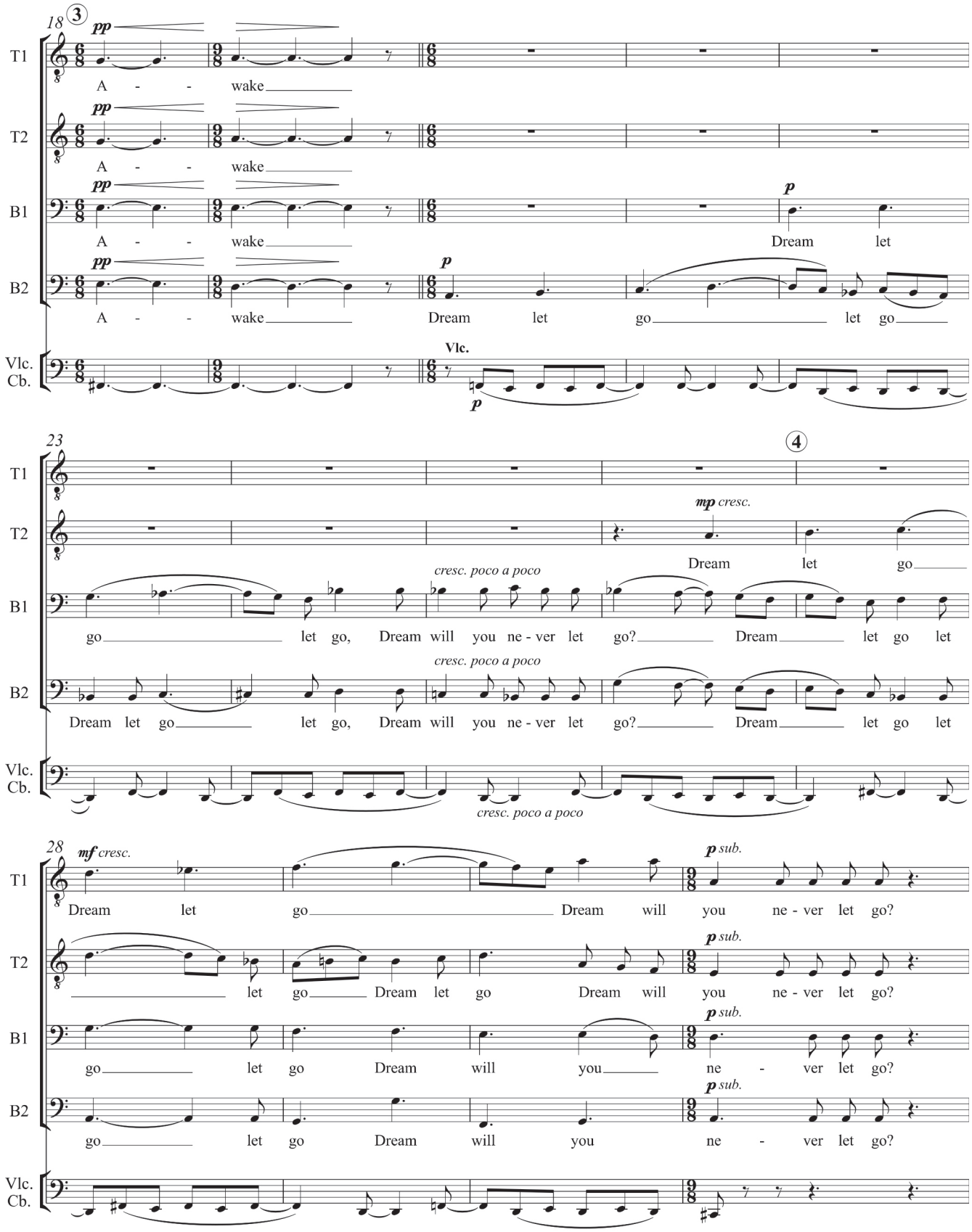


Figure 2. Marc Blitzstein, *The Condemned,* Scene 1, mm. 18–31.
Chorus and violoncello and contrabass parts only

of his teacher, Arnold Schoenberg. An example of Blitzstein's contrapuntal skill occurs later in the scene, as he inverts both the four-note scale and the low string countermotive (Figure 3). The scene ends with an unresolved polychord.

The next few scenes introduce the rest of the cast: the Wife (choir II, scene 2), the Friend (choir III, scene 3), and the Priest (choir IV, scene 4). Of note here is Blitzstein's continued use of musical language to illustrate these characters. The Wife's entrances, for example, are often paired with a lyrical and intimate theme, played by oboe (Figure 4 on page 41).

The Condemned and the Wife share words of comfort, sung contrapuntally by choirs I and II, their cadence on the unison at the conclusion of the scene suggesting an emotional union between the characters. The choral writing here shows the influence of Blitzstein's studies in the music of the Renaissance, albeit with highly modern harmonic language (Figure 5 on page 41).

The Wife's music contrasts greatly with that of the

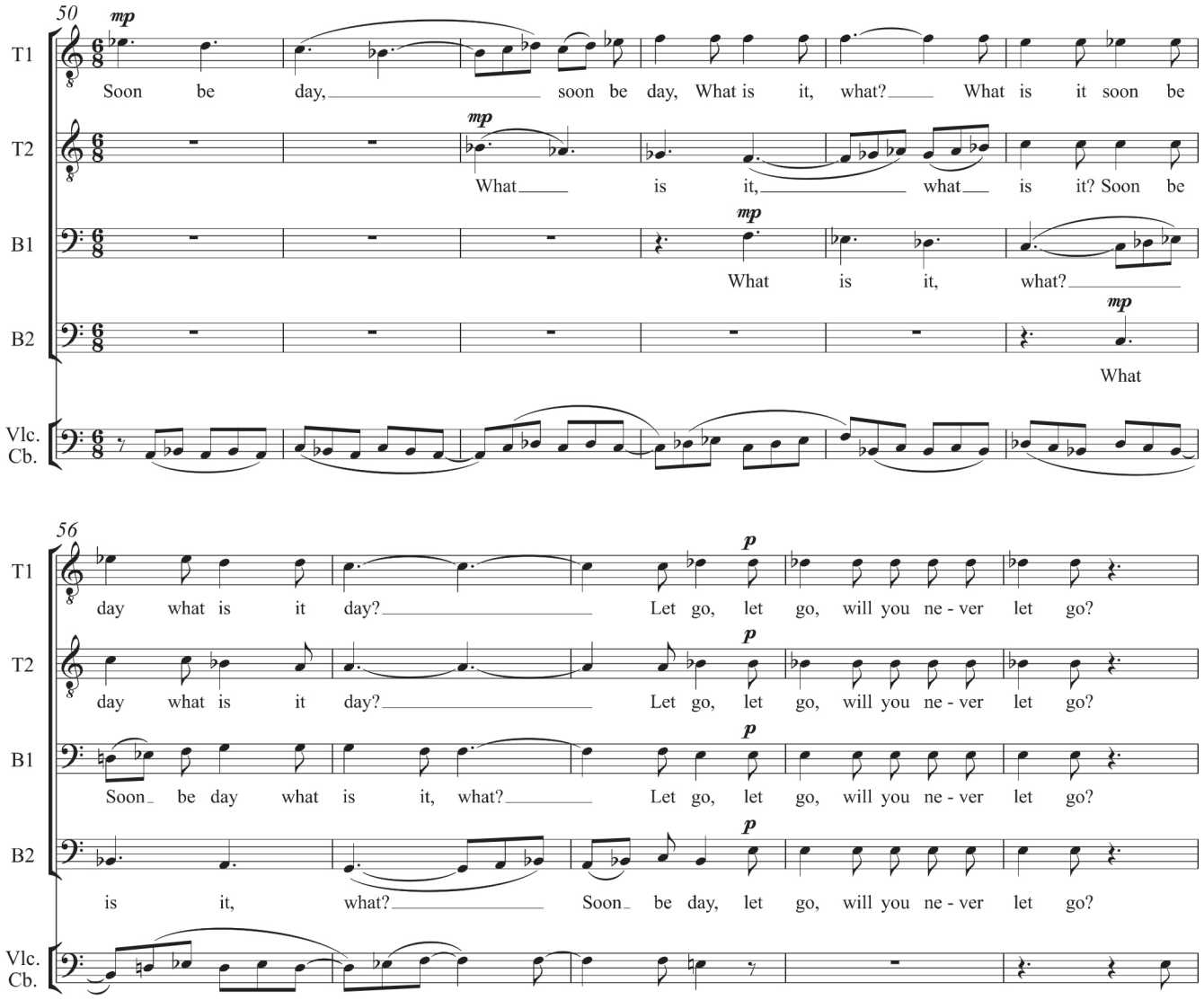


Figure 3. Marc Blitzstein, *The Condemned,* Scene 1, mm. 50–63.
Chorus and contrabass parts only

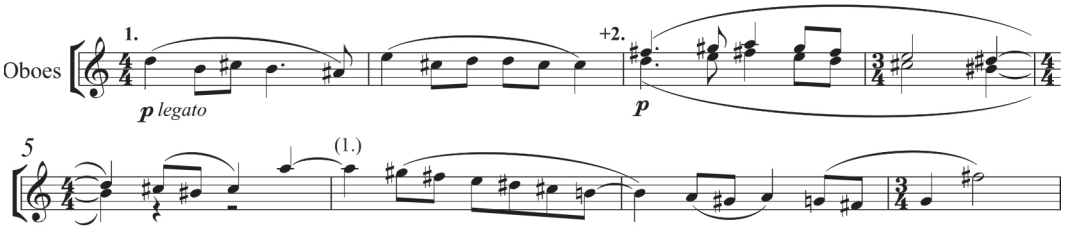


Figure 4. Marc Blitzstein, *The Condemned,* Scene 2, mm. 1 – 8.
Oboe, "Wife's theme"

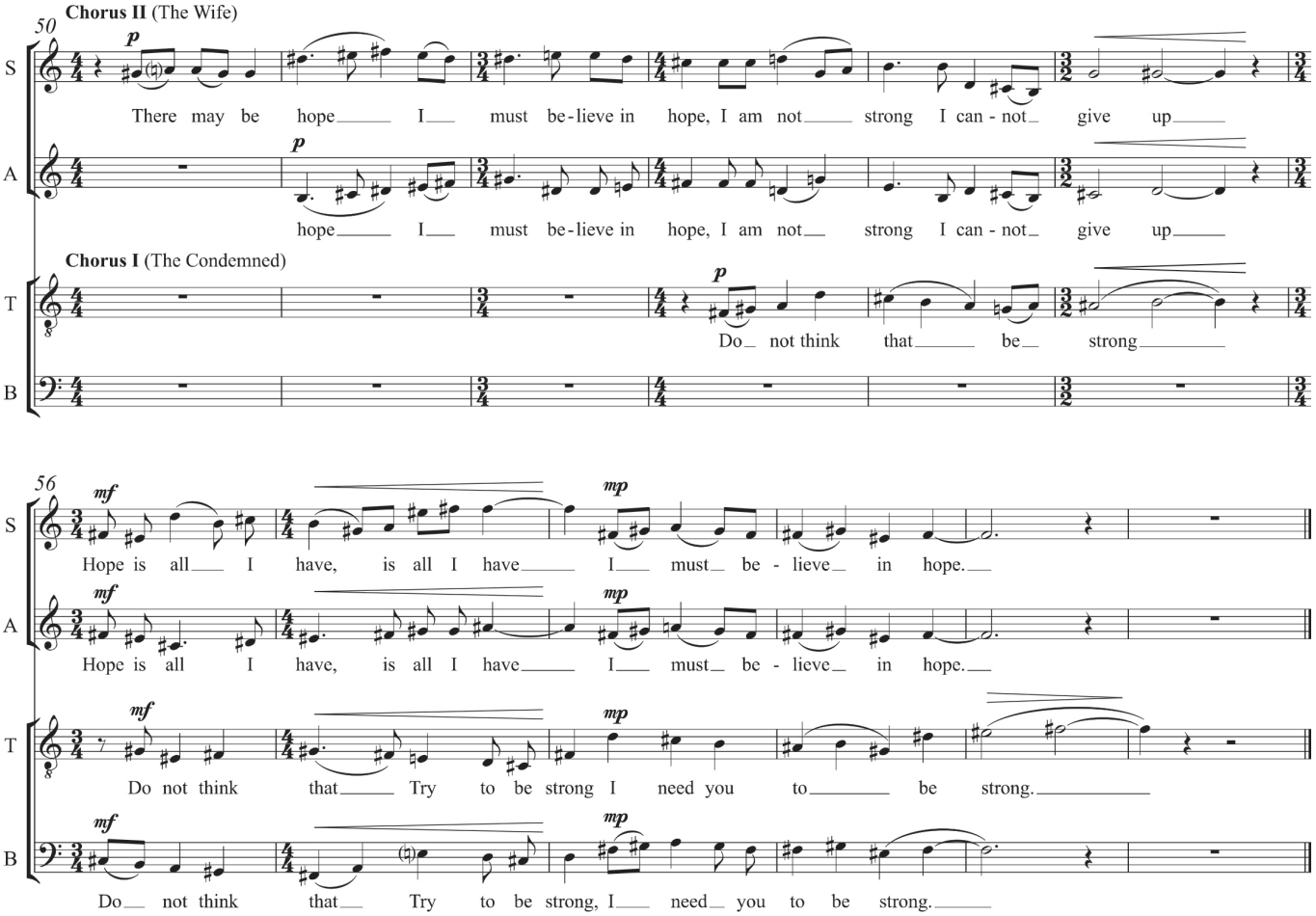


Figure 5. Marc Blitzstein, *The Condemned,* Scene 2, mm. 50 – 61.
Choral parts only

Friend (choir III), an ally of the Condemned who is filled with hatred for the oppressive system that would execute his comrade, a radical. The declamatory character of the Friend's opening statements (both orchestra and chorus will continue the sixteenth-note rhythmic pattern throughout the movement), along with the angular melody, indicates his impetuousness (Figure 6).

The Priest's music is perhaps the most sardonic and biting. A single timpani strike sounds at the rising of the Priest's curtain, followed by a bassoon duet in thirds above a ground bass, all in compound meter, combining elements of the Baroque *pastorale* and *passacaglia.* The Priest also sings in thirds, a contrast to the more dissonant choral writing of the rest of the work; this only adds to the scene's Baroque flavor (Figure 7 on page 43). These allusions, recalling the sacred style of Bach, are notable: Blitzstein would use Bach's music in *The Cradle Will Rock* for the character of the preacher, Reverend Salvation, indicating that the composer's experimentation here would bear later fruit. The Condemned denies the Priest's offer of repentance. A cymbal crashes, and the Priest disappears.

The next scenes explore the tensions between these characters, showing the Condemned moving from resignation into doubt. After stating in scene five that he "believe[s] in Man" and that "there is no God," the Condemned is seized by fear. He calls back for the Priest in scene six, pleading for forgiveness. The Wife then appears, her weeping represented by a textless vocalise, accompanied by a flourish of triplets in the strings. The Condemned declaims his desperate plea in rapid eighth notes ("Save me Father"), simultaneously singing a sustained countermelody ("Lord I believe"), a sort of *cantus firmus.* The Wife interrupts the scene several times with her cries as the Priest intones the absolution ("Ego absolve te..."). This remarkable moment weaves the choral styles of all three of these characters together, illustrating the dramatic potential of the op-

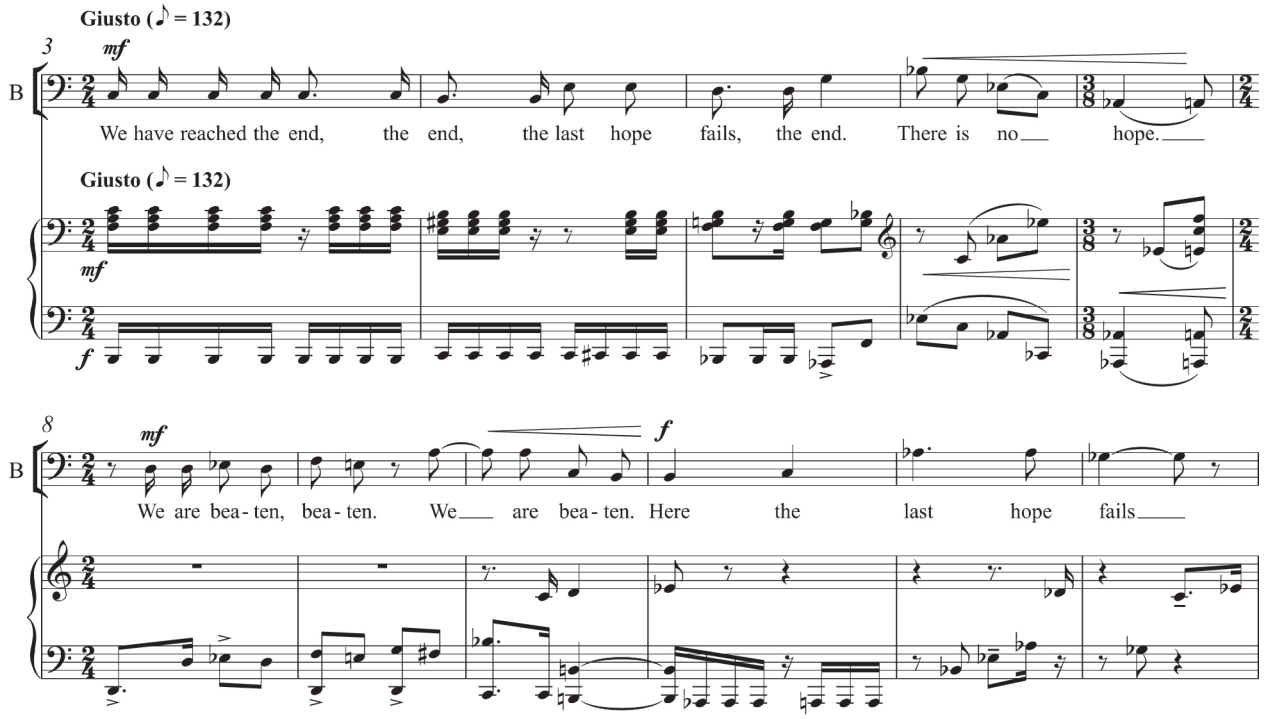


Figure 6. Marc Blitzstein, *The Condemned,* Scene 3, mm. 3 – 13.

era (Figure 8 on page 44). At the end of the scene, the Condemned again asks to be saved, a gesture of resignation; the accompanying strings, sounding a dissonant B-flat and finally a C underneath the chorus, foreshadow the Condemned's doubt and rejection of salvation.

The final scenes (7 – 11) reveal the ultimate themes of the opera, containing the last philosophical and musical statements from each of the characters. A brief and soft instrumental tableau, indicating a temporary peace, serves as a respite from the turmoil of the

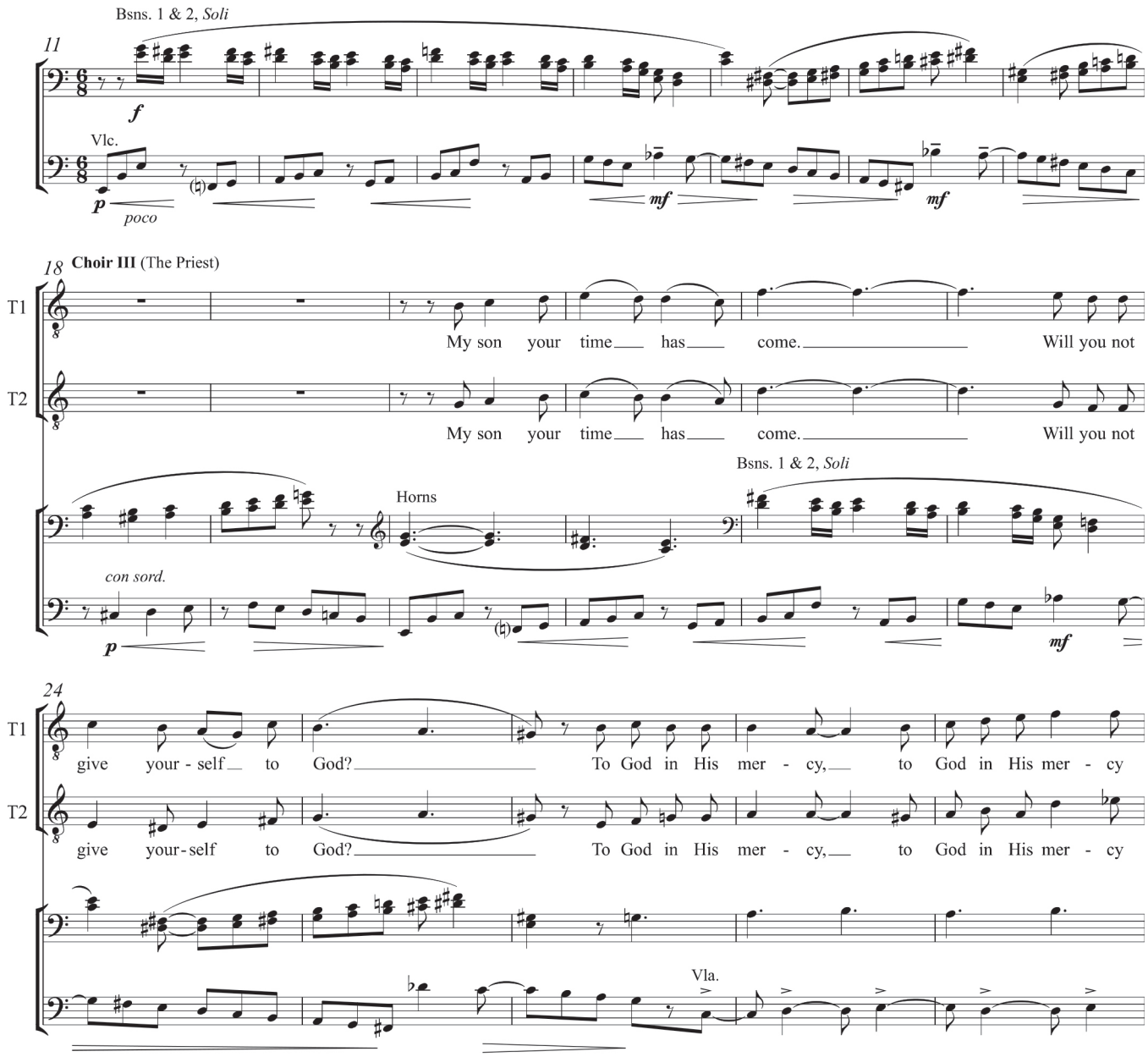


Figure 7. Marc Blitzstein, *The Condemned,* Scene 3, mm. 11 – 28.

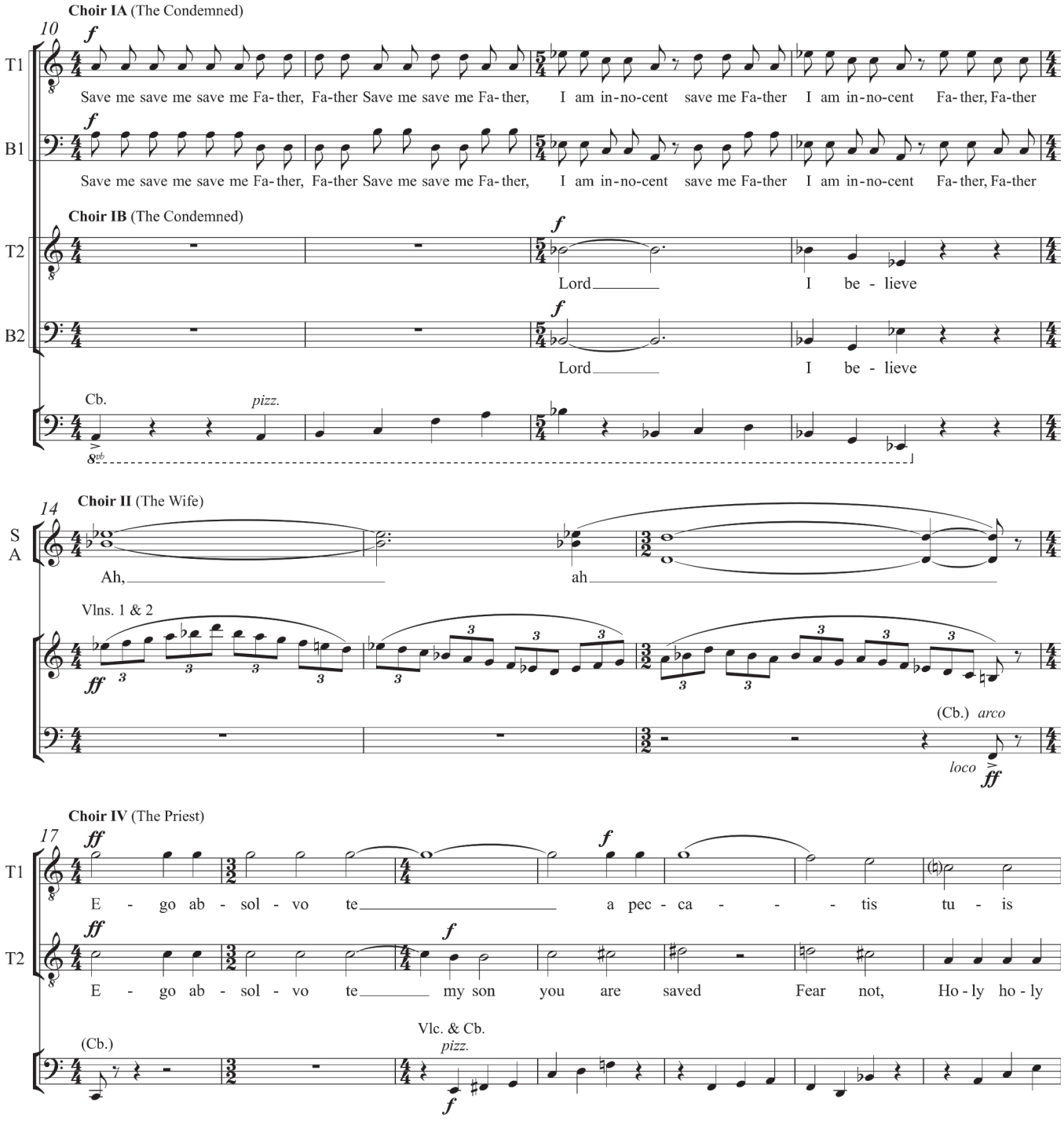


Figure 8. Marc Blitzstein, *The Condemned,* Scene 6, mm. 10 – 23.

previous action. Realizing his error, the Condemned stirs, reaffirming his humanist beliefs in his strongest statement yet: "Wrong. Weak. I deny the Father. I want only brothers. The earth shall one day be enough. All men are my brothers." The sustained choral writing here, homophonic with fully-fleshed harmonies, contrasts with the fragmented quality of the earlier scenes—finally, the Condemned has found peace through his resolve. The last statement of the chorus in this scene ("I shall die content") features a descending four-note motive stated by each of the voices, answering the very first theme of the Condemned, the ascending four-note scale on "Dream, let go." Recognizing that his struggle and persecution was born of a selfless love for humankind, the Condemned finally accepts his fate.

This wife and husband say goodbye to one another in the ninth scene, a short, intimate moment: "Remember to be strong." A solo contrabassoon signals the exit of the Condemned, who goes to his death. A long pause follows, and the Wife then describes her husband's execution in grim detail, singing at first slowly, increasing speed as she continues:

> Gone—he is gone! Suddenly gone
> He was here—I saw him; I heard him speak to me;
> and now he goes to die!
> And I will never see him again!
> Up the steps they lead him; he goes without a whisper;
> they take him to the death room! They hold him,
> They tie him, they bind him, then—strike him down!
> He falls, he is gone!

The Wife sings her narration clearly and percussively. A sustained lament—a wordless, contrapuntal vocalise—interrupts this speech, a moment for the Wife to sob as words fail her. The writing here, again, reveals the influence of earlier choral styles, and Blitzstein includes very specific instructions for phrasing and articulation. (Figure 9 on page 46).

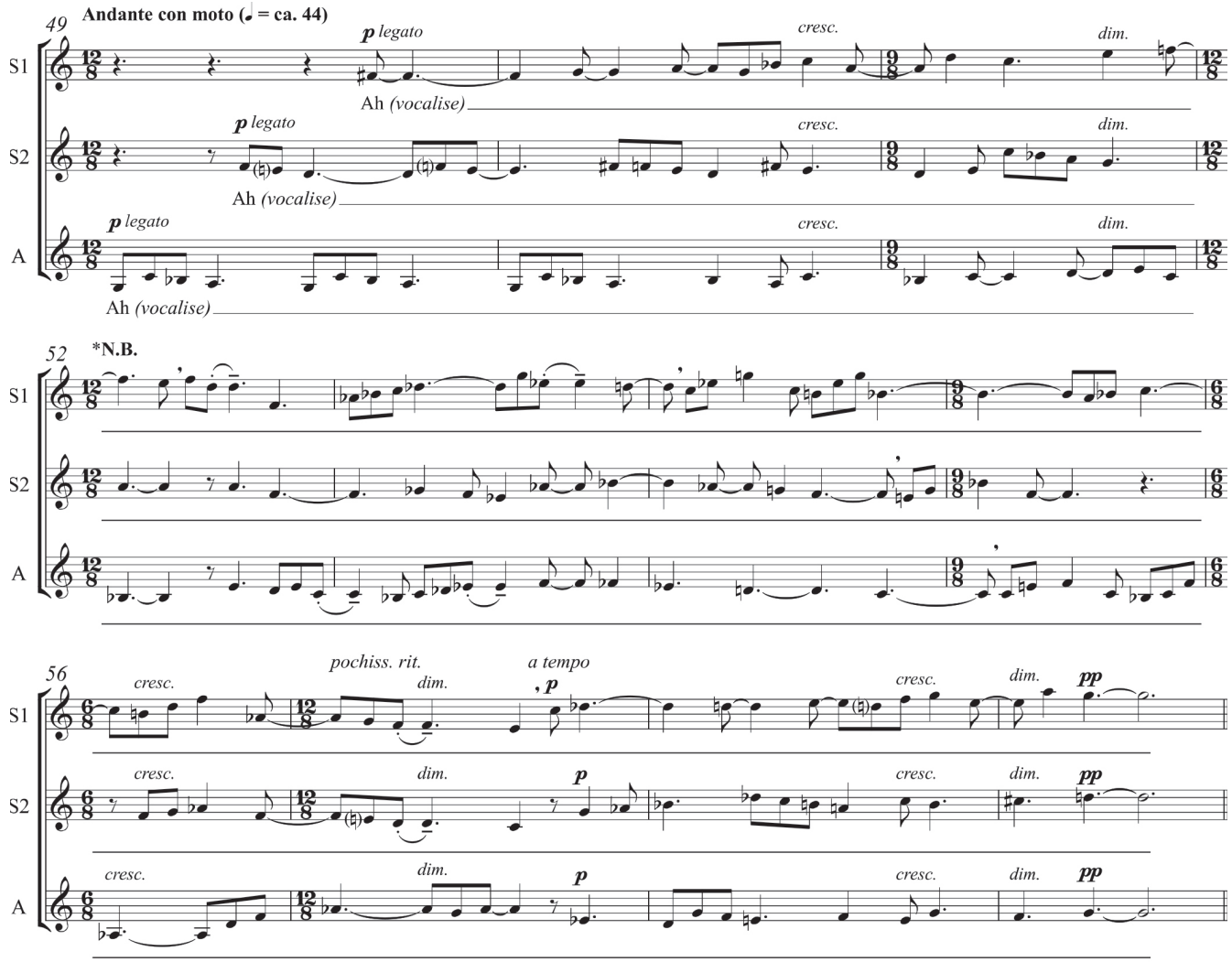
The Friend, the Wife, and the Priest find themselves again in opposition, each one perceiving a different meaning in the execution of the Condemned. The Friend berates the political system for his friend's death: "Curse the nation which killed him, O curse the murderers…. His death shall not be in vain. His name shall be a banner; we will remember the glory of his life and the glory of his death." The Wife interrupts him, saying: "I give him up to glory." The Friend continues his tirade unabated, seemingly unaware of the Wife's cries, as the Priest joins in, singing: "He did believe, he did believe. There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Glory!" This material leads to a dramatic coda, the last moment of the opera, each character singing their variation on the word "glory." The opera ends with a polytonal, unresolved chord, implying ambivalence toward this lionization of the Condemned.

Missed Opportunities

Blitzstein had high hopes for *The Condemned,* and he received some encouragement from fellow musicians. In July 1932, he sent the eighth scene of the opera to Nadia Boulanger, hoping to receive constructive musical criticism from the discerning eye of his former teacher.[29] Boulanger reacted with enthusiasm, writing: "I received your manuscript … I read with great care, great emotion the scene you sent me. I love it in itself deeply and feel that it must take the right place in the whole!" Anticipating some problems, she continued: "I don't realize what is the proportion of the orchestra, the distance in range and some places stay uncertain—in some chords where the voices seem not to be sustained by the orchestra, I would fear 'pour la justesse' [for the intonation]." However, she spent little time on the negative, praising the spirit of the piece: "These things are [a] matter of detail—what matters is the quality of the music, the strength of expression, the choice of means."[30] Likewise, the German composer Hanns Eisler, also a student of Schoenberg's and a frequent Brecht collaborator, called *The Condemned* "a work of extraordinary quality."[31] Aaron Copland was more circumspect, saying that the opera was too abstract and difficult to appreciate: "music one has to respect rather than love."[32] For his part, Blitzstein considered the opera a musical turning point, noting that while the piece

features a "narrow, hemmed-in formula, doggedly regular; the harmonies mostly bleak, hollow, underdone, occasionally passionate," the "open quality in the vertical line, and closed one in the horizontal" gave the work a "special and personal character."[33]

From the beginning, Blitzstein dreamed that the work would find a home in the Soviet Union. With the help of a former teacher, Alexander Siloti, Blitzstein managed to arrange a meeting with the Russian-born English conductor, Albert Coates. Coates had important contacts with the musical establishment in the Soviet Union, conducting at the Bolshoi and heading up efforts to unite the nation's orchestras under a single artistic leadership. In September, before the opera



*N.B. Aside from rests and indicated breathing places, phrase at will, keeping the effect of a continuous legato. If two repeated notes (marked ♩. ♩), take the second with a slight aspirate – not a full new breath.

Figure 9. Marc Blitzstein, *The Condemned,* Scene 10, mm. 49 – 59.

was complete, news came that the conductor desired to meet Blitzstein. After meeting Coates and his wife, Blitzstein sent word to Eva: "Triumph. Coates says utterly original. Russia will invite me to demonstrate. Meyerhold probable regisseur."[34] Blitzstein took extensive notes of his meeting, and Coates's comments seemed to all but guarantee a Soviet performance of *The Condemned*: "I will tell them in Moscow that this is a very, very important work, and one which should appeal to all of us…. utterly original" (although he added that the texture seemed "monotonous" at times, and the opera could use "a bit of variety"). Coates thought the Soviet Union would pay for Blitzstein's living expenses and his return fare. Overjoyed, the composer felt this moment to be "a turning point in the business of 'career.'"[35]

It was not to be. Blitzstein planned for his trip and contacted Coates again after finishing the opera, but he received no response. He would learn disturbing news in a conversation with Prokofiev: Albert Coates had broken his association with the Russians. Blitzstein, in desperation, attempted to reach Coates again, to no avail. After briefly considering making a trip to Russia anyway, he wrote to Eva in January 1933 that he had given up all hopes for a Soviet performance of *The Condemned.*

The harshness of the work, with its dissonance and lack of conventional beauty (the chorus receives almost no harmonic support from the orchestra), along with the forces required to pull it off, proved insurmountable obstacles in Blitzstein's last attempts to perform the composition, as evidenced by a rejection letter sent from the BBC early in 1935.[36] Of course, the cost to mount even a single production of the work would have been substantial, requiring hundreds of performers for only thirty-five minutes of music—difficult under any circumstances, but especially during the extreme economic turmoil of the Great Depression. Shards of the composition would appear in later compositions, but no audience would ever hear Blitzstein's choral opera.

Conclusion

Given this history, does *The Condemned* deserve a hearing today? Yes. To be sure, musicians approaching the score for the first time would probably agree with Copland's assessment: Blitzstein's musical craft is exemplary, particularly his contrapuntal writing, but it is a hard work to embrace. The uncompromising theme and singularly dark musical character throughout would surely make this choral opera a challenge for both the audience and the performers. And, to Boulanger's concern ("pour la justesse"), the lack of support from the orchestra would require a large group of very skilled, independent choral singers. But a sensitive reading and a sympathetic audience would find more: the score exudes an earnestness and a sincerity that speaks to Blitzstein's own political and social convictions, and today's listeners might find the themes unexpectedly resonant and timely. As indicated by the enthusiasm of Boulanger and Eisler, *The Condemned* contains several moments of high drama and musical inspiration, many of the key scenes and staging concepts impossible to visualize without seeing them performed onstage. And, as mentioned at the outset, it is possibly the most extensive choral work on the topic of political persecution from the Great Depression—the very idea of a "choral opera," particularly on such charged political and social themes, is unique and enigmatic.

The Condemned occupies a singular historical place in Blitzstein's output, immediately preceding his most enduring work, *The Cradle Will Rock.* Eva Goldbeck, always an ardent supporter of this choral opera, observed that the "characteristic greatness of Blitzstein's music" had here reached its zenith, noting "its universally available combination of monumentality and drama; its individual statement of human elements; its purity, depth, and concentration of spirit; above all, its complete musicality." Most presciently, she felt sure that Blitzstein's best work lay ahead: "it suggests… that at some time Blitzstein will write a great comic work in music stemming directly out of this great tragic work."[37] After having plumbed enormous depths in this abstract, psychological drama, exhausting his inspiration in the process, Blitzstein's next stage work would do just that, providing him with the success and fame he had wished for *The Condemned.* In fact, one

could argue that this unknown choral opera's vision of "the capitalistic machine against a radical individual" inspired all of Blitzstein's music and politics through the 1930s and beyond. If so, *The Cradle Will Rock*, in which a radical union member does manage to stand up against the "capitalistic machine," could be considered a more successful implementation of the basic theme of *The Condemned*, the flower that would blossom from this root. CJ

NOTES

[1] Marc Blitzstein (MB), letter to Josephine Blitzstein Davis (JBD), 16 October 1932. This and all letters quoted are from the Marc Blitzstein Papers collection, housed in the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, part of the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives in Madison. Blitzstein used bits of *The Condemned* as source material for later works, but the choral opera as originally conceived has never been performed. All Blitzstein quotations are reprinted with the permission of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, New York. All rights reserved.

[2] Some European works invite comparison, although Blitzstein's choral opera precedes them all. Hanns Eisler would write the Communist-themed oratorio *Die Mutter* in 1935, which features substantial music for chorus, and concern for the Jewish situation in Germany inspired Michael Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* (1939-1941), which would also use choral music to great effect.

[3] Biographies available include Howard Pollack, *Marc Blitzstein: His Life, His Work, His World* (New York: Oxford, 2012) and Eric A. Gordon, *Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989). Gordon's was the first full-length treatment of Blitzstein's life; Pollack's masterful biography may be considered the most definitive to date. Blitzstein's protégé and friend, Leonard Bernstein, was a tireless advocate of his music, and in the choral world Blitzstein would collaborate closely with Robert Shaw in *The Airborne Symphony* (1946). Edward Albee, the Broadway playwright, believed Blitzstein "sadly neglected." A treatment of another little-known Blitzstein work has appeared previously in the *Choral Journal*: see Justin Smith, "Grand Oratorio with a Social Conscience: Marc Blitzstein's 'This Is the Garden (1957)'." *Choral Journal* 49, no. 8 (2009): 32-47.

[4] Blitzstein was the victim of a gay-bashing incident in Martinique, in which he was lured into an alley under false sexual pretenses and badly beaten by three sailors he met in a bar. He would soon die of his injuries. See Pollack, *Marc Blitzstein*, 468-9, 496-7.

[5] Gordon, *Mark the Music*, 60.

[6] MB, notes on Cain, 1931. The ballet would wait nearly ninety years for its premiere, which finally occurred in 2019.

[7] MB, notes, 1931 (R6#242 in the Marc Blitzstein Papers, microfilm).

[8] MB, notes, 1931 (R44#59). The chronology here indicates that the idea of a choral opera may have preceded his decision to take Sacco and Vanzetti as a thematic subject.

[9] MB, letter to JBD, 9 August 1931 (R2#946).

[10] MB, letter to JBD, 10 August 1931 (R2#953-4).

[11] See Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991); John F. Neville, *Twentieth-Century Cause Cèlébre: Sacco, Vanzetti, and the Press, 1920-1927* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004); David Felix, *Protest: Sacco-Vanzetti and the Intellectuals* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1965); William Young and David E. Kaiser, *Postmortem: New Evidence in the Case of Sacco and Vanzetti* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985); and Douglas Linder, "The Sacco and Vanzetti Trial," *Famous American Trials*, https://famous-trials.com/saccovanzetti.

[12] Felix, *Protest*, 54.

[13] Pollack, *Marc Blitzstein*, 134-5.

[14] Neville, *Twentieth-Century*, 151-2.

[15] Avrich, *Anarchist Background*, 56-7.

[16] Neville, *Twentieth-Century*, 36-7. While there is still no consensus on the innocence or guilt of Sacco and Vanzetti, many historians agree that they should have at least been granted a second trial.

[17] Carolyn West Pace, "Sacco and Vanzetti in American Art and Music" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1997), 37.

[18] MB, "Sketch for a one-act opera" (R44#59).

[19] MB, character list (R44#144-5).

[20] MB, sketch (R44#59).

[21] MB, sketch (R44#60-1).

[22] Gordon, *Mark the Music*, 74-5.

[23] Marc Blitzstein, "Tame Season in New York," *Modern Music* 9:2 (Jan-Feb 1932), 79.

[24] Eva Goldbeck's (EG) journals document this period in great detail.

[25] Marc Blitzstein, music for *The Condemned,* Marc Blitzstein Papers, microfilm, R44F164-210 (early piano version), R44F211-270 (incomplete piano-vocal transcription and various musical sketches), R44F271-334 (incomplete conductor's score draft), R44F335-547 (conductor's score #1), and R44F548-746 (conductor's score #2).

[26] Blitzstein's production notes are referenced here. For more about Brecht and Meyerhold's theatrical innovations, see Katherine Bliss Eaton, *The Theater of Meyerhold and Brecht,* Contributions in Drama and Theatre Studies, ed. Joseph Donohue, no. 19 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), 9. Brecht's theories with regard to representing the Marxian materialist dialectic through dramatic means may also have influenced Blitzstein's decision to illustrate the individual as a choir, a point taken up earlier in this essay.

[27] Pollack, *Marc Blitzstein,* 137

[28] This moment again calls to mind the third movement of Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms.*

[29] Part of the Nadia Boulanger Collection at Harvard University.

[30] Nadia Boulanger, letter to Marc Blitzstein, 31 July 1932.

[31] Quoted in Pollack, *Marc Blitzstein,* 106, also see 140.

[32] Quoted in Pollack, *Marc Blitzstein,* 139.

[33] MB, letter to JBD, 29 October 1932 (R2#1227).

[34] MB, telegram to EG, 29 September 1932. A reference to Vsevolod Meyerhold, the Russian theater empresario.

[35] MB, letter to JBD, 12 October 1932.

[36] G. M. Beckett, letter to MB, 11 January 1935. Pollack notes the work was the subject of derision in the BBC offices.

[37] EG, essay on Marc Blitzstein's music, n.d. Sadly, Eva would die shortly after Blitzstein finished *The Condemned* and would not see the success of *The Cradle Will Rock.*

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On the Voice

Duane Cottrell, editor

Seven Essentials for Developing Voices in Choir: Part 1

by Francis Cathlina

Singing in a choral ensemble can create a positive impact in the lives of its singers, helping them find community to develop into emotionally whole human beings. Finding ways to encourage the singers to view themselves as worthy, talented, and special is important. Their individual vocal development can foster this belief. Consistent support from the choral director, along with a strong understanding of healthy vocalism, can promote the singers' positive view of their own voice. This provides an outlet for self-expression and encourages high self-esteem in the singers—no matter the age. To do this, choir directors must be aware of the challenges their singers face. Vocal technique—rooted in a scientific understanding of the voice and backed by historical pedagogy—is imperative in helping the singers navigate the musical complexities in a rehearsal setting. The building of strong voices in choir relies on the following seven key principles: the choral warm-up, posture, breathing and support, tone, choral blend, musical acuity, and the conductor's model/gesture. This article focuses on the first three precepts: the choral warm-up, posture, and breathing and support. By refining the choral conductor's knowledge of these seven essentials, and expanding their pedagogical toolboxes to use in rehearsals, each singer's technique can blossom healthfully within a choral ensemble.

The Choral Warm-Up

The choral warm-up is one of the greatest tools we have to develop voices. Similar to an exercise warm-up, it is wise to begin with light exercises over a limited range, and then progress toward heavier singing loads with greater range. Titze suggests that it should "involve a dialogue with one's body."[1] This allows the singers to gauge their instrument's condition on that specific day and time. The singers' use of kinesthetic movement can vastly help. Some ideas to engage the musicians include: conducting horizontally to engender breath flow; using the arms to visually depict the inhalation/exhalation process; palpating the larynx for a physical awareness of its position; or gently massaging the masseter muscles (chewing muscles) while vocalizing. Titze also states that warming up should be a "concert of individuality" where the singers are warming up their voices to their optimal individual sound.[2]

Expect to hear a cacophony of vocal sounds, especially when warming up more advanced singers. Work to further develop the students' studio technique during the warm-up at a mezzo forte; the voice functions at maximum efficiency at this dynamic level. Do not insist upon choral blend yet, or the singers will begin holding back their voices from the start, diminishing their potential for greater vocal colors within the

choral rehearsal. The unity of choral blend can occur when singing a piece together. This allows for each singer to bring their best vocalism to the repertoire.

Strong support exists to minimize collision of the vocal folds in the initial warm-up process.[3] This protects the folds while stretching the muscles to prepare it for intense activity. Choir directors can accomplish this by keeping the mouth closed during much of the warm-up. Titze recommends semi-occluded vocal tract exercises such as lip trills, tongue trills, humming, and phonation through a straw.[4] For example: a lip trill on a simple scale (scale degrees 1, 2, 3, 2, 1) gently engages the folds at the rehearsal's onset. The simplicity of the scale and limited range allows for the voice to "wake up" before more demanding vocalizations.

Ensure a high-quality breath and pitch clarity in these semi-occluded vocal tract exercises; this serves to establish foundational elements before tackling other aspects of choral technique: choral blend, articulating in synchrony, matching vowels, etc. An ending warm-up can consist of a legato /a/ vowel while singing scale degrees 1, 3, 5, 8, 5, 3, 1 in the singers' fullest, most resonant voice. The forte dynamic and the arpeggiation that spans an octave is a heavier singing load that can strengthen their ability to project with energy while combining the technical concepts solidified early on in the warm-up.

Depending on the age of the singers, the warm-up process can look very different. According to Freer, a successful choral warm-up for adolescents will have four components:

1) a logical sequence that remains constant from day-to-day;

2) student choice and experimentation with the warm-ups (ie. "pick either Do, Mi, Sol, or high Do and sustain it on an /o/ vowel");

3) a pedagogical relationship between the warm-up and the repertoire to be rehearsed; and

4) a variety of activities.[5]

The pedagogical relationship between the warm-up and repertoire helps to transfer the vocal technique developed into the literature. Students can then identify these items in the rehearsal, reinforcing their self-efficacy in rehearsals. The variety of activities provides a gentle transition from the busy outside world to the rehearsal setting.

The opening moments of rehearsal provide an opportunity for "group voice building" or "group vocal technique." This philosophy guides the enhancement of the choristers' vocal skills. Because adolescent singers have different vocal ranges, developing non-pitched vocalization exercises draws the students into the choral experience by helping them achieve success at the rehearsal's onset. Examples of these include: laughing or crying in a general vocal range, high-pitched squeals, and low-pitched growls. Listen for unanimity of the students' different parts of their ranges. These can morph into more specific consonant and vowel sounds like /baba/ or /dodo/ to refine vowels, consonants, and technique. Within this "group voice building," singers evolve their technical "toolbox" so that when encountered with a difficult vocal passage in the literature, they have the means to navigate it

successfully.

Besides the studio teacher, there are few people who develop voices more than choral directors. Those who successfully develop the voices in their care begin rehearsal with warm-ups, understand the voice and its capabilities, and constantly address vocal technique in the rehearsal.

Alignment

Strong vocal technique is founded on excellent physical alignment, and many choir directors begin the warm-up process by addressing this in some way. Physical motions—like stretching, tossing a football, shoveling snow, or raking leaves—help transition the singers from the boisterous outside world to the calm focus needed for rehearsal. From these movements, finding the most favorable alignment of the skeletal structure for singing is key. Because individual students vary in posture, the term "alignment" is preferred over "posture."[6] Using the term "posture" often causes singers to alter their body position through muscularity (puffing out their chest or excessively pulling their shoulders back). The term "alignment" invokes a calmer positioning of the body's bones, resulting in less muscular tension. Each singer's organic alignment should reduce the body's extraneous muscle tension to prepare the body for success. Watch for an elevation of the sternum with shoulders placed back and relaxed; because of cell phones, rounded shoulders are the most common ailment afflicting our students nowadays. The Alexander technique has proven useful for vocalists and is recommended for further consideration.

Ann Howard Jones talks to choral singers about the body's energy, stating that "singing does not come out of a static body."[7] The singers should stand as if they are about to traverse a tightrope; this pulls the torso up and lengthens it to give the body the feeling of suspension. This active body engagement should be paired with an engagement of the mind. If accomplished, there will be a positive connection between the body and the singer's tone production.[8]

Though the goal in our alignment is to be as relaxed as possible, singing is athletic: it requires the action of some muscles and the release of others. Muscles in the neck, mouth, shoulder, and head should be released. During inhalation, the diaphragm will be active, and expansion in the area below the rib cage will be inevitable. During exhalation, however, each singer will feel different sensations, and each voice teacher will explain the sensations differently. Because of this, it is recommended that choir directors emphasize the release of muscles that interfere (i.e., the jaw, throat, neck, shoulders, face) and let the studio teacher emphasize the muscular sensations after that. This release of tension can be accomplished through physical activity (stretching, moving, swinging arms) and kinesthetic reminders (e.g., "Touch your index finger to your masseter muscle, and let it melt the tension.").

Breathing and Support

A fundamental part of developing voices in a choral ensemble involves the pedagogy of breathing and support. Gebhardt states that teaching proper breathing technique is "achievable for all kids, especially after the age of eight when their lungs are more fully developed."[9] The breath control training improves vocal ranges, sound intensity, tonal duration, and pitch accuracy regardless of age.[10]

Inhalation should be silent, the muscles of the abdomen should be released, and the singer should maintain expanded ribs and a contracted diaphragm for a controlled exhalation. Without these elements, the singer would not be able to sing in tune since pitch accuracy correlates directly with breath support. Cottrell expounds on these ideas, and cites modern scientific studies and historical literature to confirm three useful principles that define our breathing pedagogy. The first principle is that full use of the chest and abdomen is necessary for good breathing.[11] An abdominal approach—with a sole focus on the diaphragm—was a staple of choral pedagogy for most of the twentieth century. Still popular among choral conductors, this breathing method ignores the contribution of the chest to a well-supported tone. The science of anatomy and historical pedagogy backs this assertion: the surface area of the lungs attached to the ribcage is greater than that attached to the diaphragm. Therefore, using the ribcage to aid in inspiration processes a greater volume of air. For optimal inspiration, elite classical singers follow

this breathing method: contraction of the diaphragm, relaxation of the abdomen, followed by an expansion of the chest cavity caused by external intercostals.[12] This combination is the most effective way to increase total lung capacity. Panting (like an overheated dog) is a practical tool to draw attention to these muscle areas in the breathing process.

The second principle that Cottrell sets forth is that opposing muscular forces must be balanced during controlled expiration.[13] During expiration, the muscles of inhalation (diaphragm and external intercostals) remain slightly contracted to provide resistance to expiratory forces from the internal intercostals and abdominals. This resistance keeps the exhalation muscles from contracting too quickly and prevents air from being forced out rapidly. During expiration, the abdominal muscles exert pressure over the lower portion of the lungs, and the internal intercostals exert pressure on the upper portion of the lungs. As a result, maximum expiratory force is achieved. This balanced breathing method offers singers more control over airflow and subglottal pressure, leading to more consistent breath support.

Cottrell's final principle specifies that good breath support is dependent upon firm glottal closure.[14] Two laryngeal muscles are responsible for this: the interarytenoids (IAs) and lateral cricoarytenoids (LCAs). Both sets of muscles must be contracted for complete glottal closure. Engaging only the LCA results in a glottal gap, causing breathiness and a weak, unsupported tone. Garcia advocated the *coup de la glotte* as a way to build firm phonation in his singers. This onset is not harmful, if properly trained, and can easily be translated into the singing tone. To feel this, speak the American phrase "uh oh." Though Cottrell posits that the *coup de la glotte* is not recommended in choral performances, teaching it during the warm-up will translate into firmer, clearer vocal sounds.

Sustained tone exercises (such as singing on an /a/ vowel on any single pitch) serve an important role in teaching support. It allows each singer to concentrate on breath management, making corrections as needed; it builds continuous coordination of breath and resistance in the folds; and it leads to the ability to sustain legato phrases, producing a more connected tone.[15] It is also important to note that because singers take in a breath to sing an entire phrase, the conductor should aim to rehearse in phrases—and not little spurts. This trains the singers' bodies to take in, and release, breath efficiently for each phrase.

Conclusion

Singers' vocal development in a choral ensemble starts with the director's clear understanding of technique, rooted in a scientific understanding of the mechanism, and supported by historical pedagogy. These seven essentials form a foundation for the singers' vocal growth: the choral warm-up, posture, breathing and support, tone, choral blend, musical acuity, and the conductor's model/gesture. This initial installment of a two-part article refines understanding of the first three precepts: the choral warm-up, posture, and breathing and support. Once these three are understood and applied, tone, choral blend, musical acuity, and one's own model

and conducting gesture can form an ideal environment for each singers' voice to burgeon healthily. CJ

NOTES

[1] Ingo R. Titze, "Getting the Most from the Vocal Instrument in a Choral Setting," *Choral Journal* 49, no. 5: 36.

[2] Ibid., 36.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Patrick K. Freer, "Choral Warm-Ups for Changing Adolescent Voices," *Music Educators Journal* 95, no. 3 (2009): 59.

[6] Freer, 60.

[7] Ann Howard Jones, "Voice Training in the Choral Rehearsal," *Choral Journal* 49, no. 5 (2008): 13.

[8] Jones, "Voice Training," 13.

[9] Gebhardt, Rianne Marcum. "The Adolescent Singing Voice in the 21st Century: Vocal Health and Pedagogy Promoting Vocal Health." DMA diss., The Ohio State University, 2016.

[10] Darlene Louise Fett, "The Adolescent Female Voice: The Effect of Vocal Skills Instruction on Measures of Singing Performance and Breath Management," (PhD diss., The University of Iowa, 1993), 36.

[11] Duane Cottrell, "Support or Resistance? Examining Breathing Techniques in Choral Singing," *Choral Journal* 50, no. 9 (2010): 53-54.

[12] Ibid., 54.

[13] Ibid., 53.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 57.

ChorTeach is ACDA's quarterly online magazine for choral directors/music educators who are searching for fresh ideas or techniques to meet practical needs in their choral classroom. Articles are chosen from author submissions and from ACDA state and regional newsletters and reprinted with permission. *ChorTeach* is edited by Terry Barham and contains over 150 articles dating back to 2008. The *ChorTeach* index is organized by genre and annotated for easy reference. View the archives and index at acda.org/chorteach. Below is a preview of the Spring 2021 issue of *ChorTeach*.

Sharing through Song: Resources for Singing Migration Stories by Ethan M. Chessin
For those who wonder how to use song to tell someone else's story, the author of this article provides "resources for teachers and directors interested in using music to teach choirs and audiences about immigration." The Immigrant Story (www.theimmigrantstory.org) was a primary source for his project.

Addressing Racial and Cultural Challenges in Choirs by Baruch Whitehead
Should white students sing stories about Black oppression? This article details a collaboration between a predominantly white high school choir and a multiracial, intergenerational choir of college and community singers.

A Delicate Balance—Caring for the Music and the Singers by J. Dennis Morrissey
This is an interview article with twelve college/university choral conductors from Illinois answering questions about caring for the music and the singers, rehearsal balance, and more.

Preserving the Choral Art in the Time of COVID: "How Can I Keep From Singing?" By David Howard and Jeffrey J. Gonda II
The authors of this article share their experience with the challenges and triumphs of making music during the COVID pandemic with the hope of inspiring and encouraging others.

In Memoriam

Guy Webb
1931–2021

Dr. Guy B. Webb was professor and director of choral studies at Missouri State University from 1980 until his retirement in 2014, culminating a teaching legacy of over fifty-five years. He previously taught at the University of Florida; State University of New York, Cortland; and New Mexico State University. His degrees are from the Juilliard School, Columbia University, and the University of Illinois. Dr. Webb trained generations of vocalists, music teachers, and choral directors who now work at institutions across the country. His choirs were featured at regional and national conferences of ACDA, and he served ACDA in various capacities in national office, along with serving as president of the Southwestern Division (2004-2006). Dr. Webb was editor and author of *Up Front: Becoming the Complete Choral Conductor* (ECS Publishing Group). At Missouri State he conducted the choirs and taught choral-related courses including conducting and choral literature, always holding his students to the highest standard of excellence. There, he took the MSU Chorale on countless tours both domestic and abroad. Known among his colleagues as a forward-thinking choral artist, he was always eager to introduce new music to the world. In addition to his inspirational artistry, Dr. Webb will be remembered as one with a kind heart and a genuine love for humanity. He is revered by those who knew him as always full of life, often instigating comedic antics that would always bring a smile to his colleagues and students. He is survived by his wife, Barbara, of sixty-seven years; son, David and wife, Jennifer, and grandsons, Daniel and Andrew; daughter, Marcia; and beloved dog, Meko. His choral legacy will live in perpetuity through the lives he touched and through his namesake scholarship. Memorial contributions may be made to Dr. Guy B. Webb Touring Scholarship: https://tinyurl.com/ydeq5b5q

Repertoire & Resources

Children's Choirs

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Children's Choral Repertoire with Highlighted Pedagogical Elements

by Katrina Turman

The world of children's choral music is a worthy and exciting field. Young people are capable of performing with such artistry, and conductors are lucky to guide and witness this transformation. One of the conductor's most inspirational tasks is to seek out innovative children's choral repertoire. As leaders of children's choral ensembles, we have a responsibility to select music of educational and communal value and to provide our students with the best training possible. While discovering interesting and appropriate repertoire for ensembles is an enjoyable responsibility, it is also time consuming. Conductors are asked to fill so many roles: teacher, artist, administrator. Sometimes the work of selecting repertoire can turn into a daunting or even stressful experience. The purpose of this article is to provide high-quality repertoire options by composers of varied backgrounds and to identify pedagogical aspects within those examples that make them exceptional. The highlighted elements focus on two subcategories: a progression from unison to multiple part-singing, and a theme of languages/storytelling.

A Progression from Unison to Multiple Part-Singing

Of all the elements a conductor considers when evaluating the difficulty of a piece of music for their ensemble, the number of vocal parts usually comes first. The choral field often considers singing in multiple parts as the definition of success and this pervades children's choral music as well. A beginner group singing in two parts is considered a success even if they do so poorly. When we push our students to sing music that is too complex, frustration and resentment can brew. We also do not want music that does not provide enough of a challenge for the student intellectually. A conductor should aim to program repertoire that is appropriate to the skill level of the ensemble while still providing the group with artistic and mental stimulation. The following progression highlights elements to discover within repertoire selections that may aid the learning process and help an ensemble find success. The literature progresses from simple unison melodies to multiple part-singing. Once one skill is well-mastered, it may be time to move on to the next. This is not meant as the only sequential progression to consider when advancing a choir's part-singing skills, but it is one option that follows a logical sequence of skill development.

Let's start at the very beginning. Well, not quite the beginning. After the student has had some experience singing short melodies, chants, and games in a classroom setting, they may be ready for a longer choral piece. Sherelle Eyles's *Clouds* is an example of a quality full-length choral song with repetitive material. The strophic nature of the piece, with verses that are melodically nearly identical, will help young students find success in their learning. This is an imaginative work with text that describes the different shapes clouds may take and features optional corresponding animal noises. The text is approachable and will be easy for

young singers to learn and memorize. The additional elements of a largely stepwise melodic line with supportive accompaniment that doubles the melody throughout create a piece that young students can easily master, without sacrificing quality (Figure 1).

Once an ensemble is somewhat experienced performing full-length, strophic works, a conductor may desire to introduce unison choral songs with more variations. Errollyn Wallen's *I am looking at a map of the world* displays this with little to no repetition of melodic material. The rhythms of the vocal line are more advanced with tied and syncopated notation. The added element of an accompaniment that does not double the vocal line requires that students become more independent in their rhythm and pitch. This challenging piece is quite short and very approachable for an intermediate elementary ensemble wishing to pursue a vocally more complex piece, while still singing in unison (Figure 2).

Prepping a choir for harmonic singing is a journey and is not achieved overnight. Necessary skills should be introduced early and practiced often. Consider implementing varied exercises that increase vocal independence throughout the year, such as rounds, call-and-response melodies, ostinato exercises, and short partner songs. These can be integrated into warmups or peppered throughout a rehearsal to break up more intensive work. Part-singing exercises such as rounds are useful throughout a child's choral education and are not defined solely by their usefulness in learning to sing in harmony. As choral educator and prolific author Robert L. Garretson

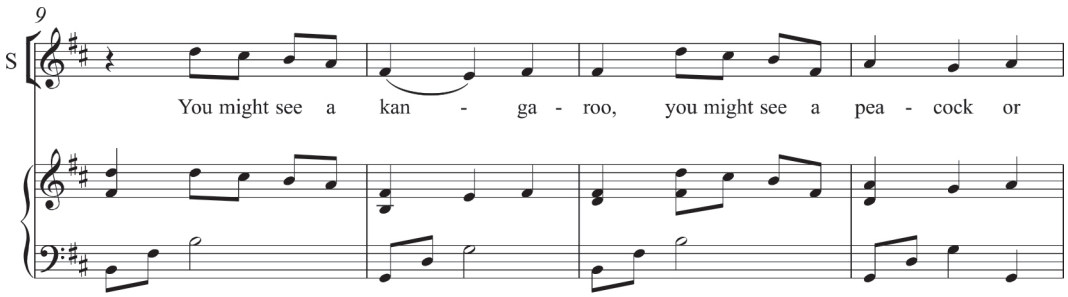

Figure 1. Sherelle Eyles, *Clouds,* mm. 9–12.

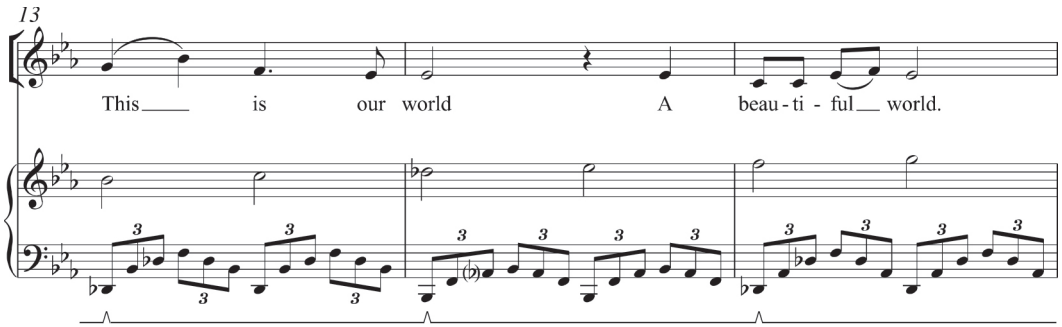

Figure 2. Errollyn Wallen, *I am looking at a map of the world,* mm. 13–15.

states, "these activities…should not be considered terminal in nature, but may be continued for as long as they are enjoyable and contribute to the musical development of the children."[1] Singing these types of songs with friends never gets old or boring!

If an ensemble has experienced some of this harmonic preparatory work and has displayed independence in their singing of unison repertoire, they may be ready for a multiple part choral work. One way to successfully introduce two-part singing is to find repertoire that uses partner songs. This is when two (or sometimes more) differing melodies are performed together in harmony. The strength of each melody helps students stay on their vocal line rather than being swayed to the other.[2] *Giant of the Forest* by Glyn Lehmann is a beautiful example of this technique. The two main themes are introduced separately, by both piano and voices. Eventually the two melodies are performed together in a triumphant and heroic melding. The environmental background behind the music is an appreciated bonus. Centurion is the name of a 500-year-old tree in Tasmania that has survived countless trials, including wildfires and human logging. While this piece contains a more difficult polyphonic section in 6/8 meter, the moment is short, and the music again returns to the partnering of the two main themes (Figure 3).

A canon with accompaniment or a piece that utilizes canonic polyphony in its structure is an additional helpful element to aid in the learning of multiple part-singing. This is especially ideal if a choir has extensive practice in singing canons or rounds. It is best if there is as consistent of imitation between the voices

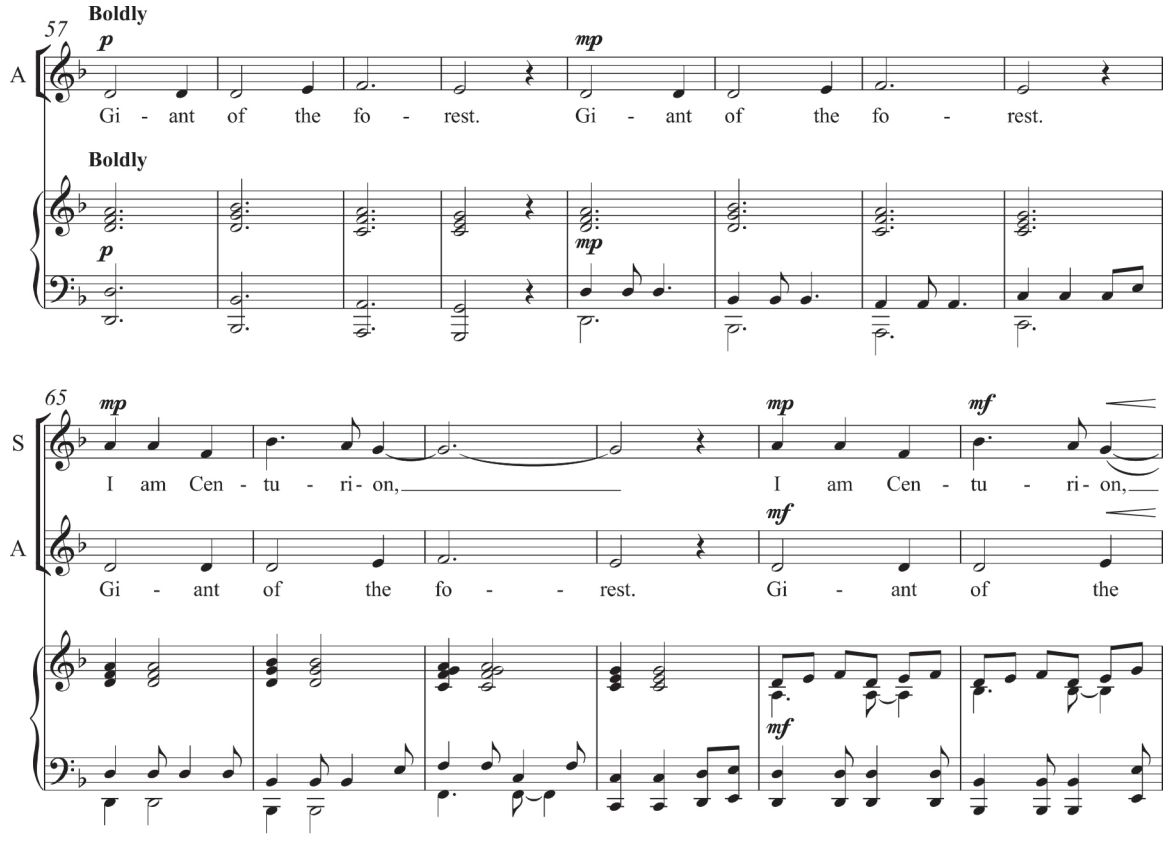

Figure 3. Glyn Lehmann, *Giant of the Forest,* mm. 57–70.

as possible. When imitation is varied slightly, whether by pitch or rhythm, young students have more difficulty.[3] *Wau Bulan,* arranged by Dr. Tracy Wong, uses this technique. With only a few moments of actual harmonic singing, this piece could easily be taught in a call-and-response manner. One teaching idea would be to use the call-and-response melodic material during warmups, first with the conductor leading and eventually having students come up and lead the ensemble themselves. The Malaysian text is repetitive and phonetically very accessible to non-native speakers. *Wau Bulan* is accompanied by unpitched percussion instruments, necessitating an ensemble capable of maintaining relative pitch (Figure 4).

New arrangements of traditional choral works are always welcome and B.E. Boykin's arrangement of *Joshua fit the battle of Jericho* is no exception. This arrangement is wholly appropriate for ensembles developing their part-singing skills as it is largely in unison with minimal harmonic splits. The harmonic structure of this traditional African American spiritual allows young singers to experience this important work in an accessible way. Considering the history of the spiritual and the religious text, this work should be taught in an informed way, ideally with the advice and guidance of an African American spiritual music expert (Figure 5).

After much time with the above described styles, it may be time for an ensemble to tackle a two-part homophonic work. With a less advanced group, it is most advantageous to focus first on homophonic works in which the voices move in parallel 3rd or 6th motion. There has been dispute regarding repertoire that heavily features parallel 3rd/6th motion with less experienced ensembles due

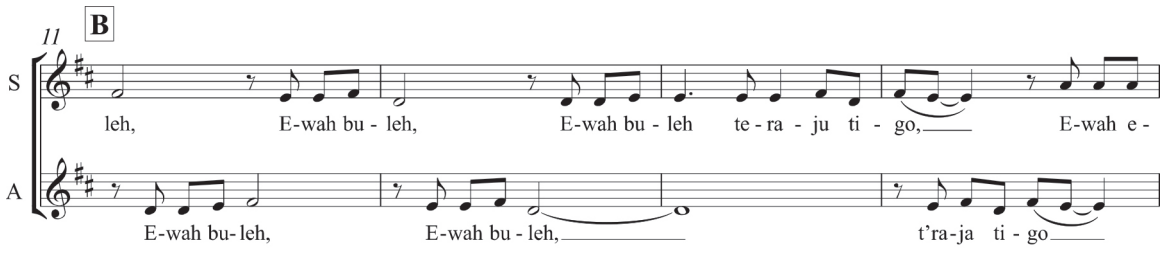

Figure 4. Dr. Tracy Wong arr., *Wau Bulan,* Traditional Malaysian, mm. 11–14.

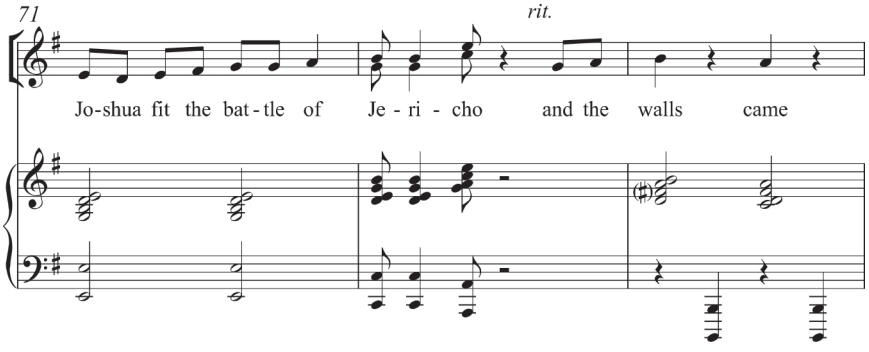

Figure 5. B. E. Boykin, *Joshua fit the battle of Jericho,* mm. 71–73.

to the harmonic similarity between the parts.[4]

Young singers may have difficulty hearing the difference between the voices if they are aurally not prepared or if they learn completely by rote. This can mitigated if this type of repertoire is taught on solfege or in a literacy-forward manner. It is also helpful if the two voices begin in unison and then break out into parts, allowing the students to visually see the contour of their line compared to the other.

Once a choir has mastered parallel motion with more expected harmonies, conductors can look to compositions that hold more complex intervals between the voices and feature oblique and contrary motion. *Peyi Mwen,* a Haitian song by Pierre Rigaud Chéry & Yves Lavaud and arranged by Sydney Guillaume, displays this more advanced voicing still within a homophonic setting. While lengthy, the piece is repetitive and has many moments of unison between the voices, which would allow a chorus to "check back in" with each other before again moving away in harmony. There are a few moments of polyphonic singing, but these are composed in a comprehensible call-and-response style. The Haitian Creole text would likely be difficult for most non-native speakers, so conductors should anticipate spending a good amount of rehearsal time working text. *Peyi Mwen* is challenging in language, rhythm, and duration, so adequate preparatory work and time must be dedicated to ensure mastery of the work while still maintaining the enjoyment of the process (Figure 6 on page 62).

Once an ensemble is comfortable with part-singing, a conductor may look for a varied piece of music which features moments of all of the elements discussed above: uni-

son, call-and-response, homophonic singing, and polyphonic entrances. *Migaloo* by Australian composer Annie Kwok is one such piece. The song features more complex voice relations, suspensions, moments of unison, and largely homophonic singing with extra challenging polyphonic sections. The option of an SSA version provides programming flexibility to the conductor and the dynamic accompaniment brings texture and a virtuosic element for the accompanist. *Migaloo* is about Australia's most well-known humpback whale and was thought for a time to be the world's only all white whale. The underlying message of having courage to be different is universal and a great conversation topic for choristers of any age (Figure 7).

Ikan Kekek is another great example of a two-part work that contains diverse and varied compositional techniques. Throughout this Malay children's song, arranged by Singaporean composer Zechariah Goh, singers will experience unison texture, canonic imitation, parallel homophonic motion, and partner song technique. The largely pentatonic melody lends itself to being tonally accessible for all singers. This work is extremely sight readable, with no added accidentals and easily identifiable rhythmic patterns, allowing

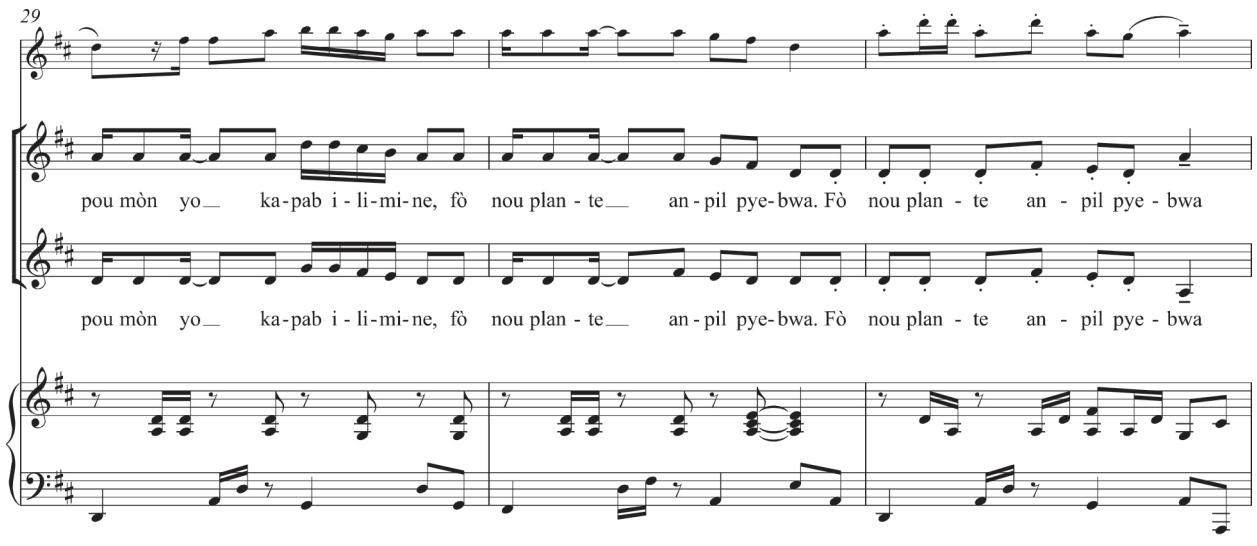

Figure 6. Pierre Rigaud Chéry and Yves Lavaud, Sydney Guillaume arr., *Peyi Mwen,* mm. 29–31.

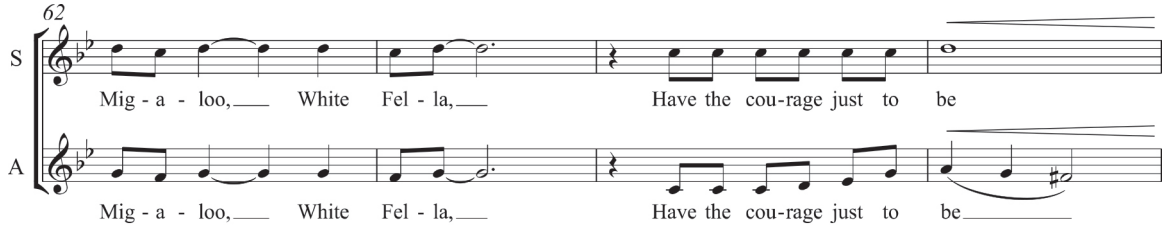

Figure 7. Annie Kwok, *Migaloo,* mm. 62–65.

conductors to utilize the material in a variety of pedagogical ways. One could explore the different compositional tools, having students identify where the work is canonic vs. homophonic. There is a key change from G major to B-flat major, which could be an excellent time to explore key relations, with discussion regarding the interval between a G and B-flat and what similarities those two keys may or may not have. The change in key plus the diatonic nature of the work also makes *Ikan Kekek* an ideal piece to learn on solfege (Figure 8).

Languages and Storytelling

Text and language provide their own set of challenges to the choral repertoire selection process. The English language, though it is typically the first spoken language for many American singers, can be surprisingly difficult to pronounce for young students. The wordier the song, the quicker the rhythms, and the more advanced the vocabulary, the more trouble a conductor and student are bound to have. The thematic content of a piece, no matter the language, is equally as important to consider. The stories and voices a conductor chooses to represent can strongly affect the experiences of both singers and audience members. The following section goes through teachable elements as they relate to language and storytelling, and criteria one may use when selecting repertoire based on the skill level and age of the ensemble.

With young singers, it is a good idea to choose a piece with a relatable or interesting storyline. All the better if the story lends itself to kin-

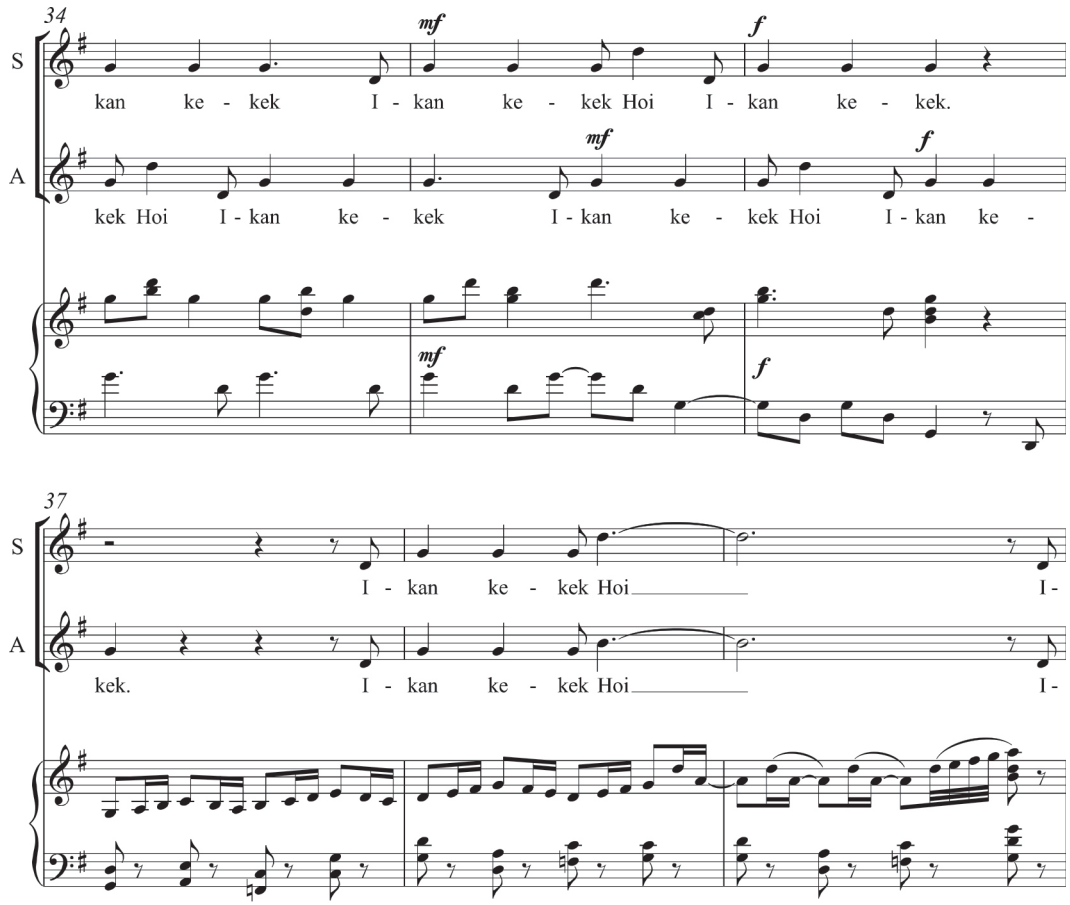

Figure 8. Zechariah Goh arr., *Ikan Kekek,* Malay Children's Song, mm. 34–39.

esthetic motions that can be used by the conductor or singers to help with learning the text. Katherine Ruhle's *A Barnyard Lullaby* exemplifies this. The genre itself, a lullaby, is comprehendible to young singers, an underrated benefit. The text describes a variety of animals falling asleep at a farm and the singers also get to perform animal sounds that correlate to the different characters. Movement to accompany the piece would be easy to teach and may help students remember the text. The motions could easily be chosen by students themselves. The easy to understand story, enjoyable animal sound effects, and the supportive arrangement all make *A Barnyard Lullaby* an excellent choice for young elementary-aged ensembles (Figure 9).

Delving into foreign language pieces brings another set of fun challenges. Foreign languages or songs with nonsense words should be introduced early on to normalize the process. Nonsense syllables are a fun option when looking to perform outside of the English language. Memorization of sounds rather than meaning is an essential part to singing in a non-native language. Young children are often singing and making up songs in a made-up language from a very early age.[5] This "music babble" lends itself to choral repertoire when the piece contains nonsense syllables as text.[6]

Integrating English and a foreign language can be another helpful step into building comfort with performing foreign text. Whether there is non-English text in the choruses alone or the verses switch between two languages, as seen with Andrea Ramsey's *Puer Natus Est*, this type of work can be less daunting to an ensemble not used to singing in a foreign language. *Puer Natus Est* is based on a sixteenth-century plainchant and the text alternates between Latin and English. *Puer Natus Est* features handbells and an optional second vocal part, allowing for much performance flexibility (Figure 10 on page 65).

Once an ensemble is ready to perform fully in a foreign language, conductors should attempt to find literature that has a short and repetitive text. A foreign language piece, no matter the difficulty of the language, that repeats a small amount of text numerous times will be easier for a less advanced group to perform.[7]

Cangoma is a traditional Brazilian piece in Portuguese. Though Portuguese can be an intimidating language to English speakers, *Cangoma* is highly repetitive and allows singers to easily develop a comfort with the text. Composed in a circle sing style, with the voices building from unison all the way to three-part, this arrangement would be easy to teach by rote in a call-and-response form. Singers will be challenged by the tied and syncopated traditional rhythms, but the repetition of rhythmic patterns similarly allows for singers to be comfortable with the style easily. This spirited folk song arrangement features optional percussion accompaniment and

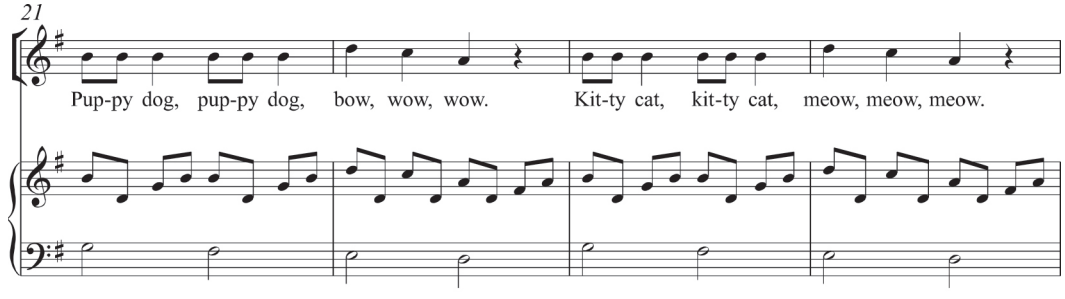

Figure 9. Katherine Ruhle, *A Barnyard Lullaby,* mm. 21–24.

would make a great concert opener or closer. Dr. Elisa Dekaney, one of the arrangers of *Cangoma,* was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. When searching for folk music to perform, it is best to find works arranged by people of that culture (Figure 11).

The makeup of your choir can strongly affect the ensemble's interest in the languages a conductor chooses to introduce. When choosing repertoire based on text, consider a foreign language that is relatable to your students. Look not only at what languages they may speak at home, but also what languages they may be studying in school.

Spanish is the second most commonly spoken language in the United States and is a commonly taught subject in schools.[8] A Spanish piece, such as *Nido de Amor* [Nest of Love] by Mexican composer Lilia Vázquez Kuntze, would work well with a more advanced elementary ensemble. There is no melodic repetition, but each phrase is delicately built to practice extending the vocal range and contains almost exclusively quarter and eighth-note rhythms. The accompaniment does most of the rhythmic driving and both piano and voices get to explore bird calls with trills and animal sound effects. With a work such as this, one could ask Spanish speakers in the ensemble to help with teaching the pronunciation and giving a

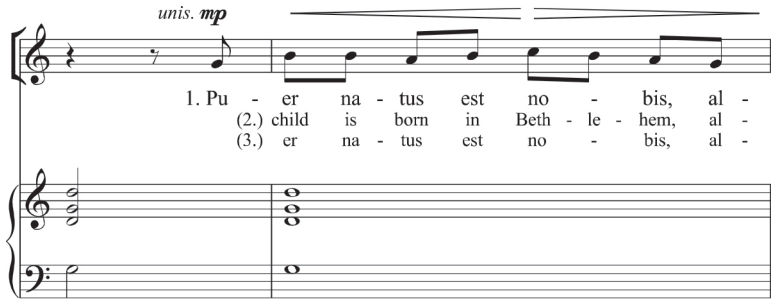

Figure 10. Andrea Ramsey, *Puer Natus Est*

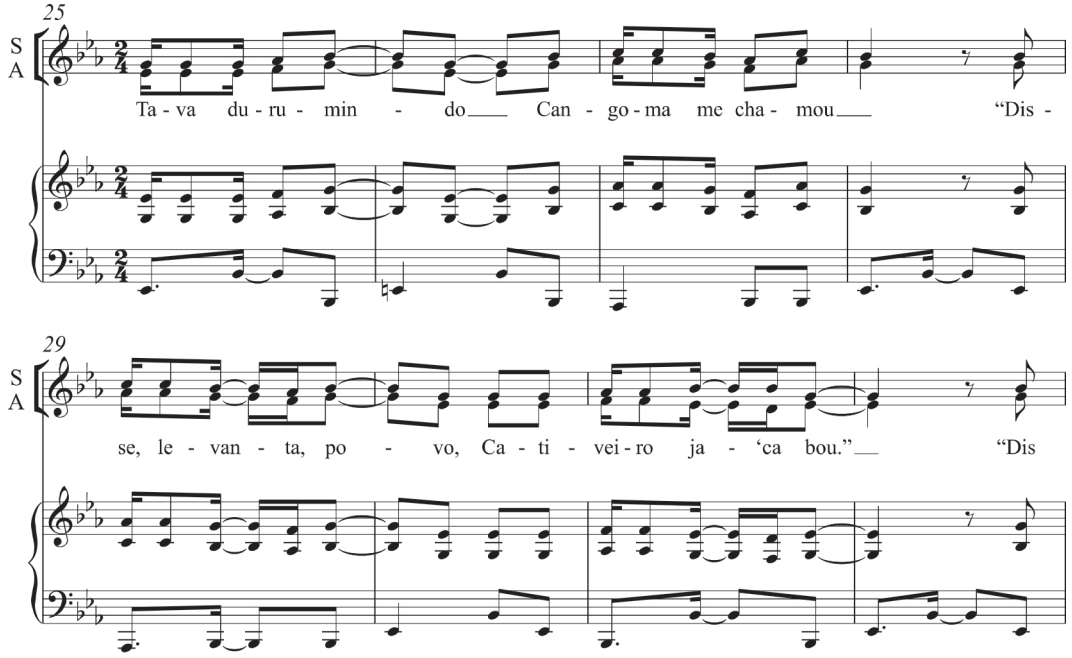

Figure 11. Dr. Lon Beery and Dr. Elisa Dekaney arrs., *Cangoma,* Traditional Brazilian, mm. 25–32.

translation, providing an easy leadership opportunity (Figure 12).

Singing has always been a vehicle for communication. From the storytelling bards of early music, to moral-imparting folk songs, to the more modern social justice literature, it is important to discover text that is meaningful and impactful. Music for music's sake is fine, but the message you impart to your singers with the texts you choose can thoroughly affect their response to the music. Ivo Antognini's *Excuse me, I don't understand* [*Pardon, j'ai pas bien compris*] is a powerful two-part treble piece that discusses hunger and violence in a modern world, and the desire for peace. While the text may be considered controversial due to the serious thematic content, as educators, it is better to lean into these tough subjects rather than shield students from them. This work is available in French and English. The piece is highly teachable, with largely homophonic texture, supportive accompaniment, and a memorable melody. Antognini cleverly clears the way for the text to shine in this poignant and heart- wrenching work. Much discussion could occur in an ensemble about the social injustices in our world and what we as musicians can do about it (Figure 13).

The field of a choral conducting is as enjoyable as it is important. Conductors work in their passion and get to affect change by imparting that joy on to generations of music-makers. Of course, the work is imperfect and there are hardships. There seems to never be enough time or resources and this can bleed into a conductor's efforts in searching for appropriate repertoire as well. The provided list of pedagogical elements to discover in children's choral repertoire is not meant as a short cut, but a helping hand to make the task of literature research less daunting. The repertoire examples are high-quality works and are written by up-and-coming composers in the children's choral field. These composers hail from all over the world and provide a diverse array of repertoire for young singers to perform. It is hoped that the elements within the featured repertoire will aid educators around

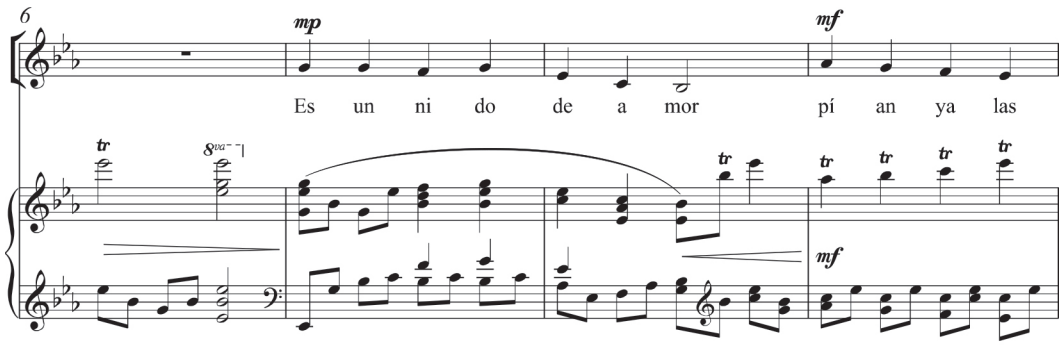

Figure 12. Lilia Vázquez Kuntze, *Nido de Amor,* mm. 6–9.
Reprinted with permission.

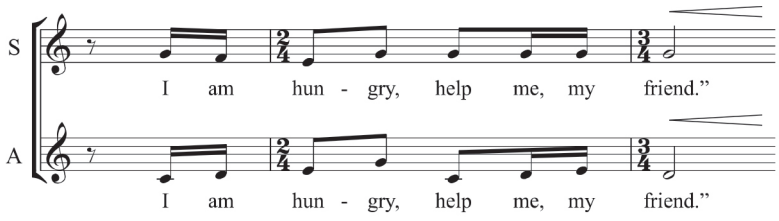

Figure 13. Ivo Antognini, *Excuse me, I don't understand (Pardon, j'ai pas bien compris)*

the country in their teaching and will inspire them to explore more deeply their repertoire selections in the future. See below for ways to contact these musicians directly. CJ

Katrina Turman is an alumna of the Kodály Institute in Kecskemét, Hungary and is a current choral conducting graduate student at University of Washington.
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NOTES

[1] Robert L. Garretson, *Music in Childhood Education* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 172.

[2] Linda Swears, *Teaching the Elementary School Chorus* (West Nyack, N.Y.: Parking Publishing Company, 1984), 163.

[3] Angela Broeker, "Developing a Children's Choir Concert," *Music Educators Journal* 87, no. 1 (2000): 28.

[4] Swears, *Teaching the Elementary School Chorus,* 163.

[5] Patricia Shehan Campbell and Carol Scott-Kassner, *Music in Childhood: From Preschool through the Elementary Grades* (New York: London: Schirmer Books; Prentice Hall International, 2014), 68.

[6] Ibid., 68.

[7] Broeker, "Developing a Children's Choir Concert," 27.

[8] "Detailed Languages Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over for United States: 2009-2013," https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2013/demo/2009-2013-lang-tables.html.

Music Reference and Contact Information

Sherelle Eyles (*Clouds*) – sherelleeyles.com

Errollyn Wallen (*I am looking at a map of the world*)
errollynwallen.com
fridayafternoonsmusic.co.uk

Glyn Lehmann (*Giant of the Forest*)
glynlehmann.com

Dr. Tracy Wong (*Wau Bulan*)
tracywongmusic.com
Info@tracywongmusic.com – Cypress Choral Music

B.E. Boykin (*Joshua fit the Battle of Jericho*)
beboykin.com

Sydney Guillaume (*Peyi Mwen*) – sydneyguillaume.com

Annie Kwok (*Migaloo*) – singscore.com.au/annie-kwok

Zechariah Goh (*Ikan Kekek*)
muziksea.com/composer/10-zechariah-goh

Katherine Ruhle (*A Barnyard Lullaby*)
www.katherineruhle.com

Andrea Ramsey (*Puer Natus Est*)
andrearamsey.com

Elisa Dekaney, Lon Beery (*Cangoma*)
brileemusic.com, Catalogue Number: BL 1041

Lilia Vázquez Kuntze (*Nido de Amor*)
Youtube: "Lilia Vázquez Kuntze," www.facebook.com/l.vazquezkuntze/

Ivo Antognini (*Excuse me, I don't understand* [*Pardon, j'ai pas bien compris*]) – ivoantognini.com

In Memoriam

Bob Scholz
1939–2021

Robert Victor Scholz, Professor Emeritus of Music at St. Olaf College, died Sunday, February 21, 2021, at age eighty-one of Parkinson's Disease in Northfield, MN. Dr. Scholz was born on November 19, 1939, in Chicago, Illinois. Robert began piano lessons as a child, adding organ lessons in high school. He attended Lutheran parochial schools until he moved to Minnesota to begin his collegiate studies at St. Olaf College. While at St. Olaf, he was a tenor in the St. Olaf Choir under Olaf Christiansen and earned a bachelor of arts magna cum laude with a music education major in 1961. Later he received his MM and DMA in choral conducting from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

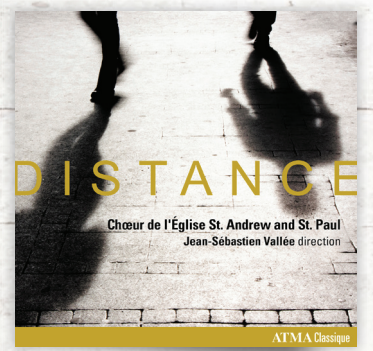
Upon his appointment to St. Olaf College in 1968, he led the Viking Chorus, the first-year TTBB ensemble, and the St. Olaf Chapel Choir. As conductor of the Chapel Choir in collaboration with the St. Olaf Orchestra, he led performances of some of the most respected of the choral-orchestral works of the Western canon. Robert also taught voice lessons, choral conducting, and choral literature. He was an integral member of the St. Olaf Christmas Festival Artistic Committee. He was also a prolific composer and arranger, and many of his works continue to be performed both at St. Olaf and around the country.

Anton Armstrong, conductor of the St. Olaf Choir, called Robert Scholz his "musical godfather." "When I returned to St. Olaf in 1990 as faculty member in the Music Department, Bob was always a supportive colleague and friend. He was perhaps the most 'pastoral' musical colleague I've been blessed to know in my thirty-one years at St. Olaf College. Bob was a model of the scholar/teacher/conductor who was the exemplary servant-leader as he nurtured thousands of students who had the privilege and joy of singing with him."

Robert Scholz retired in 2005 after teaching at St. Olaf for thirty-seven years. He is survived by Cora, his wife of fifty-six years; his five children: Miriam Scholz-Carlson, Maria Boda (Stephan), David Scholz (Dara), Wendy Scholz, and Carol Smith (David); and seven grandchildren.

DISTANCE

Choir of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul



The Choir of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montreal presents an album around the theme of isolation due in part to the Covid-19 pandemic. Distance explores different aspects of isolation and silence: solitude, reflection, but also determination and "breaking the silence". The program includes several choral pieces ranging from Bach motets with continuo to 21st century repertoire for a cappella choir by Samuel Barber, Edward Elgar, and many others.

ACD2 2840 · 722056284028

GOOD NIGHT, BELOVED

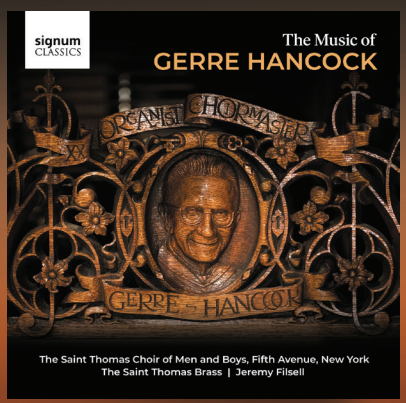
The Sixteen

What could be more welcome than a little repose and respite from the demands of daily life? The works on this album span over 500 years and tell stories of life and love, of tranquility and stillness, some naïve and simple, others infused with complex imagery.

COR16184 · 828021618420

THE MUSIC OF GERRE HANCOCK

Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys

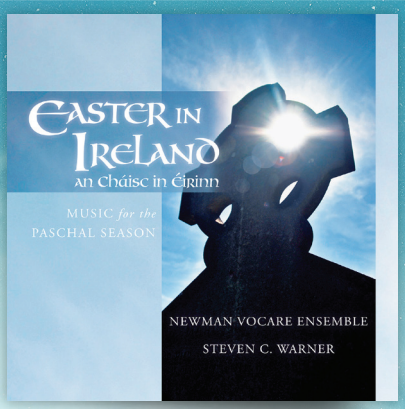


The renowned Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys record a fitting tribute to their former Choirmaster and Organist Gerre Hancock (1934-2012). In this post for over 30 years, he was a pivotal figure in the choir's rejuvenation and created a wealth of choral and organ music during his career – much of it composed for friends and colleagues across the USA.

SIGCD631 · 635212063125

EASTER IN IRELAND

Newman Vocare Ensemble



GIA Publications, Inc. is pleased to offer Easter in Ireland, our first recording by Steve Warner and The Newman Vocare Ensemble, music ministers at the Notre Dame-Newman Centre for Faith and Reason in Dublin, Ireland. This album offers a taste of the rich fabric of sounds found in Ireland. It is a merging of traditions: four-part choral singing; Uilleann pipes, low whistle, harp and harmonium; strings, organ and guitar.

GIACD-1072 · 785147007227

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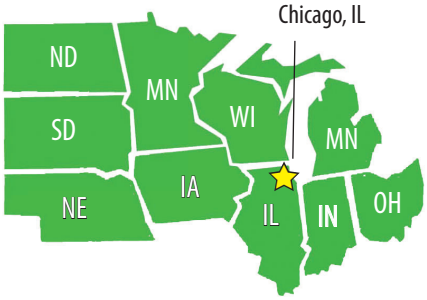

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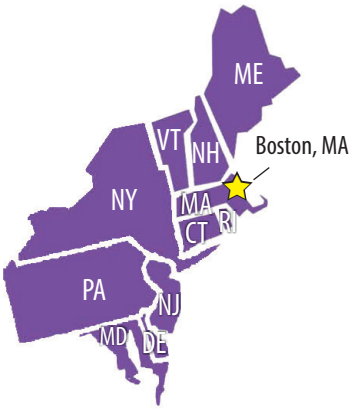

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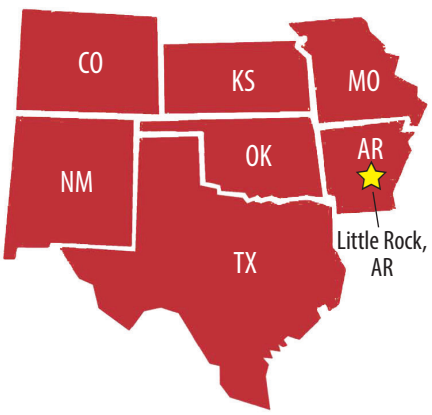

February 28 - March 3, 2022
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Southern

February 23-26, 2022
Raleigh, NC

SAVE THE DATE

Technology and the Choral Art

Kyle Hanson, editor <kyhanson88@gmail.com>

NAXOS MusicBox Review

by Kyle Hanson

Editor's note: This article is an "out-of-the-box" review, exploring the online-based product MusicBox for the first time after receiving login credentials from Naxos. While the scope of this piece disallows for a full "unboxing" of the product, the intention is to provide an overview of a product and assess the delivery of the experience to the end-user. The author has not been paid or sponsored by NAXOS for this review, and the contents of the article purely reflect the first-hand experience of the author as a private home-user and not that of Naxos, the American Choral Directors Association, or any employer of the author.

Boasting 2020 Creative Child Awards "Product of The Year" and catching the attention of conductors as renowned as Marin Alsop, Naxos MusicBox is a leading-edge classical music resource for those looking for an attractive solution for online-based music education. This robust educational resource has over 4,000 music tracks with diverse activities for engagement like puzzles, quizzes, and various exploration features. Naxos MusicBox is tailored to support the education of children ages 4-12 alongside a guide for a teacher or a parent, but the content is rich enough to support all levels of learning. Naxos has long been a stopping-ground for scholars of classical music: those with an appetite for exploring thousands of carefully curated audio archives and who have relied on Naxos for these services for over thirty years. Now this expertise can be delivered to kids, parents, and teachers in a beautiful remake that brings fresh vitality to online classical music education.

When one thinks of a Naxos landing page, the first thing that comes to mind is the iconic Greek pillars with embedded Naxos' *serif* font surrounded by grey, white, and royal blue—a page purposefully designed to be taken seriously. If Naxos were an entrenched style, then Naxos' MusicBox would spout the complete opposite end of the design spectrum. Its colorful, playful icons gently float amidst the sun-yellow burst of music notes, staff, and bright orange messaging. It is delightfully refreshing and speaks directly to the core audience for whom this service was developed.

Once logged in, how does one know where to begin? Each icon reacts to cursor tracking, inviting the user to click and explore. For this unboxing, an icon with deep forest-green jewel tone catches the eye, unlocking a portal to music from around the world. Upon exploration, there is a quick narrative to introduce ethnomusicological studies in an encouraging, attainable manner. All one must do is click on a region icon to explore. These icons lead to another page that explores various field recordings from various regions supported with short explanations. The written language is

accessible but without a read-aloud function, flip-book story book, or video explanation utilized in many elementary learning apps, a child's exploration would certainly need to be supported by an adult.

Returning to the home page icon menu, the general format explored in music from around the world is repeated for discovery into the instruments, composers, history, stage & screen, and more. History timelines are modeled after traditional music history textbooks while the scrolling function allows for student-like perspective on the breath of music developed primarily within Western music spheres. The Composers icon opens to a basic encyclopedia of composers from William Byrd (1543-1623) to John Adams (b. 1947-present) but glosses over many notables covered within the wider Naxos library. Each composer page highlights a brief but accessible biography supported by music examples, quick-quizzes, key-facts sheet, and deepening listening activities.

While the formatting could be further tailored for the audience, the content is rich, unassuming, and an over-all delight to peruse. Admittedly, some explanation requires more explanation not offered—such as "There was a split at the time between the 'galant' style, which was very artificial and polite, and the 'sensitive' style, which was dramatic and powerful (regarding C.P.E Bach (1714-1788)"—but there is a wonderful ease of approach for how each article describes the life, style, and impact of the composer's work.

One of the real gems of MusicBox is the Audiobook section. Front and center of the substantial contribution of MusicBox, the audiobooks provide a stimulating overview of musical genres broken down into bite-size pieces. Do you want to hear the story of classical music? Just click on a link, sit back, and allow the flood of classical sounds delivered by a gripping narrative to fill the room. The service delivered by this page is that of a young people's concert at a local symphony orchestra—brief enough for intrigue and rich enough for deepening. Want to learn more about classical composers? There is a book for that. Want to know more about ballet stories? There is a book for that as well. There are hours of audiobooks that delight the ears, open the mind, and offer just enough to plant the seeds of learning. Even though the Audiobook page does not offer link-sharing, support-videos, or pop-out images, this portal is a one-stop shop for delivering a substantial introduction into classical music.

It goes without saying that MusicBox's entry into supporting classical music education via a robust online platform is certainly a step in the right direction. However, like the roll out of all things, MusicBox does not always seamlessly deliver the brand experience to the end-user. For example, the considerable breath of the Instrument section is enough to support the broadest of education, but perhaps does so without considering the age of the audience. Did you know the clarinet has a cylindrical bore? Or that Stradivari also made cellos? This section reads more like a textbook than an introduction; that is not to say the information is dull, just that the format and delivery of the information could be re-designed to lend itself to unfacilitated exploration. Combined with the seemingly haphazard approach toward quizzes within the activity portal, portions of MusicBox graciously lend itself toward updates and re-formatting in the future.

Overall, MusicBox is the perfect solution for parent-child co-learning the richness and expansiveness of classical music together. While the format at times may not align with their targeted demographic or smoothly entreat the end-user experience, MusicBox delivers an abundance of classical studies in bite size, delectable pieces. With a seven-day free trial, MusicBox is worth exploring and losing sleep-over (in a good way!). Education subscriptions are available, and one can even gift this music experience to friends, family, and loved ones. For $4 a month or $99 for lifetime access, Naxos has made a brilliant step toward breaking down the stodgy barriers long fortifying classical education within the walls of the elite institutions and delivers this beloved music accessibly to a computer near you. CJ

The 14 Purposes of ACDA

- To foster and promote choral singing, which will provide artistic, cultural, and spiritual experiences for the participants.
- To foster and promote the finest types of choral music to make these experiences possible.
- To foster and encourage rehearsal procedures conducive to attaining the highest possible level of musicianship and artistic performance.
- To foster and promote the organization and development of choral groups of all types in schools and colleges.
- To foster and promote the development of choral music in the church and synagogue.
- To foster and promote the organization and development of choral societies in cities and communities.
- To foster and promote the understanding of choral music as an important medium of contemporary artistic expression.
- To foster and promote significant research in the field of choral music.
- To foster and encourage choral composition of superior quality.
- To cooperate with all organizations dedicated to the development of musical culture in America.
- To foster and promote international exchange programs involving performing groups, conductors, and composers.
- To disseminate professional news and information about choral music.
- To foster and promote choral singing in the pursuit of peace and justice that enhances social and emotional well-being.
- To foster and promote diversity and inclusivity through active engagement with underrepresented choral musicians and potential choral participants.

—ACDA Constitution and Bylaws

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QUARTERLY ENDORSEMENTS

RUTH ALON (NEW to PROJECT : ENCORE)

Two Hands

- SATB, SATB incidental divisi; a cappella; Hebrew (Zadok Alon)
- 4′ 25″. A poem about holding and letting go, of sorrow and comfort. Mix of standard and aleatoric writing, ideally performed in darkness, with singers mixed within the audience. Thorough conductor instructions and pronunciation guide. Hauntingly effective for an adventurous choir, confident presenting new experiences. ProjectEncore.org/ruth-alon

SIMON BEATTIE (NEW to PROJECT : ENCORE)

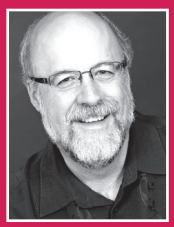
Remember me

- SATTBB; a cappella; English (Christina Rossetti)
- 4′ 57″. Very effective new setting of this well-known poem, so often recited in memorial settings. The soprano and alto lines are very modest in range, well suited for male voices. A primary theme is accompanied by minimal imitation, hummed tone clusters, some chordal text presentation. A gem! Solid church choir and above. ProjectEncore.org/simon-beattie

BRIAN FIELD

A Christmas Carol

- SATB; ATB incidental divisi; a cappella; English (Christina Rossetti)
- 5′ 50″. A fresh new setting of the beloved Rossetti poem better known as "In the Bleak Mid-Winter." Original melodic material, also breaking with tradition for being through-composed. Gentle dissonance, largely presented chordally, but with some imitation. Warm imagery; perfect for semi-pro church level, and above. ProjectEncore.org/brian-field



JOHN MUEHLEISEN

Love Is

- SSAATTBB; trumpet accompaniment; English (Rabi'a of Basra; Muehleisen, trans.)
- 6′ 45″. A meditation on love, with its full breadth of emotions. Text by eighth-century female Sufi mystic/saiint. The four descriptive sentiments are separated by wordless meditations on the text just heard. Trumpet perfectly complements the sonoric luxury of the voices. University or good community choir. Find a reason to include! ProjectEncore.org/john-muehleisen

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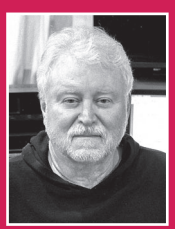
CHRISTOPHER RUST

It's All I Have

- SAB; piano; English (Emily Dickinson)
- 2′ 40″. Meaningful Dickinson text on giving of onesself, of one's heart. Lovely, melodic setting with some pleasing and intuitive imitation that makes this a real winner for middle school and beginning high school choirs. It was composed for that purpose. This is a must-do for young mixed choirs! ProjectEncore.org/christopher-rust

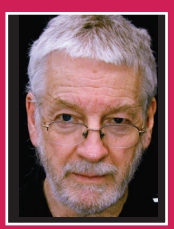
DONALD M. SKIRVIN



The Delight Song of Tsoai-talee

- SATB; a cappella; English (N. Scott Momaday)
- 1′ 30″. Exuberant self-definition by the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, author, and Native American, whose Kiowa name is Tsoai-talee. A joyous catalog of his delights, of who he is, images tumble as a rapid-fire declamation, often one line at a time. Energetic opener or closer for an ensemble with excellent diction, precision, pitch! ProjectEncore.org/donald-m-skirvin

GORDON THORNETT



Locus iste

- SSATTBB; S and B solos; piano or organ (optional); Latin (Liber Usualis)
- 6′ 04″. This setting of the quintessential text for dedication of a sacred space is filled with imagery that draws ears and imagination heavenward - ascending lines; chordal imitation; semi-chanted solo lines. Performance option of colla parte organ support makes this stunning piece viable for choirs full enough to cover the parts. ProjectEncore.org/gordon-thornett

PROJECT : ENCORE will continue to accept compositions with a documented virtual premiere for submission for the July and October deadlines.

DEBORAH SIMPKIN KING, PHD.
Conductor
P:E Director and Founder
DeborahSKing.com

Julius Herford Prize

2020

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS -- Note New Procedure!

Each year the Julius Herford Prize Subcommittee of the Research and Publications Committee accepts nominations for the outstanding doctoral terminal research project in choral music. Projects are eligible if they comprise the principal research component of the degree requirements, whether the institution defines the project as a "dissertation," "document," "thesis," or "treatise," etc. The submitted projects are evaluated entirely blind with regard to dissertator, assisting faculty, institution, and any other identifying material, by an unpaid panel of choral conductor-scholars.

When a dissertation may be nominated: The prize name's date (above) indicates the year in which the relevant doctoral degree was conferred. Dissertations must be nominated in the calendar year following the year in which the degree was conferred. The prize is awarded in the calendar year following the year of nomination. Thus, the dissertation of a student with a 2020 degree can be nominated between January 1 and June 15, 2021; the prize will be awarded in 2022 (at the relevant 2022 ACDA conference).

The award: The winner will receive a $1000 cash prize and a plaque. The committee reserves the right to award two prizes or no prizes in any given year.

Nomination Requirements and Procedure:

1. An institution may submit only one document for that year's prize. In the event that there are two nominations of equal merit from one school, the letter from the Dean, Director, or Chair of the music school (described below) must justify the additional nomination. The submitting faculty member, institution, and/or the writer must be currently a member of ACDA in good standing.

2. Links to the nomination form and instructions for uploading the dissertation are found on the prize webpage
(http://bit.ly/2020HerfordPrize)
OR Log onto acda.org; Under "About", select "Awards & Competitions"; Select "Julius Herford Dissertation Prize"

The nomination consists of two parts: (1) completion of the online nomination form, with its required PDF uploads, and (2) upload of a PDF version of the dissertation, with all material identifying the author, faculty, and institution removed or blacked out. The nomination form will require the following uploads:

- PDF abstract of the dissertation WITHOUT any material identifying the student, faculty, or institution.
- PDF title page of the dissertation WITH identifying information, including the dissertator's name and institution.
- PDF of a signed letter from the dean, director, or chair of the music school recommending that the dissertation be considered for the Herford Prize. Letters from the chair of the choral area are not acceptable. The letter must include the following: (1) the full name of the student, (2) the year in which that student's degree was granted, and (3) the full title of the dissertation.
- PDF of complete contact information for the dissertator (full name, USPS address, phone number, email address) for the submitting faculty (full name, title, phone number, email address).

3. The dissertation and all accompanying materials must be uploaded by June 15, 2021, noon CST

NB: If one or more of these requirements is not met, the dissertation will be eliminated from consideration.

Questions? Sundra Flansburg, Director of Membership and Communications: sflansburg@acda.org

Recorded Sound Reviews

Laura Wiebe, editor laurawiebe@gmail.com

Finding Harmony
The King's Singers
Signum SIGCD 607 (2020: 69' 40")

Those of us old enough to recall the debut of The King's Singers can only marvel at the group's longevity. The original personnel have long retired, of course, but with them the die was cast and what has survived, indeed, thrived, is the 'brand.' Its hallmarks are an exquisite sense of pitch and inflection, diction that is clear (not affected or precious), and a range of selections that is catholic in its truest sense. Even those who take pride in their expansive repertoire will find something unfamiliar but deserving of attention in their choices, which has never been more evident than in their latest compilation. This disc is outstanding in every way, from the confident way in which the singers tackle numerous languages, to the vocal dexterity they show in diverse styles of music.

The playlist is eclectic, to say the least: Bach contrasts with Gospel arrangements specially made for this disc by Stacey V. Gibbs; Baltic composers complement the Sowetan, Neo Muyanga; William Byrd precedes an Arianna Grande hit. What ties together such a disparate playlist is not only their invention, but also a quest for harmony, both literal and metaphorical. And here is where the lengthy but thoughtful essay by one of the Singers, Patrick Dunachie, proves invaluable: this program was originally created for a concert setting rather than an academic anthology intended for selective sampling. In live performance, the King's Singers take the time to introduce each piece, giving its background and then explaining why they chose it: it's one of the reasons why their audiences return. So, to disregard the *Finding Harmony* essay is a mistake, and it will only detract from the listener's appreciation and enjoyment. However, as the descriptions do not follow the sequence of tracks, it's best to listen first, then read and repeat the process.

On second hearing or more, some arrangements are striking, especially those by Tony Young and Rebecca Dale. The latter has transformed the early feminist anthem *Bread and Roses* into a fully-fledged folk song—Vaughan Williams would be proud. More recent British composers, though, have enjoyed the luxury of working directly with the King's Singers, and two of the most illustrious musical 'knights'—Richard Rodney Bennett and James Macmillan—made exquisite arrangements for the ensemble. It's a particular pleasure to hear those on this disc. There are other delights too, but perhaps they should remain a surprise, like discovering a new favorite at a concert, 'finding harmony' indeed.

Philip Barnes
St. Louis, Missouri

Vexilla Regis: A Sequence of Music from Palm Sunday to Holy Saturday
The Choir of
Westminster Cathedral
Martin Baker, conductor;
Peter Stevens, organist
Ad Fontes; (79:22)

The Choir of Westminster Cathedral is considered one of London's top three established church choirs,

along with those of Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral. The three have a shared history of Organist-Choirmasters, and between them, over five hundred years of music-making. Though the youngest of the three, the Cathedral Choir has had an illustrious history of music. Informally, it has, of late, been considered consistently by many aficionados to be best choir of the Big Three.

Their latest recording, *Vexilla Regis,* showcases the Choir in its element. Recorded at the famous Benedictine abbey of Buckfast in Devon, the fantastic ensemble of boys and men under the skilled direction of Martin Baker take us on a journey through Holy Week. Baker and the Choir present what would be a typical Holy Week at the Cathedral: a combination of polyphony, plainchant, and hymns, some of which are firmly rooted in the Cathedral's history. The album is anchored by pieces of polyphonic virtuosity by present and former Masters of Music: Richard Runciman Terry (the Cathedral's first Master), George Malcolm, James O'Donnell, and Baker himself. These are complemented by repertoire mainstays by Victoria, Byrd, Lotti, and Duruflé. Interspersed among all this polyphony are hymns and various selections of plainchant, all in their proper place, and so the album's narrative is clearly defined and the story arc for each day dutifully encapsulated.

The recording leaves no doubt that Westminster Cathedral Choir is among the finest cathedral choirs in the world. The level of execution is astonishing, particularly from the young choristers from whom Baker has coaxed a tone so consistent and colorful that one forgets at times that these are boys as young as eight. The seasoned lay clerks are equally consistent, providing a solid foundation for the choir's resulting overall sound, one which is naturally bright, full, and rich (adjectives I do not often associate with English-style cathedral choirs). This allows Baker to tackle broader repertoire to showcase the

full sound palette of his ensemble. They are ethereal when they need to be, such as in Duruflé's famous "Ubi caritas et amor," which is sung with such care that the reassurance of the text is immediate. Likewise, O'Donnell's short versicle *I give you a new commandment* reflects that English penchant for including the space in the context of the music.

And yet, the singers can also mine the wells of emotion that are sometimes latent under the lines and careful craftsmanship of some of the more traditional polyphony. For example, in the two songs of complaint—Lassus' *Improperium exspectavit* and Victoria's *Improperia* for Good Friday—the Choir is unafraid to swell and fade with the harmonies to detail the anguish, fear, and anger present in both texts, moments in their respective ceremonies when Christ confronts his own humanity. Another well-known motet, Bruckner's behemoth *Christus factus est,* features the gamut of colours: dark and bright, soft and loud, self-awareness and abandon. The choral sound is not constrained by pre-conceived notions of what a choir of men and boys typically sounds like: it is simultaneously finely honed and unabashed. The intonation is also superb throughout, particularly in such dangerous waters as Lotti's famous eight-voice *Crucifixus,* which is here rendered exquisitely.

In a more modern tradition, the plainchant excerpts are accompanied beautifully and with understated care by Assistant Master of Music Peter Stevens on the organ. His sensitive touch gives life to well-known melodies, including the Thomasian hymn *Adoro te devote* and the titular hymn *Vexilla regis prodeunt.* Martin Baker's own skill as a composer is evident in his polyphonic insertion into the plainsong Credo, as well as in his antiphon *Postquam surrexit Dominus,* which segues smoothly into (and pays homage to) the Duruflé. The *Strepitus,* toward the end of the album, will bring a smile to anyone's face.

Vexilla Regis is an appropriate swansong for Baker, who stepped down from his position at Westminster Cathedral at the end of 2019. Baker cemented the Choir and Choir School's legacy as one of the finest in the world, in no small part thanks to his leadership (I myself, a regular at choral services at the Cathedral, bore witness to this). Hopefully, he can take stock of his accomplishments there and point to this album as the culmination of nineteen years of hard work and peerless artistry. It is only fitting, therefore, that the Cathedral's latest Master of Music should close the album with music by its first: *Praise to the Holiest in the Height,* set to the hymn tune Newman (named for the Cardinal) by Richard Runciman Terry.

Vicente Chavarría
London, England

Stabat Mater
Gloriae Dei Cantores
Arvo Pärt
Richard K. Pugsley
Gloriae Dei Cantores Recordings
Catalog number: GDCD 065
(2020; 69:02)

Arvo Pärt is one of today's most celebrated composers, so it is not necessarily a surprise to see a new recording featuring entirely his music, or that the recording is performed by a choir that frequently performs and records sacred music, including Pärt's choral music. This new recording offers a survey of Pärt's choral works, ranging from his famous "tintinnabuli" technique to music infused with influences of Gregorian Chant and other liturgical styles, all of which, according to the liner notes, "[reveal] the heart, soul, and mind of a true master of his language in both text and music." For those wishing to learn more about Pärt's style, this is an excellent recording to immerse yourself in a variety of his music; those familiar with Pärt will revel in the beautiful sound and vocal virtuosity of this choir.

Besides the vocal quality of Gloriae Dei Cantores, which is consistently good throughout and exceptional in some places, this recording is valuable for the variety of musical textures and styles it represents in Pärt's compositional output. The opening track, *Peace Upon You, Jerusalem,* features the trebles of the choir with crystal clear diction and warm vocal tone. Vibrato is employed, but never at the expense of harmonic clarity or ensemble balance. Tracks

2 and 6 (*L'abbé Agathon* and *Stabat Mater,* respectively) feature two separate string groups—both of which are exceptional in their rhythmic articulation, lyricism, and ensemble balance. *Salve Regina* (Track 3) features the organ of the Church of the Transfiguration (Orleans, MA), the home parish of the choir. Here, the instrument seems to melt into the acoustically welcoming surroundings of the church, providing a tranquil backdrop for the serene singing of the choir. Overall, the balance between sections in the choir is good in all dynamic ranges and instrumentations. The soprano section deserves special recognition for their skill in extreme registers, singing high notes with an ease that betrays their difficulty (including a sustained B5 in "Salve Regina").

The standout performances on this recording are *L'abbé Agathon* (Track 2) and *Stabat Mater* (Track 6). The story of "L'abbé Agathon" and his encounter with the leper outside the city walls is brought to life by the strings which march along with marked, almost heavy rhythm and articulation to mark the weary steps of Agathon. The disc concludes with "Stabat Mater," hailed as a musical landmark in Pärt's career. Pärt's own words in the liner notes bring insight to the contrasts performed vividly by Gloriae Dei Cantores and the strings: "It is just like the opposing elements, for instance lava erupting from a volcano, flowing into the water…the text presents us the simultaneous existence of immeasurable pain of the event and potential consolation." The choir begins with the word "Amen," sung with anguished, rich harmonies; it concludes with contemplative, unison "Amen" statements sung with poignant reflection. The string ensemble also participates in this juxtaposition of pain and consolation, shimmering in moments of meditation common in many works of Pärt, while also dancing in ecstatic and virtuosic jubilation (especially at 17:09 in Track 6 after the text, "make me a sharer of his Passion and remember his wounds.").

There are rare blemishes: the soprano blend at the beginning of the *Magnificat* was not as secure as in other tracks on the disc (though this impression faded after repeated listening), and the sound of the treble voices at the soft beginning of the *Nunc dimittis* is tighter and thinner than in other moments of piano dynamics on the disc. The liner notes (written with clarity and candid enthusiasm by James E. Jordan, a member of the choir and also the organist for *Salve Regina*) are an essential part of the listening experience, but buyer beware: not all digital platforms offer the liner notes as part of the download. The recording is enjoyable on its own, but the perspective of the notes (particularly for *L'abbé Agathon* and *Stabat Mater*) is critical to fully appreciate this recording. It is a welcome addition to the Pärt discography, and a worthy representation of the high musicianship that followers of Gloriae Dei Cantores have come to expect.

Nathan Windt
Davenport, Iowa

Here I Stand
iSing Silicon Valley girlchoir
Jennah Delp-Somers and
Shane Troll, conductors
Innova (2020; 49:26)

Very few things are as stunningly beautiful as the voices of children, and the iSing Silicon Valley album, *Here I Stand*, achieves perfection. iSing Artistic Directors Jennah Delp-Somers and Shane Troll have taken 300 young women, all ages 7 through 12, and developed a highly esteemed choral program in Silicon

Valley. The choir epitomizes blend, diction and intonation in this recording—their first.

The first two works on the recording, the contemporary standards Ēriks Ešenvald's *Only In Sleep* and Ola Gjeilo's *Ave Generosa* each demonstrate the choir's exhilarating tonal purity and accuracy. It is blatantly apparent that much has been accomplished by the careful attention to detail by the ensemble's directors. These performances are dynamic.

Daniel Elder's rhythmically explosive *In Your Light* utilizes the poetic text of thirteenth-century Persian poet, Rumi. The work was commissioned by the choir in 2019 and is an energetic addition to treble choir literature. The ensemble's performance demonstrates their accuracy of pitch and dynamic contrast. As Elder writes, the work "explores one of the most joyful of Rumi's poems and expresses it musically in a churning statement of pure ecstasy."

A second commissioned work by Daniel Elder, *365*, is a heart-wrenching foray against gun violence. The composition is an aphoristic yet edgy piece, an eerie reflection of our times.

Composer Adam Schoenberg's haunting *Never Shall I Forget* is a three-movement work that utilizes excerpts from the Holocaust memoir of Elie Wiesel. The piece is written for treble choir, string quartet and percussion, and is destined to become standard repertoire for treble choirs. The composition challenges the ensemble in many ways, yet the choir performs the moving work without becoming overly vapid. The third movement is astoundingly beautiful and moving.

The tender nuances delicately achieved by the voices of the choir truly shine in Bob Chilcott's *Like A Singing Bird*. The composer uses an amalgam of texts from Christina Rossetti and Robert Burns and then molds the lyrics into a wonderful composition. This is a vivid example of how beautiful children's choirs can be.

Other selections, all remarkably beautiful in their own right, include Sarah Quartel's *The Bird's Lullaby*, Claude Debussy's *Salut Printemps*, the commissioned *Here I Stand* by composer Karen Linford, and PinkZebra's *Sing*. The recording concludes with Andrea Ramsey's poignant *Grow Little Tree*.

iSing Silicon Valley girlchoir has made a monumental contribution to the art of the treble choir. This is a prodigious recording that contains several wonderful additions to the repertoire.

Alan Denney
Estes Park, CO

The Choral Journal: An Index to Volume Sixty-One

by Scott W. Dorsey

SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION

The classification numbers used below correspond to subject headings in all ACDA monographs utilizing bibliographic format, particularly *The Choral Journal: An Index to Volumes 1-18* (Monograph No. 3) by Gordon Paine and *The Choral Journal: An Index to Volumes 19-32* (Monograph No. 7) by Scott W. Dorsey. Subject classifications with no entries for this volume year have been omitted from the listing. "REP." "BIB." and "DISC." are abbreviations for repertoire, bibliography, and discography. A comprehensive index with appropriate annotations and cross-references of all *Choral Journal* articles from 1979 to 2021 is available to ACDA members online at www.acda.org.

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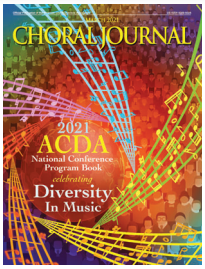

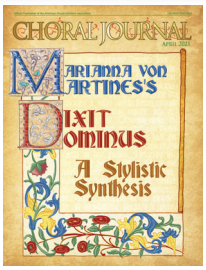

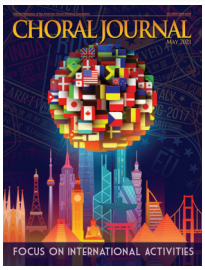

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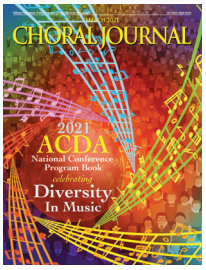

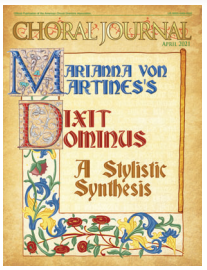

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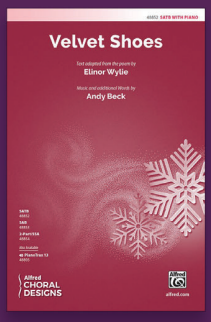

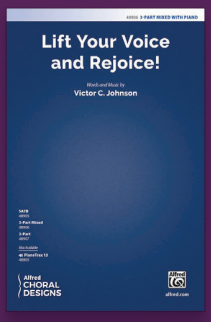

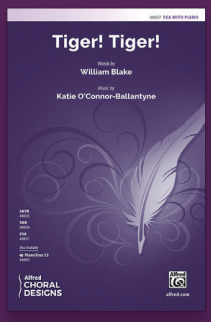

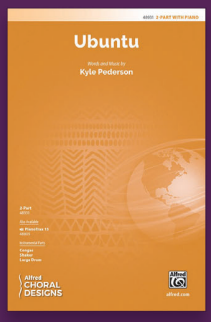

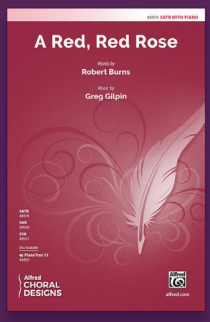

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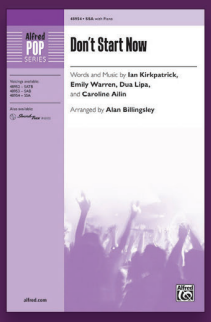

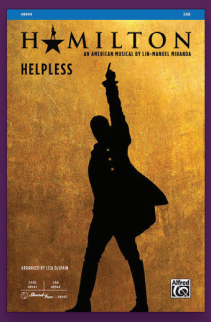

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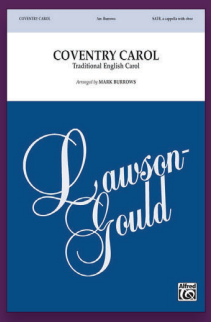

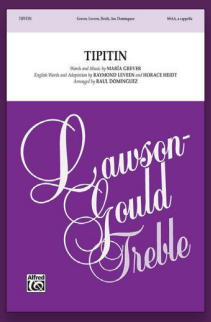

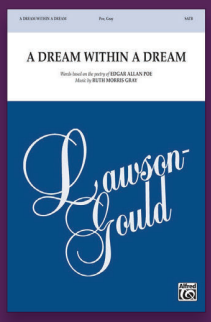

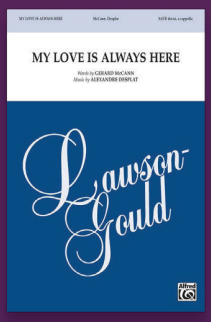

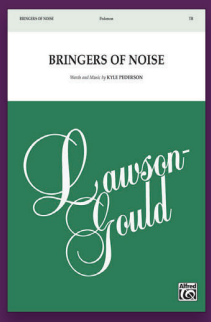

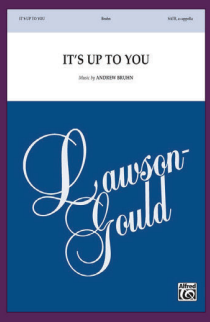

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