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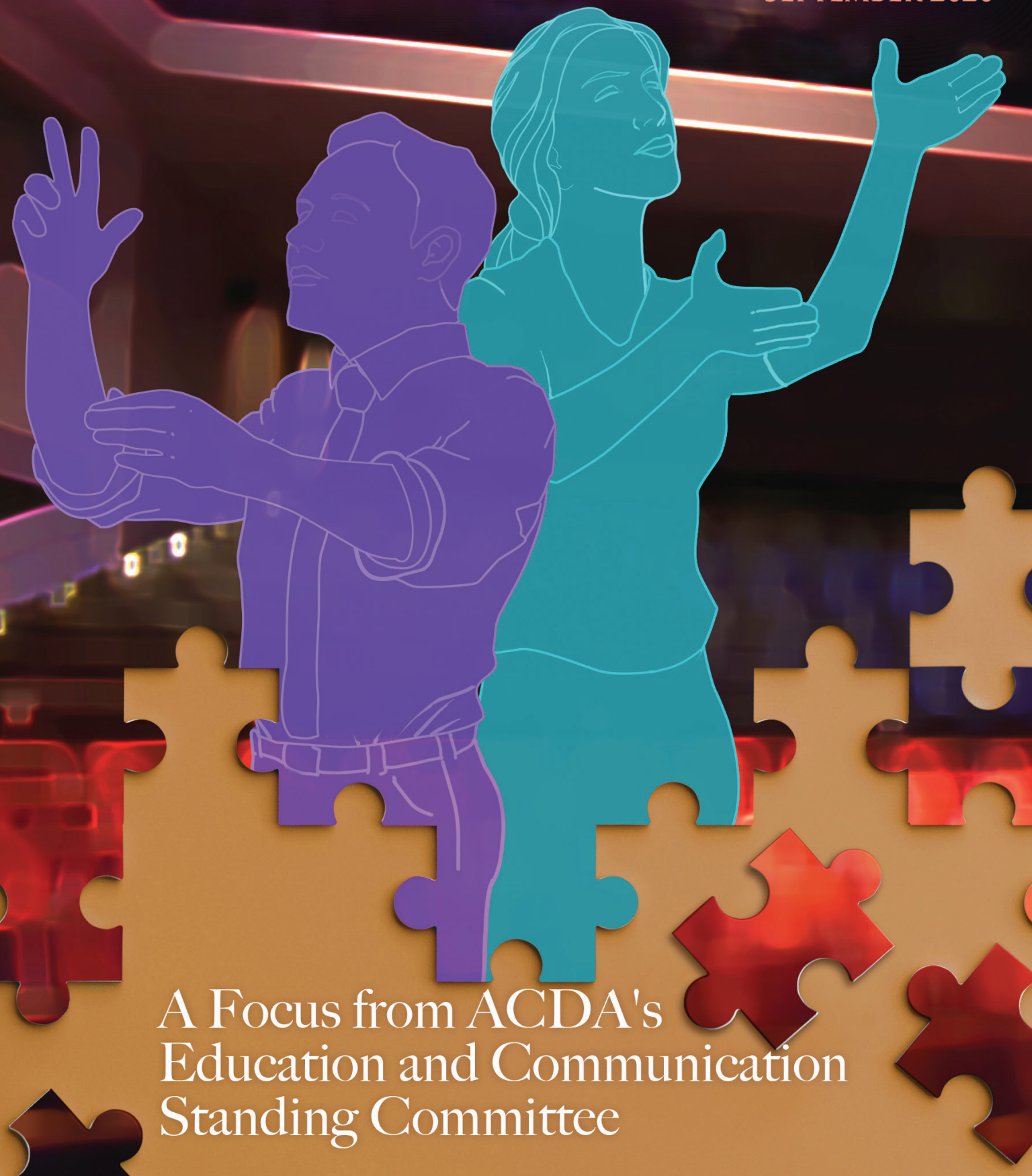

A Focus from ACDA's Education and Communication Standing Committee

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CONTENTS

September 2020/ Volume 61, Number 2

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Since 1959, the *Choral Journal* has been the refereed, international journal of the American Choral Directors Association. Each issue features: scholarly articles, anonymously peer-reviewed by the editorial board; refereed articles on pedagogical or scientific issues for the choral conductor; refereed articles with practical advice and ideas for the choral conductor; reviews of books, recorded sound, and choral works by choral experts; and editorials from association leadership. The January issue previews each year's regional or national conference offerings. Articles from the *Choral Journal* can be found in the following online databases: JSTOR (Arts & Sciences XI Collection); ProQuest (International Index to Music Periodicals); University Microfilms International; NaPublishing; RILM (Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale); EBSCO music index; and WorldCat. Advertising options are available for members and nonmembers. Cover art by Efrain Guerrero. Interior art by Tammy Brummell. Musical examples by Tunesmith Music <www.Tunesmithmusic.com>.

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ADVOCACY STATEMENT

Whereas the human spirit is elevated to a broader understanding of itself through study and performance in the aesthetic arts; and

Whereas serious cutbacks in funding and support have steadily eroded state institutions and their programs throughout the country;

Be it resolved that all citizens of the United States of America actively voice affirmative and collective support for necessary funding at the local, state, and national levels of education and government to ensure the survival of arts programs for this and future generations.

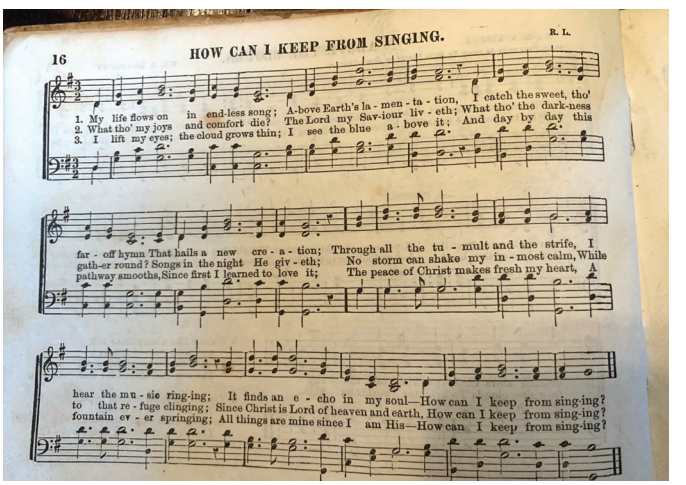
From the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tim Sharp

In 1864, the United States was three years into Civil War. Later that year, Abraham Lincoln was re-elected President for a second term, only to be assassinated on April 15, 1865. During this time of civil unrest and devastation, composer Robert Lowry wrote his best-known composition, a hymn sung by many of us and appreciated by others through Charles Ives' or Aaron Copland's setting of *At the River.*

Not long after the Civil War ended, the crippled nation faced a cholera outbreak that resulted in over 5,000 lives lost in Brooklyn, NY, where Lowry lived and worked. In the face of all of this upheaval, in 1869 he wrote and published *How Can I Keep from Singing* in the Sunday School hymnal *Bright Jewels.* Read and ponder Lowry's words:

> My life flows on in endless song; Above Earth's lamentation,
> I catch the sweet, 'tho far-off hymn, That hails a new creation;
> Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear the music ringing;
> It finds an echo in my soul—How can I keep from singing?



As we face our current COVID-19 adjustment, I believe we are at a remarkable moment in history related to our approach to choral pedagogy and choral performance—a "new creation," to use Lowry's poetry. At this moment, I believe we have the opportunity to open new doors to those yet to enter the joy of making choral music as conductors, singers, and listeners.

Understandably, over the last five months our focus has been on serving and leading those insiders that we work with—our students, our singers, and our earned audiences—who were devastated by the loss of our communal singing. We made the pivot to go virtual with no warning at all, and what previously seemed like futuristic possibilities became a clear and present necessity. Things like Zoom, GoToWebinar, Team, and Skype meetings, online delivery systems, practice tracks, and distance learning had heretofore been elements that belonged to another world, while the century-old scalable approach to classroom and rehearsal room teaching and conducting had served us very well. We mourned its loss, and it took the advancing calendar to move us to a new paradigm and a new reality.

Listen to how Eric Whitacre describes the moment ten years ago, on March 21, 2010, when he uploaded the first virtual choir that most of us experienced:

> In May of 2009, a young singer from Long Island named Britlin Losee made a video for me and posted it to YouTube. Britlin had no way of knowing if I would ever see the video—we had never met—but she uploaded it anyway and hoped it would find me. A friend saw it, sent me a link, and thus her video, like an electronic message in a bottle, improbably found its way to me.

(continued on the next page)

The 12 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.

—ACDA Constitution and Bylaws

Executive Director's Log

What's on Tim's Daytimer?

Sept 9 Marriott Meeting Planner Event

Sept 9-11 IMEX America

What's on Tim's Ipad?

White Fragility
by Robin Diangelo

On Bended Knee
by Bill Cunningham

What's Tim's Latest App?

MyChoralCoach

What's Tim Listening to?

Israel in Egypt
G.F. Handel
Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra
John Eliot Gardiner, Conductor

Angel Band
Sharp & Powell
Gentry Music
The Cecilia Ensemble
Joel Scraper, Conductor

Hear more at <www.acda.org>.
Log in and click on the
First Listen icon

(continued from previous page)

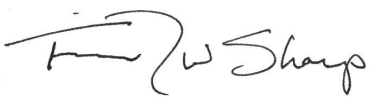
> She told me how much she loved singing, how deeply my composition *Sleep* had touched her, and that as a way of thanking me she wanted to give me a gift. "And so," she said as she turned the camera, "this is me, singing 'Sleep' for you." She started playing the track on her CD player as accompaniment and sang the soprano part, beautifully.
>
> I was knocked out by the purity of her voice and the immediacy of the video, and in that moment I was struck by a simple idea: what if fifty people did exactly what Britlin did? What if they sat alone in front of their computers, in their dorms, in their kitchens, and simply sang their respective parts, soprano, alto, tenor, or bass to the same piece? And what if I collected all those videos and started them at the same time? A virtual choir, made of individuals who had never met, separated by time and physical space but united in song.
>
> (from Foreword to *Innovation in the Ensemble Arts,* GIA Publications, 2017)

COVID-19, with all of its pain and tragedy, has presented us the very promising and exciting prospect of moving in new and enhanced pedagogical directions and innovations in the area of performance that can expand our current reach. Our challenge now is to shift our thinking to new students, new singers, and new opportunities for choral music education, performance, composition, and advocacy. If we shift this mind-set, our current crisis can convert to becoming a part of Lowry's "new creation."

The following are the "new creation" opportunities I see in this time of innovation:

- A technological focus on pedagogy and process;
- Individualized instruction made further possible by online and distance learning;
- Small group instruction focusing on synchronous quartets, octets, and chamber vocal combinations;
- A swing back to the intimacy and advanced musical refinement that comes through small group rehearsal and performance;
- Multiple ways of learning for differentiated learners and differentiated interests, and a move away from a one-size-fits-all models of teaching;
- The development of our audience through media resources that could exceed earlier numbers limited by insider-only attendees and room capacity;
- New hybrid forms of virtual presentation that incorporate multi-media in ways that former staged performances did not accommodate;
- Assessment at a level we formerly theorized about but never really approached due to time and scale;
- A move away from elitism to a more democratic approach to participation and audiences;
- Students can be encouraged to explore and experiment, and improvisational skills can be developed by more singers as they explore possibilities in their private and risk-free environments;
- The exploration of composition and arranging can also benefit from this new environment, which makes all aspects of experimentation enormously less tedious.

To get there, I believe we need to grasp three strategic imperatives: a new mind-set, a new skill set, and a collaborative team set. I know of no better place to find the support for these imperatives than the resources and network available through our professional connection with our American Choral Directors Association.



sharp@acda.org

From the PRESIDENT

Lynne Gackle

We live in an age of the fastest and most widespread communication known to mankind. Though we can communicate more efficiently and more rapidly than ever, we often wonder if our communication is truly effective. Likewise, the process of educating and of being educated has been sent "reeling" in the past months, and the same unknowns that serve to confuse and frustrate us on one day seem to invigorate us with possibility on the next. In short, though the word "unprecedented" seems to be overused, there is no word that better defines our current reality.

There are, however, constants found among the unknowns. We have seen these constants manifested through our recent music making (virtual, masked, small ensemble, etc.); our scenario planning for the unknowns of the semester/season; our webinars and virtual conferences, which are abundant with resources, ideas, and affirmation; various groups and coalitions focused on helping and encouraging colleagues everywhere; as well as professional reports and guidelines that serve as sources of information and recommendations as we move forward. These constants are 1) the power of and our need for music and music making in our daily lives, 2) our need for community and connection with each other, and 3) the resilience of the human spirit and our desire to make a difference in the lives of others and the world.

As we think about the past few months and look into the coming months, we find that the challenges which have and continue to face us both professionally and personally, serve to magnify the things that are most important in this life. For the past few months, we have been pushed out of our comfort zones on so many fronts. We have been forced to view and respond differently to our situations. We have learned that no matter where we are on our career or life journeys, we are not alone. We ARE capable of change as we continue to learn and expand our view of self and of our world. We have found new pathways for teaching, learning, and music making that are more effective and more efficient. Many of these newly acquired skills will become part of our new normal and will be added to our pedagogical toolbox.

With that, I welcome you to the new academic year and to a new musical season—with all of its challenges AND all of its successes!

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From the EDITOR

Amanda Bumgarner

Over the past few years, I have enjoyed working with the chairs of ACDA's national standing committees to put together focus issues relevant to their work with our association. This month's focus is from the Education and Communication Standing Committee, and I want to thank Jamila McWhirter and her committee members. We hope you enjoy the articles in this September issue. Our October issue will include several articles directly related to singing during COVID-19, and I look forward to sharing those with you. In addition, there is a correction from last month's August issue. Patrice Madura Ward-Steinman's In Memoriam incorrectly printed her year of birth. The correct year is 1952.

Jamila L. McWhirter

From the Standing Committee Chair

It has been a privilege for me to serve as guest editor of this Education and Communication focus issue. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of the ACDA Education and Communication Standing Committee for their diligent work. Please take a moment to read the bios of these wonderful individuals who give of their time to serve on this committee on behalf of the ACDA membership.

The committee and I are delighted about the articles in this issue of the *Choral Journal,* and we hope you will find them enlightening and encouraging. John McDonald delves into the importance of conducting workshops, especially for early-career choral conductors. He provides insights from Daniel Bara, Deanna Joseph, Pamela Elrod Huffman, and Eugene Rogers. Alex Favazza and Amon Eady examine the challenges and struggles of early-career choral educators, but more importantly the areas of resilience that can be found in self-efficacy, personal magnetism, and support systems. Brett Nolker and Robert Sinclair challenge us to examine the dualism of the choral experience. They ask us to contemplate the use of self-regulated learning in the choral rehearsal and to deliberate how to better create a welcoming and empowering individual environment within the ensemble framework. Lastly, I tackle a communication issue that has become prevalent in the past several months known as Zoom fatigue. My hope is that you may find at least one helpful suggestion that may ease the weariness of the virtual classroom for you and your students.

Thank you for taking the time to explore this focus issue of the *Choral Journal.* I hope you will pause and read the Mission Statement and Goals of the ACDA Education and Communication Standing Committee in order to become familiar with our work. When you read these words, those of you who are K-12 and university choral teachers will be entering the academic year with a myriad of guidelines and unusual expectations. My hope is that this issue inspires your work.

Call for *Choral Journal* Editorial Board Members

Over the next two years, there will be openings on the *Choral Journal* staff for Editorial Board members. Editorial Board members are responsible for reviewing article submissions while offering input and suggestions for the workings of *Choral Journal.*

Criteria

Editorial Board members should have strong research skills and knowledge of a variety of topics related to choral conducting and pedagogy, music history and theory, vocal pedagogy, choral music education, world music, conducting performance, choral repertoire, and rehearsal techniques. A member need not have expertise in all of these topics but should have a wide range of knowledge. It is our desire that the board reflect a variety of voices, and *Choral Journal* encourages a diverse pool of applicants.

Editorial Board members will communicate directly with the *Choral Journal* editor and will meet at minimum every other year either at the ACDA National Conference or via an online meeting format.

Choral Journal Editorial Board members are volunteers recommended for a four-year term and may be reappointed once, for a maximum of eight years.

Board members review article submissions to assess their suitability for publication in the *Choral Journal,* and also help to determine overall policies for the Journal. Members are not responsible for line editing, rewriting, or proofing.

A letter of application, including a vision statement and resume, are due by September 15 to Amanda Bumgarner, ACDA Publications Editor, abumgarner@acda.org. There will be a review of applicants by the Publications Editor and our current editorial board.

Email abumgarner@acda.org with questions. Applications are due September 15.

About the EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION NATIONAL STANDING COMMITTEE

Jamila L. McWhirter is professor of choral music education at Middle Tennessee State University. She is national chair of the ACDA Education and Communication Standing Committee. She also serves the National Association for Music Education as a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee for the *Music Educators Journal.* She recently authored *A Creative Duet: Mentoring Success for Emerging Music Educators,* published by Oxford University Press. In addition to her university duties, Jamila presents for national, regional, and state conferences of ACDA, NAfME, SMTE, and MTNA. She serves as guest conductor and clinician for numerous honor choirs and festivals throughout the United States. Jamila holds the PhD in Curriculum and Instruction in Choral Music Education from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She is entering her thirty-first year of K-20 choral and music teacher education teaching.

Mark Lawley has enjoyed serving ACDA as president of Missouri Choral Directors Association and president of the ACDA Southwestern Region. He has also served as president of South Central Missouri Music Educators Association. Mark has enjoyed thirty-five years as a teacher and conductor teaching all levels kindergarten through university in both choral and instrumental music. Choirs under his direction have given invitational performances at National ACDA, National NAfME, Southwestern ACDA, and eight times for the Missouri Music Educators Association. He is grateful for his wife of well over thirty years, Lori, and their children: Devin, Ruthie, Drew, Meghan, Brooke, and Matt. Nothing has turned life upside down so deliriously as having five granddappers: Hudson, Gavin, Harrison, Jaden, and Nolan.

John McDonald is assistant professor of music education and director of choirs at McKendree University in Lebanon, Illinois. He also serves as director of the St. Louis Children's Choir Young Men's Chorus. At McKendree, John teaches undergraduate courses in vocal and general music education, directs the Chamber Choir, the Concert Choir, and is Chair of the Student Affairs Committee. He maintains a professional ensemble singing career, performing with the Missouri Choral Artists and the Church of St. Michael and St. George in Clayton, Missouri. John earned degrees from the University of Missouri-Kansas City (DMA), East Carolina University (MM), and Middle Tennessee State University (BME). He lives in Swansea, Illinois, with his wife, Alyssa, and their two sons, Tyler and Charlie.

Robert L. Sinclair serves VanderCook College of Music as director of choral activities and dean of graduate studies. His educational background includes three years at Luther College, where he sang in the Nordic Choir under the direction of Weston Noble. He completed his Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Performance and Master of Music in Choral Conducting degrees with B. R. Henson at Sam Houston State University. In December of 2000, he completed a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction (Music Education) at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where he worked with David Rayl and Wendy Sims. Robert brings thirty years of experience working with middle school and high school choirs at the state, regional, national, and international levels.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the ACDA Education and Communication Committee is to foster and support educational initiatives that provide professional development and resources for emerging, mid-career, and late-career ACDA members as well as those initiatives focused on inspiring the next generation of choral professionals.

Committee Goals:

1. Support initiatives, develop guidelines, and disseminate information through partnerships with other arts organizations, such as the Urban Harmony initiative with the Barbershop Harmony Society.

2. Support initiatives, develop guidelines, and disseminate information through partnerships with state/regional ACDA leaders, such as NextDirection.

3. Support initiatives, develop guidelines, and disseminate information for continuing professional development graduate credit, such as ACDA conference attendance graduate credit through Vandercook College of Music.

4. Encourage the membership to contribute to and utilize the ACDA educational platforms and programs in place, such as ChoralNet, ChorTeach, and ChorTransform.

5. Identify and create action items for emerging, mid-career, and late-career professional development that can be shared with the ACDA membership.

Coming Soon!

Grant Opportunities for Research in the Areas of Undergraduate and Graduate Choral Music Curriculum

The ACDA Education and Communication Committee would like to announce that in the near future, grant opportunities will be available for studies that assess the undergraduate and graduate curriculums in choral music.

ACDA is particularly interested in funding research studies examining the undergraduate curriculum in the following areas: (a) whether conducting is appropriately emphasized as a major instrument; (b) whether there are sufficient actual rehearsal experiences for the student conductor; and (c) whether adequate aural training materials have been developed specific to choral ear training.

Also of particular interest, are studies examining the graduate curriculum in choral music to determine such factors as (a) What do graduates feel are the strengths and shortcomings of their programs? (b) Are sufficient psychological and intrinsically musical factors in interpretation adequately studied in addition to historical, musicological, notational, and programmatic approaches? (c) Has sufficient content been developed for additional aesthetic theories of interpretation?

Proposal submission guidelines will be forthcoming on the ACDA website from the ACDA Education and Communication Committee. When these guidelines are available, notification will be sent through ACDA social media.

ChoIr or ChorUS

What's in a Name?

D. BRETT NOLKER AND
ROBERT L. SINCLAIR

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As ensemble leaders, we place value on the group experience. The result of our score study, rehearsal planning, and concert preparation is to create a meaningful experience for the ensemble members and for the audience. For those who guide ensembles in the schools, or work with inexperienced or developing musicians, the list of responsibilities includes not only large group leadership but also meaningful learning for each ensemble member. The group we guide is composed of individuals, each of whom must learn and grow, and use their individual skills to contribute to the final performance. A moving and enjoyable rehearsal experience may be rewarding, but can we ensure that the experience is also educationally sound? As we plan ensemble rehearsals that nourish the spirits of our singers, should we also provide experiences that educate them?

In our work to emphasize the unification of the group, we can overlook the individuals of whom the group is built. Ensemble music in the schools has the responsibility to provide lasting individual music learning for each individual student. Sadly, however "music performance instruction in North American schools typically involves large-group instruction in bands, choirs and orchestras where the needs and priorities of the ensemble can often outweigh those of any given individual."[1]

ChorUS or ChoIr

How do you refer to your ensembles? Do the terms you use to describe your groups accurately represent the individuals who sing in them? The terms we use for our ensembles may indicate differences that are overlooked but offer insights that could guide our practice and help us ensure the richest experience for each of our singers. Consider the two most commonly used terms: Chorus or Choir. The difference between these terms points to an important truth that should guide our preparations. There are actually two entities in our rehearsal room at the same time: 1) the choir, composed of the individuals in the room, and 2) the chorus, the group itself. While commonly used as synonyms, should they be? Careful consideration of these terms may provide important insight into aspects of our instruction and our students' ensemble experiences and learning.

Linguistically, these terms have strong and consistent interactions. Historically, however, they come from different environments that indicate some potentially important differences that can inform our practices. While over time each term has collected multiple definitions and usage, for this illustration we will focus on the chorus of Greek drama and the choir of the western cathedral tradition.

The *Khoros* of ancient Greek tragedy was a group of performers who dressed, moved, and spoke in unison to comment on the action of the main characters. There is some debate among academics of theater history, but members of the khoros may have dressed in identical robes and masks to hide their identities and underscore the non-individualized role of the group. In contrast, the *Choir,* as an architectural term, identifies the portion of the cathedral between the nave and the altar, and is also used to describe those who occupy that space. The choir was often furnished with choir stalls, which are elaborate, enclosed individual areas in which the clergy and singers could stand, sit, and kneel to carry out their individual duties during the service.

Each term contains an internal reference to the social context of its origin. The chorus contained an expectation of large group anonymity and collective action. The individual was minimized to heighten the effect and importance

of the assembled group as a unified body. The essential aspect of the chorus was the idea of "us," whereas, in organization, format, logistics, and even theology, the choir environment contains a foundational difference. It is a collection of individuals. From the individual placement of the singers in their stall, to the expectation that each person is acting in personal worship, the term choir contains an expectation of individual responsibility and individual action. Yes, there is an "I" in choir. While we are not advocating the use of one term over the other, the differences contained within our most commonly used terms may provide an important and useful insight to guide our teaching and ensemble leadership.

The Dualism of the Choral Experience

This difference between these terms hints at a dualism in the choral experience that is frequently overlooked and often misunderstood. While we may assume that in most classes the individuals are learning, in an ensemble setting, our performance emphasis often reveals that the group is the focus of the experience. Most classrooms appear similar to an outsider: one teacher in the front leading a group of students who are all engaged in the same activity. Yet, there is an important aspect to our experience that makes it particularly challenging, valuable, and unique. All other classrooms in our schools, even those that employ "group learning" strategies, have a final outcome of an individual test. The teacher may speak to the group, and guide group discussion, and even guide well-organized team-based learning activities, but behind it all is the understanding that the final measure will be the student's proof of individual learning. Whereas, for almost all of our activities, the final measure is intended to be a collective outcome, an aggregate of the work contributed by each. Where all other learning experiences have an individual test as the intended result, the ensemble concert is unique in providing our students with a group or collective outcome.

Consider a typical math class. The instructor talks to the group, teaches to the group, and eventually tests the group. The instructor may answer individual questions to address individual problems as they arise. The instructor will likely check for understanding in a variety of ways including questioning strategies: "Any questions?" or "Tommy, are you with us on this?" followed by a head nod or thumbs-up. Regardless of teaching strategy or rhetoric, there remains an unspoken understanding that the onus is on each student, and each student knows it because the test is individually graded. A few gifted mathematicians don't help the room suddenly "math" better on tests. The final outcome is not determined by the group score.

In the choral setting a similar scenario might include, "Any questions in this section? It seems to be coming along." or "Tommy, are you finding your pitch going into the 'B' section?" To what end are these students preparing? Against what measure do these students compare their success? How do we show that each student is improving at choral singing? Many argue that our performances are our tests. While the conductor and the ensemble may be evaluated publicly, students are not graded individually in this public setting, not even a large-ensemble contest or festival. The job of each student in the math class is to absorb and process the material, even when presented to the group, so they can exhibit individual mastery. What is the job of each student in the ensemble? When the final measure for the chorus is the concert performance, what is the ultimate goal for the individual? Is it only to sing well in performance? What about the less-than-accurate singer or the extremely self-conscious voice? For those members, the goal is often to contribute what little they can—or think they can—to the whole or simply to stay out of the way. Take as an example this teaching sequence:

The director stops the group and asks them to repeat a section. This time, Tommy chooses not to sing and leaves out the musical element with which he has been struggling. After the repeat, the director enthusiastically praises the group on an improved sound. In fact, the group does sound better, but what has Tommy learned? Not how to improve individually, but instead, when not to sing. That is a significant but unintended consequence.

The dualism revealed in our classrooms takes the form of two simultaneous experiences: the group event, and a parallel individual event. These experiences, while reflected in our terminology, are often not represented in our actions. In fact, most are unaware that either event is taking place, yet the differing social contexts exist si-

multaneously in each moment of each rehearsal. Is the moment intended for a group outcome, or an individual outcome? Is it for the performance of the group, or the learning of the individual? This brings us to a key point that must guide our decisions. Groups don't learn, individuals do, and individuals within groups still learn individually.

Self-Regulated Learning

There is a growing body of intriguing research in an area of cognitive development that may provide a perspective on how individual learners within the ensemble acquire the tools necessary to monitor and control their own thoughts, behaviors, and attentional resources to improve their performance[2] Self-regulated learning (SRL) refers to a set of strategies or habits-of-mind that learners use to take control of their own learning. Schunk and Zimmerman define SRL as, "learning that occurs largely from the influence of students' self-generated thoughts, feelings, strategies, and behaviors, which are oriented toward the attainment of goals."[3] As one of the primary scholars in this area explains, "Self-regulation is not a mental ability or an academic performance skill; rather, it is the self-directive process by which learners transform their mental abilities into academic skills. Learning is viewed as an activity that students do for themselves in a proactive way rather than as a covert event that happens to them in reaction to teaching."[4]

In the music education literature, SRL has been investigated by some of the leading researchers in instrumental instruction. The research has revealed some important findings on practice strategies and individual development on the instrument. However, when considering the individual learning experiences that must take place in the large ensemble rehearsal, we believe it can also provide valuable insights to choral directors as we plan group rehearsals leading to the most effective individual learning experiences.

There are a few theoretical models of SRL, with subtle differences, but they all tend to agree on some central components. For this discussion we will focus on Zimmerman's social cognitive theory of self-regulated learning, which has developed as the most prevalent model in the music education literature. This model explains that SRL, "unfolds in real-time as a cyclical process wherein a learner negotiates through three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection"[5] Within each phase the learner is engaged in personal actions that respond to internal dialogues and are shaped by feedback, both from the learner and from the teacher. It is our position that for this to be managed effectively, the ensemble director must establish and clearly maintain an environment that communicates the individual emphasis and nature of the learning outcomes of the rehearsal. Each phase requires specific and consistent actions by the director to build this individualized mind-set and maintain it throughout the rehearsal. Although the actions of SRL are strategies of the individual learner, when the social context is the full ensemble rehearsal, it is the responsibility of the director to communicate the expectation of individual growth for self-regulation. McPherson and Zimmerman suggest that "effective music teachers act like mentors to their students by stimulating and guiding their cognitive and technical skills in a nurturing but rigorous environment."[6] Rather than present a full exposition of the details of self-regulated learning, we refer the reader to DiBenedetto for a more in-depth discussion of the various components of self-regulated learning theory.[7]

The choral ensemble is a complex, dualistic social environment with many levels of interaction. Each singer has individual responsibilities, enacted within the larger social context of the choir, while simultaneously engaging with the director. The director establishes and reinforces the learning context and matching tasks, whether individual or group, for each student. This requires a multi-step process that is carefully planned and clearly articulated with a learning outcome, a clear statement of context for responsibilities and strategies, and a clearly articulated assessment strategy that matches the context of learning and action, individual or group. To maintain the environment for optimum self-regulation, the ensemble director must, (a) establish and maintain the individualized environment, (b) use individualized rhetoric to sustain individual focus, and (c) provide opportunities for reflection through individual assessment and self-assessment.

There are self-regulating students in our ensembles already. We often refer to them as gifted musicians. They engage more fully in rehearsal. They practice outside of

rehearsal. They spend much of their time creating music for themselves. They have set their own agenda in learning that is parallel to ours. They have an individual learning outcome. We may even offer them assistance outside of class that assists them in forethought, performance, and reflection. What about the rest of the ensemble members, those who make up the majority of the ensemble? What is each student learning about musicianship or the voice and how to use it in the ensemble setting? We can provide an environment that encourages them each to grow and fulfill their place in the ensemble.

Refining Instructional Rhetoric

To successfully communicate the learning context to students, we need to develop both verbal and non-verbal vocabulary skills, helping each student connect to the specific student's approach to skill building or singing, which in turn, helps each student develop the vocabulary skills that empower them to describe habits of thought, word, and deed during the rehearsal process.

An important first step is for you, the instructor, to develop two sets of descriptive and precise language and pedagogic gestures that align with your intended outcomes—one for the group and one for each of the individuals in it. Group gesture tends to be more embracing and less direct. They tend to use two hands rather than one, and is most often used with group terms like "we," section names (sopranos, tenors, and basses).

Individualized gestures tend to be more direct, will include more specific eye contact, use of more individual terms like "each," carefully using a student's name, and are often accompanied by a change of proximity toward the group of individuals you intend to address. A rhetorical example that highlights the issue is the use of the ever-problematic, "you." A broad gesture and a casual use of "you" establishes the group context. Whereas, changing proximity, a focused gesture, and a pointed "you," with change of tone, characterizes a singular "you." However, did the student addressed follow your intent? Pronouns are chosen to help each learner think independently, work independently, and reflect independently. Remember that the term "you" requires context and definition in order to be understood. When students walk into an ensemble setting, they tend to be automatically in group-mode. Thoughtful management of your rhetoric, gesture, eye contact, and proximity communicates an environment that heightens the students' self-regulation.

Creating a Welcoming and Empowering Individual Environment

Many of us work with choral singers who are self-conscious of, and perhaps uncomfortable with, their singing voice. This is especially true in beginning and developing ensembles, or ensembles with less-experienced singers like church or community groups, but it can be found in most groups. Every ensemble is composed of voices of all sizes, shapes, and timbres. Likewise, our singers have an equally wide array of attitudes toward their instruments. The ensemble experience can mask some voices, providing a safe environment for the less-confident singer while allowing other to shine. However, opportunities must be provided to encourage the full engagement of singers at all levels in processes that make each a more independent and collaborative musician.

> **"The richness of the vocal ensemble is represented through the diversity of its individuals, not the homogeneity of its voices."**

While self-consciousness or discomfort with one's voice is common, the director needs to help overcome this by providing an environment in which to develop a healthy self-awareness of one's own instrument, its value to the ensemble, and the value of each person to the society. First, acknowledge and validate the fact that every choir has a variety of voices. These include a range of voices described as big, small, best, least-best, and so forth. We need not identify these voices by name, as that will only make individuals more self-conscious.

Each singer may identify who they are and into which category they fall. The richness of the vocal ensemble is represented through the diversity of its individuals, not the homogeneity of its voices. Our job is to help each person see the value and importance of the individual voice in the corporate sound and to encourage each singer to be more self-aware, self-reflective, and self-confident.

One of the best places to begin this process is during warm-up exercises. These are usually designed to build individual skill sets and understandings, which provides an excellent opportunity to establish individual rhetoric, context, and student-generated vocabulary. To establish whose knowledge-base your students are using, try the following activity with your ensemble.

Word Association Game

This game is revealing in one of two ways. Either the only words they know are the ones you taught them (deep, low, silent, etc.) or they are quite rich and descript, which is evidence of increasing self-regulating thought and vocabulary. Take note when students begin getting nervous as words are utilized, since no word is allowed to be repeated. The longer it takes for this to happen, the more independent the students. If students run out of words quickly, the knowledge was not theirs initially. The vocabulary was yours. Each has not developed a repertoire of words to describe breath or struggled to understand the significance of developing individual responses and to every question posed in rehearsal. The greater the response rate, the richer the vocabulary. Here is an example of student/teacher exchanges during this activity:

Teacher: Describe a musical breath using one or two adjectives. There are a couple of rules, however. You may not repeat words, and you may not say that another student took your word. Lastly, I will go rapid fire and will not take volunteers. Are you ready? Karla, you first.

Karla: Low

Teacher: Good. Sarah?

Sarah: Deep

Teacher: Ok. Todd?

Todd: Full

Teacher: Yes. Thank you. However, all of you are being a little safe in your responses. What else do you have? Khalil?

Khalil: Expectant

Teacher: Nice! Ginger?

Ginger: Suspense-filled

Teacher: Excellent! Francis?

Francis: Blue!

Teacher: Blue? Tell me more about blue breathing.

Francis: The text is, "My Lord, what a morning." I can see how blue the sky is and how awe inspiring it must be. I breathe blue.

Teacher: Very creative! I like this, Francis!

The quality of the answer is not as important as the originality and authenticity of the answer. A "correct" answer is even less important. The accuracy of the answer is not particularly important, at least early on. The originality and authenticity of the answer is of most importance, as is the manner in which you affirm a response and, perhaps, manipulate the answering process to establish comfort and buy-in from students. Work to avoid any judgement of the word you hear. Asking for an explanation shows your validation of the choice even if it doesn't make sense yet. This same type of activity can be used to describe tone, attack, phrase shape, vowel shape, posture. Remember, each may feel or hear "correct" differently. Our job is to help each student unpackage, understand, and develop personal vocabulary to describe what is happening so that it can be replicated in the future.

Establishing the Correct Learning Outcome for Each Task

Rather than working for a better or more correct sound, focus on making a *different* sound by the end of each rehearsal. *Better or correct* carries success and failure implications that *different* does not. Many of today's students equate incorrect with failure. This limits creativity at the same time that it exacerbates self-consciousness. Starting with *different* counteracts this sense of failure and frees each student to take risks and to use intuition and imagination to guide individual learning. In many ways we, as directors, create our own problems here. We tell students how to do something or what to feel before doing a task. Instead, ask each student to experiment with an idea or concept like tone production or phrase shape, perform the task incorporating the individual's experimental thought, then describe any changes the student felt. Knowing that something may be about to change and that one will be asked to describe or demonstrate this change keeps each student more engaged in the process of learning.

Personal Space Activity

Here is another activity to do with your ensemble. This is a two-step process. First, spread singers out with arms slightly extended to their sides. Ask them to turn around in place one time to draw a circle around themselves. Now each singer is inside a self-imposed personal space. Rhetoric at this point is critical.

> *Teacher instructions to each student*: Erase everything you think you know about correct. Inside your space, no can hear you. You are not listening to anyone else. Create a space in front of you. Put your arms up like you are hugging a barrel.

This step is quite important because it changes the focus of each student from group (ChorUS) to the individual experience (ChoIr). Each is being asked not to listen to others for the next several minutes, simply focus on one's own singing. This activity can work very well to liberate the hesitant or self-conscious singer. You have now established an individual mind-set for an individual outcome. Next, change your proximity to the students. Move directly to a student. Proximity, eye contact, and pronoun use are keys to student perception of learning outcome. This embodies individual outcome. An example of teacher speak follows:

> *Teacher*: Ok, Wilson. I want you to fill this area, the one you just created around the barrel, with your sound. You are not worried about Tim's sound. Tim is filling his space with his sound. Fill your space with your sound.
>
> *Take one of your hands, move it around inside the circle created by his arms.*

Do the same with a few more students, perhaps one in each section, then repeat while motioning to each person in the room.

Performing the Singing or Learning Activity

This is an individual activity with an individual outcome, and each student will be asked to talk about the experience when finished. The key here is to reiterate that each student should be in individual task mode and that the choral teacher's role in minimal.

Providing Opportunities for Reflection

This exercise almost always results in a difference in both tone and production. The next step is critical. Avoid telling them what you, as the director, heard. It doesn't matter what you heard. Ask them what they heard and what each experienced. Ask students to self-assess and reflect on any changes they perceived in production, then ask students to describe the difference in the production. Ask for direct answers not correct answers. Early-on they will be self-conscious about responding. Ask students to avoid quality judgements for the ensemble. Sounding better or worse is not the outcome. Describing the difference is what matters.

Strategy for success: Early in this process, ask group questions, such as describing the difference in the sound. Soon, begin to ask more individually. "Tim, did you do anything differently this time?" Always encourage self-reflection and self-description when answering. It

is not important that each person answer each question out loud, but it is important that each person develop an answer to each question that is considered, honest, and authentic.

The same process is followed for each component of rehearsing: sight reading and literacy building, phrase building, blend, building the repertoire, and even the performance itself.

Step 1: Contextualize the learning moment (aligns with forethought from SRL). Is the student being asked to act in group or individual mode? How did you express your intended outcome? How did you check for student perception? Identify each student's role in the learning activity about to be performed.

Step 2: Perform the learning activity. Sing through the vocalise, prepare for the first reading of new music, prepare to sing through a segment of the repertoire for the next concert, consistently emphasizing each student's self-awareness and regulation.

Step 3: Provide opportunity for reflection. Assess the outcome of the activity. How did we do? What changed? How was it different? What, if anything, did you do that was different? Sometimes, take real "snapshots" of the learning. Have individuals record and self-assess. Record the group and have individuals discuss. Do the same with sections. Guide each student's ability to assess and reflect accurately. Remember, they are often harder on themselves. Encourage each to express and define differences rather than making quality judgements.

Music educators aware of our dualism effectively communicate, both verbally and nonverbally, the expected outcomes for both the individuals and group. The cycle is completed when the singer is aware and confident of the improvement made, and intentionally incorporates the new skill into a rehearsal or performance. This requires risk-taking and demonstrates learning. The only thing remaining is to take some kind of snapshot of the student using the skill—an individual assessment—which documents the learning. As you continue to use this process in your rehearsals, remember, the director's responsibility is group sound. Each student's responsibility is the individual product. When you hear a group sound that aligns with your expectation, commend the group, but immediately ask individuals to describe what happened or how something felt as opposed to telling the group. This encourages the development of a vocabulary of words and gestures that you and your students can use in future rehearsals and while conducting. The process will empower each student to new and more independent levels of contribution to the whole. CJ

NOTES

[1] Peter Miksza (et. al.) *Connecting Self-regulated Learning and Performance with Instruction Across High School Content Areas* (Jersey City, N.J.: Springer, 2018), 339.

[2] Gary McPherson, and Barry Zimmerman, "Self-Regulation of Musical Learning: A Social Cognitive Perspective on Developing Performance Skills" in Richard Colwell and Peter Webster (Eds.), *MENC Handbook of Research on Music Learning, Volume 2: Applications* (pp. 130–175). (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 131.

[3] Dale Schunk and Barry Zimmerman, eds. *Self-Regulated Learning: From Teaching to Self-Reflective Practice* (New York: Guilford Press,1998).

[4] Barry Zimmerman, "Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview" in *theory into practice, 41*:2 (2002), 64-70, DOI: 10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2: 65.

[5] Barry Zimmerman, "Attaining Self-Regulation: A Social Cognitive Perspective" in Monique Boekaerts, Paul R. Pintrich, and Moshe Zeidner (Eds.), *Handbook of Self-Regulation* (13–39) (New York: Academic Press, 2000).

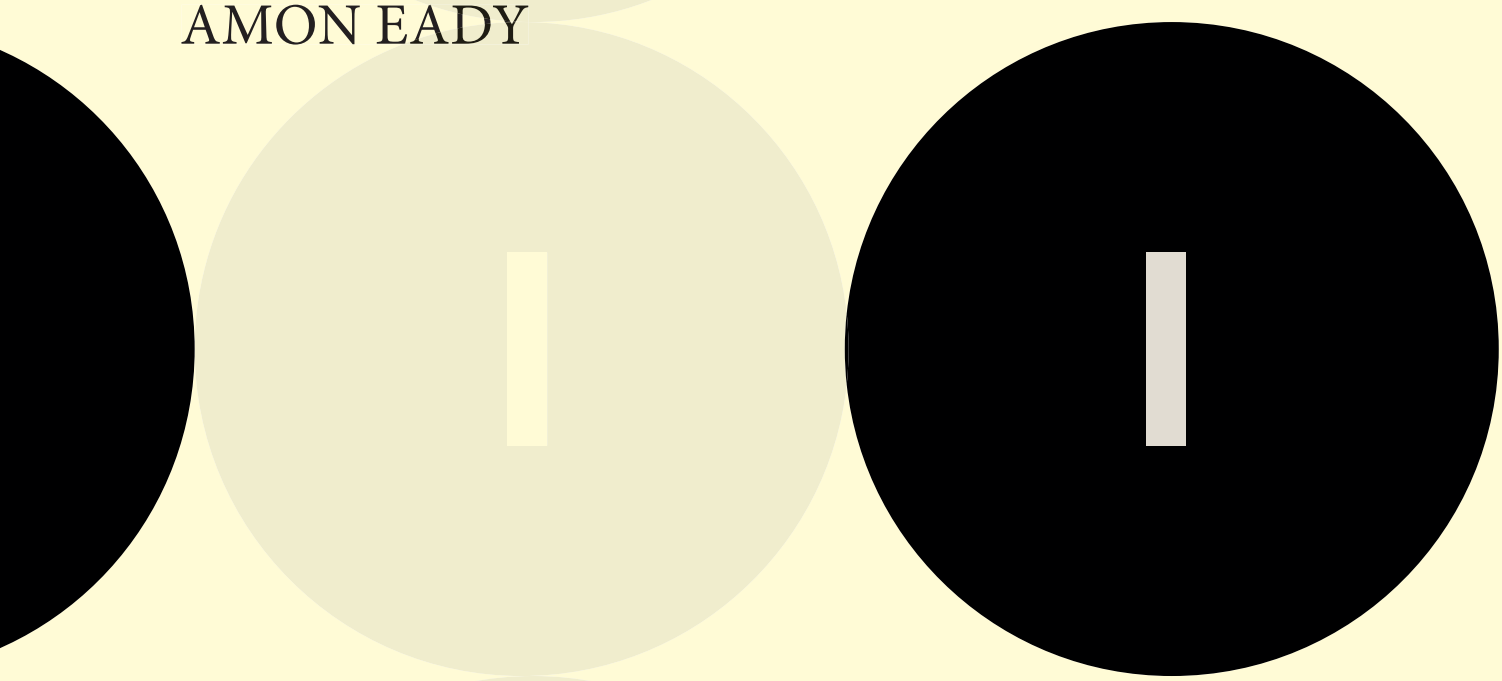
[6] McPherson and Zimmerman, 156.

[7] Maria DiBenedetto, ed., *Connecting Self-Regulated Learning and Performance with Instruction Across High School Content Areas* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer International Publishing, 2018).

RESILIENT CHORAL TEACHERS

ALEX T. FAVAZZA, JR.

AMON EADY



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New teachers enter a profession that is wrought with stressors and challenges. Whether it is shortage of monetary and educational resources, lack of active support systems, paltry compensation, or the extreme demand of emotional capacity required for such young professionals, beginning educators face a myriad of potential challenges upon entering the work force.

Stories and statistics of teacher burnout and attrition are ubiquitous, and the U.S. Department of Education has reported similarly abysmal numbers over the past twenty years. The music classroom is no exception, especially in complex situations such as urban environments. In a study conducted over a ten-year period in a large urban school district in the mid-south, only 17 (13.7%) of 124 secondary band and choral programs experienced no teacher turnover. The other 86.3% (104) experienced turnover, with 55 of those schools experiencing moderate or high teacher turnover, and one school changed music teachers every year during the ten-year span.[1]

We will not dwell on the negative aspects of the teaching profession nor discover an elusive "secret" to keeping teachers in the profession. Instead, the aim is to identify and investigate attributes of successful teachers who defy disadvantageous constructs and thrive as choral directors. These teachers demonstrate resilience. Resilience is a product of how one interacts with their environment over time, and such evidence of a teacher's resilience might only become visible when they encounter adverse situations. Melanie Tait suggests, "Resilience is a mode of interacting with events in the environment that is activated and nurtured in times of stress."[2]

The study of teacher resilience, especially thriving teachers, is a somewhat nascent field of inquiry. Gu and Day indicate that only as recent as the 1980s, and continuing through the decades to follow, has the research on resilience shifted focus to the positive traits and strengths of the resilient, rather than the negative situations they overcome.[3] Beltman, Mansfield, and Price compiled a review of fifty educational research studies on teacher resilience from 2000 to 2010 focused on "quality retention." These researchers identified recurring concepts of resilience:

> Individual characteristics such as self-efficacy, confidence and coping strategies are important in overcoming challenging situations or recurring setbacks.[4] Difficulties are not simply managed, but individuals are able to bounce back quickly and efficiently, persevere and thrive.[5] Successful adaptation occurs despite obstacles, and personal wellbeing is maintained[6] Reciprocal, mutually supportive personal, professional and peer relationships are important in this process.[7] The outcome is that teachers maintain job satisfaction and commitment to their profession.[8, 9]

What does resilience look like for the choral teacher? We have focused these recurring concepts of resilience in the research literature into three areas concerning the pre-service music educator and beginning choral teacher:

- Self-Efficacy and Skill sets
- Personal Magnetism
- Support Systems

We will explore these factors of resilience-building for the pre-service and early-career choral conductors through three reflective personal essays.

Self-Efficacy and Skill Sets

Self-efficacy and confidence are some of the most common conceptualizations of thriving teacher resilience in research literature. Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their ability to accomplish a goal. The psychological study of self-efficacy stems from the work of renowned psychologist Albert Bandura and has greatly influenced learning theories in education. Self-efficacy concerns the combination of cognitive faculties (thinking, logic, memory, etc.) and affective faculties (emotion, instinct, etc.). High self-efficacy involves a trust in cognitive abilities coupled with positive outcome expectancy.

Individual perceptions of self-efficacy can develop over time, and the undergraduate college experience is, for many, a time of concentrated personal growth and development especially in the area of emotional maturity. College teacher-conductors are likely not strangers to modern university students' struggles with self-doubt, anxiety, and depression. Oftentimes for pre-service music educators, these struggles manifest themselves in stunted development of self-concept and confidence on the podium and beyond. Students seem overly concerned with the possibility of failure in front of others, even students who may display little to no anxiety in solo and ensemble performances. Of course, potential for failure is not without consequence in the classroom, and master teachers maintain a dedication to creating successful experiences for their students. However, this diminished perception of self-efficacy in pre-service music educators prevents them from having the requisite confidence to effectively display resilience in times of stress.

Feelings of self-doubt and insecurity are typical struggles throughout a teaching career. These feelings are most frequently experienced in the beginning stages.

> Ordinary social realities are strewn with difficulties. They are full of impediments, failures, adversities, setbacks, frustrations, and inequities. People must have a robust sense of personal efficacy to sustain the perseverant effort needed to succeed. Self-doubts can set in quickly after some failures or reverses. The important matter is not that difficulties arouse self-doubt, which is a natural immediate reaction, but the speed of the recovery of perceived self-efficacy from diffi-

culties… Because the acquisition of knowledge and competencies usually requires sustained effort in the face of difficulties and setbacks, it is the resiliency of self-belief that counts.[10]

While the "resiliency of self-belief" is ultimately the most important factor in teacher bounce-back, the development of the resilience innate in a music education student's "acquisition of knowledge and competencies" is foundational. It does take years to achieve mastery of the fundamental musical and teaching skill sets necessary for success in the choral classroom. These skill set proficiencies must be in place as second nature. They serve as a baseline for choral teachers to cultivate the resiliency of self-belief.

Strong skill sets are the first line of defense for the pitfalls of self-doubt. Therefore, the choral conductor is charged with developing strong skills in personal musicianship as well as effective sequential teaching patterns and rehearsal planning. Below, we briefly consider some areas of personal musicianship and rehearsal organization for preservice and beginning choral teachers to consider. By no means is this list exhaustive, but it highlights a few areas we encounter teaching preservice choral teachers.

Areas of Personal Musicianship

Singing (Vocal Model)

The vocal model is of extreme importance in building tone. More broadly, "modelling is the first step in building competencies."[11] For most young singers, especially in at-risk situations, the choral conductor is the sole voice instructor. The choral conductor's vocal model will be one of the strongest influences on the development of choral-vocal technique and tone. Having singing skills outside the Western Art bel canto style is also beneficial for reaching more singers. A strong vocal model should include:

- Supported breath
- Vocal fold closure
- Raised soft palate
- Chiaroscuro (bright-dark, balanced) tone
- Active resonance areas
- Intonation
- Diction – and sound understanding of pronunciation of foreign texts
- 120–70: you might have to give what you think is 120% to get 70% of what you want back from the choir
- Practice singing all parts before the first rehearsal

Conducting Technique

Conducting technique is developed in action. It is difficult to become one with gestures intended to elicit sound without the context. Conducting gestures can also be the first thing to go in times of stress.

- Make conducting gesture second nature; practice conducting while doing other things, develop hand independence
- Breathe (on the vowel) with little to no audible sound; metric breathing with each prep, eye-contact
- Show the equilibrium of breath flow in the resistance and fluidity of the wrist
- Use the rebound to control time and "stay in the pocket" (beat speed change, 60+% in the rebound, 40%> in the takt)

Keyboard Proficiency

Do no harm. You do not have to be an amazing pianist to run a choral rehearsal. You do have to have some basic proficiency. The need for the choral conductor's piano proficiency cannot be undersold. Often in secondary school choirs, the choral conductor is the sole source for piano assistance until the dress rehearsal and concert. This has a great effect on the quality of

the outcome. The choral conductor cannot afford to be without piano skills.

- Make rhythm the most important
- Maintain a consistent tempo
- Give a harmonic context, think chords
- Ask yourself: how can what I am doing help the choir progress with the piece?

Knowledge of Theory and Formal Structures

Many students engage only with college theory instruction as a formality-style requirement of their degrees. This is an unfortunate reality, as the information investigated in the theoretical study of music is actually exceedingly important in developing the shape of a piece – right down to the shape of each line. When choral teachers begin truly applying concepts of theory, form, and analysis to choral music for rehearsal, they open up huge possibilities for success. Understanding formal analysis in the process of score study allows the choral teacher to develop a concept of how the piece should sound—the aural image of the work.

Aural Image and Error Detection

The aural image also includes the various shades of tone, timbre, and color that make up the concept of choral sound. This task involves committed critical listening and seeking out opportunities to hear different choirs of many ages and backgrounds with various levels of training in live performance and recordings. It involves expanding the tonal palate and distinguishing the differences in what you hear, engaging your ear with unfamiliar and foreign tone concepts, asking why you perceive different sounds the way you do. A choral teacher's aural image also connects to their personal experiences as a singer in choirs. It also involves understanding how different musical styles dictate different styles of vocal production and tone.

Upon establishing an aural image for a piece, how does the choral teacher get the choir to the finish line of the final performance living up to the aural image? The choral educator is responsible for teaching what needs to change in the ensemble to get the singers from the actual performance closer to the aural image in the choral educator's mind. This requires accurate listening, solid vocal models, and specific feedback.

Direct Instruction Teaching Cycle Model Using Sequential Teaching Patterns

Once the choral teacher knows what academic information they need to teach for the chorus to approach the aural image of a work, they must apply sequential patterns to deliver the instruction within the context of a rehearsal plan. The vast research of Clifford Madsen, Cornelia Yarbrough, Harry Price, Judy Bowers, and many others concerning sequencing and reinforcement in music teaching has produced a brilliant framework of operational definitions for sequential teaching patterns (1 – Teacher presentation, 2 – Student performance, 3 – Teacher reinforcement). This comes out of the Direct Instruction Model.[12] The most effective sequence is task presentation, student performance, with immediate, specific, positive feedback.

The most valuable specific teaching a conductor can do in guiding toward an aural image is presenting academic musical tasks and related feedback to students' performance. Students will better internalize academic musical concepts, techniques, and skills with clear instruction, an opportunity to try it, and specific, related feedback. We may recall examples of the breakdown in sequential teaching when a teacher has given high-magnitude disapproval that is specific but unrelated to previous instruction. Often, conductors are reactionary in error-detection mode and fail to be proactive in teaching what will eliminate the errors prior to rehearsal. Proactive sequential teaching helps allow singers to build independence as individual musicians rather than only seeking not to displease their conductor.

Although an older study, readers are encouraged to access the detailed breakdown and operational definitions of sequential teaching patterns in music in the 1993 *JRME* article "The effects of sequential patterns on rehearsal evaluations of high school and elementary students" by Cornelia Yarbrough and Catherine

Hendel.[13] By being able to name these behaviors with operational definitions, music education students can quantify actions in the classroom and begin to shape their own teaching behaviors toward best practices. Additionally, when students can identify effective teaching sequence cycles, they can eliminate the practices that reduce their effectiveness and efficiency.

Rehearsal Technician Skills

Another contributor to success and efficiency is rehearsal planning. Rehearsal organization and pacing create a foundation and rhythm for growth and success. The structure of routine in a rehearsal plan maximizes student engagement and makes consistent forward progress. It is worth mentioning that these skills also proactively manage the potential for off-task behavior in the classroom.

We include a suggested general outline for a 60–75-minute rehearsal plan (Table 1 on page 24). Sections of Forward Progress and Continuity and Retention can, and should, be cycled, and possibly shortened, based on the needs of the repertoire and singers. This is a general outline that may be adapted as needed. The fundamental tenants of this outline exist to keep students engaged. Do not spend too much time on any task. Move things forward, and emphasize retention.[14]

Bandura notes that a unique aspect of human cognition is the self-reflective evaluation.[16] How did it go? How do we adapt? With the fundamentals of personal musicianship, sequential teaching patterns, and rehearsal organization in place, choral teachers have established the first lines of defense against self-doubt.

Though the power of positive thought is not without merit, if someone is struggling with self-doubt, it is unlikely that this fear will subside by simply thinking about it or through it. Choral teachers will eventually stand in front of the class, and they might fail. Hopefully, it is a safe pre-service environment where failure can lead to learning, but sometimes it is not. When beginning choral teachers do fail, how do they not let

Table 1. Suggested Choral Rehearsal Outline and Sections

Warm-ups (5 – 7′)	• Stabilize ensemble focus (on-task) • Make a need for yourself as the conductor and leader • Stabilize ensemble focus (on-task) Numerous resources exist for choral warm-ups • Stabilize ensemble focus (on-task) Suggestion: "The First Five Minutes" from *Foundations of Choral Conducting* – Kevin Fenton, 2009[15]: ◦ voice activation ◦ skill development ◦ ensemble enhancement
Gratification Zone 1 (15′)	• Most important: have success! • Area where singers can find success quickly. A less challenging read or a piece that students have rehearsed previously • Establish choral sound • Continued sound building from the ensemble enhancement portion of the warm-ups. • Focus on tone and intonation • Mild polishing can be done in this zone. • Create an atmosphere for success – get choir ready to work on difficult material
Forward Progress Zone (15′)	• Most challenging material you will cover in the rehearsal • New material • Biggest teaching zone • Singers' minds are in the optimal focus place for learning
Continuity Zone (10 – 15′)	• Transitional material • Connect the forward progress to preceding and following sections in the music • Put things in context – always have "the gestalt" (big picture of a section, piece, or work) in mind • This zone transfers from the minute detail work to the full section material – do not work on things in complete isolation, context fosters musicality
Retention Zone (10 – 15′)	• Material covered previously (earlier and/or in previous rehearsals) • Can progress naturally from Continuity Zone, especially if goal section is part of a larger movement of piece with previously rehearsed sections • Memorization work can be done here • Polishing possible in this zone
Gratification Zone 2 (10′)	• End with success • Piece or section that is fun to sing • Polishing in this zone • Positive attitudes leaving the rehearsal • Singers leaving your rehearsal still singing is a good thing

it destroy them? How does the "confident" or experienced conductor behave and think? This confident behavior is often referred to as personal magnetism.

Personal Magnetism

Magnetism is a term used in choral music education. This term appears most often when the discussion centers around choral conducting with regard to behaviors associated with one's effectiveness on the podium. In a 1961 *MEJ* article, Elizabeth Green intentionally mentions not only the conducting technique but also the "personal magnetism" of legendary Hungarian conductor Arthur Nikisch, when explaining his success.[27] In the book *Essentials in Conducting,* Karl Wilson Gehrkens notes the struggles of several famed composers when conducting their own works. Assuming it could never be attributed to a lack of skill or musicianship in these giants of the music-making realm, he decides it is simply because of an absence of "personal magnitude," something he describes as "that peculiar ability which enables one man to dominate others." He goes on to explain that this ability seems largely inborn, but that those who do not naturally possess it, can acquire it, to an extent, by making a "consistent and intelligent attempt in this direction."[18]

Both authors clearly present personal magnetism as the counterpart to musicianship. This creates a necessary duality within the teacher-conductor persona that seems generally understood across the profession. For any music educator, this duality transfers directly to the dual mission of moving the ensemble developmentally forward both as a group, and as individuals, and both as musicians and human beings. For those who educate pre-service teachers, a developed personal magnetism is crucial because students will take on the traits with which they identify most easily, and strive to develop those they do not, but perceive to be contributors to success in the classroom/rehearsal. The pre-service teacher must capitalize on traits that already lend themselves to success, and strive to grow and strengthen other areas where needed. A developed level of personal magnetism can become a physical illustration of the idea "the best defense is a good offense" when it comes to facing the challenges in the music classroom. What does this look in the choral classroom?

A colleague once described magnetism as the way in which a teacher-conductor develops relationships with students, recognizing the relationship itself as the chief catalyst for success and achieving of goals within the ensemble or classroom. This relationship is how the educator engages with their environment. She made the point that educators will go about establishing and fostering these relationships in different ways, since each brings different personalities and value systems to the classroom. Still, the goal remains the same: creating a context of trust by which the teacher and students move forward with their goals. To her, this relationship yields continued magnetism in the life and career of the student going forward, not unlike the parent-child relationship. The teacher has established a platform, albeit easy to abuse, by which everything they say and do is quite literally magnified.

While this sounds nice, it also presents a very difficult and sometimes seemingly insurmountable reality. The teacher must not only overcome the challenge of striking balance between relationship building and the achieving of musical goals, both long-term and short, but many educators live in a perpetual "honor choir" scenario, where student turnover does not allow time for the building of relational inroads. Now they must call upon personal magnetism to establish trust and relationship while moving forward with goals in a truncated amount of time, balancing instruction, progress, inspiration, enjoyment, pace, skill development, team-building, and so on, knowing they may be starting the process over from scratch the next semester. But how?

When we consider how to better identify, define or describe magnetism, especially in a practical, tangible, and useful way, three sources of inspiration come to mind:

- Our own experiences with teachers and mentors.
- Our own experiences as teachers and mentors.
- Time spent with our students and choristers.

Many of the teachers and mentors exhibit a "take-charge" or "type-A" quality, often associated with leadership. The ability to be commanding and "larger than life" comes quite naturally. Some command respect on reputation, celebrity, or accomplishment alone, while others take a different approach based on different personality traits they possess. Many perfect the use of humor, or a well-constructed, anecdotal story, or even just a beaming smile. Organization and preparation are devices many use to ensure structure, clarity, and progress. What are these educators trying to accomplish, exactly? What is the purpose of expending so much energy on things that may not be found spelled out on the curricular map? Successful music educators reveal as quickly as possible, two imperative contributing factors to personal magnitude:

- A sense of willingness and commitment to do whatever is needed to accomplish the goal at hand.

- A level of care or passion for the craft of music education, and the students themselves.

It is to these qualities students attach themselves, from these qualities they draw inspiration, and the educator who exhibits these qualities they choose to follow.

Next, we need to consider what works for each of us as choral music educators. When facing low points as a choral teacher, such as reaching points of frustration with all that this career entails, it is our care for our students and passion for what we do that keeps us connected. We hold on to the traits we have learned from those who have invested in us, combined with our own personalities, to garner trust and respect from our students as we move toward shared goals.

Lastly, working with pre-service music educators is a fascinating endeavor. Each brings his or her own unique personality, skill set, strengths, and weaknesses to the table. Some have a wealth of talent and skill at their disposal, while others have an unquenchable desire to be successful in each stage of their development. When you are a teacher and your students see that you care, and sense this intentionality and willingness to do whatever it takes, then they will follow you.

Personal magnetism is born in a music educator's willingness to do what it takes to reach the goal, and this same individual's level of care and passion for the students and the craft of music education. Angela Duckworth calls it "grit" and points to perseverance and passion as its two most imperative components.[19] Personal magnetism becomes a reality when these attributes and behaviors are always visible to those we intend to lead.

Support Systems

The third element upon which we can build resilience in early career or pre-service teachers is the navigating of support systems. In comparison to the other two elements, a support system is the element over which teachers feel they have the least amount of control, and encompasses all the factors contributing to teacher attrition, like isolation, low pay, perceived lack of importance, lack of structure, and so on. David Chapman and Sigrid Hutcheson explain that the body of research around teacher attrition places far more emphasis on the factors contributing to teacher attrition rather than the possible difference in characteristics between individuals who leave the profession and those who choose to stay.[20] It may be explained by saying that a sense of personal magnitude and self-efficacy, comprising both parts of the dual teacher-conductor persona, come from within the educator, and are fostered therein, while support systems exist outside the person. So, how can we teach young teachers to control what they can control?

Of course there are components of personal magnitude and heightened self-efficacy that will greatly contribute to one's ability to control what they can control. Still, the reality remains that so much of the environment into which beginning teachers enter exists and functions outside of the control of one music educator. It seems it would be most helpful to identify and define these support systems before discussing how they could be more successfully navigated. In the view of this educator, those systems of support fall into three categories: school, community, and professional.

The school support system is multi-faceted and complex, with different plug-ins surrounding the teacher at

all times. The support of an attentive and knowledgeable administrator, for example, can go a long way. In light of the fact that the music educator has no control over who sits in the position of administrator, how can the early career teacher be set up more for success in navigating this relationship?

Creating as many tangible experiences as possible in the pre-service training and degree programs seems the first and most logical step to preparing teachers for almost anything, including relationships with administrators.

- More classroom situations in the training experience = higher level of adaptability to any environment or situation

- Higher level of adaptability and comfort = greater likelihood a clear vision and expectation begins to develop

- Clear vision and expectation for the program = working dialogue with administrators concerning goals

So often, administrators are out of touch with the realities of the music classroom and are only involved when a problem arises or persists. Jumpstarting this working dialogue with a developed and shared vision can preempt the challenges every novice teacher inevitably encounters, and open the door to more possibilities to be explored with the administrator, and not alone.

Developing a class schedule, for example, that benefits and fosters the growth and development of the students and the program, is unattainable without the help and support of an administrator. This is territory that remains "uncharted" for so many music educators and becomes a "deal breaker" in the end. On the other hand, for those fortunate enough to get the schedule aligned appropriately, it opens the program up to unprecedented possibility. This must be done working hand-in-hand with an administrator. Exposure to different scenarios, environments, challenges, and demographics can help equip young educators with the confidence, vision, and creativity to move this administrator relationship toward shared goals.

The relationship to other teachers and employees within the school can bolster a beginning teacher's resilience, or play a large role in tearing them down. Young people hone their relational skills during middle and high school, and are supposed to begin converting them into professional social skills while in college. It is imperative that these future educators learn the relational skills necessary for making meaningful, tangible connections in the work environment and to bolster a positive mindset and a student-first approach to the craft of teaching. Mentor teachers and college professors can set an example to nurture both a positive mindset and altruistic motives in these future music educators through consistent, unwavering expectations, and open, fervent communication.

It appears students studying to become music educators attach themselves much more naturally to the stresses, perceived rigor and anxiety of the program, and sometimes lose sight, even while they are still students, of the joy of music education. They begin to resemble the countless educators who seem to exist only in a mode of survival. These students are losing sight of something they never really possessed, at least not as teachers, because it only comes through experience. Again, the solution must be in placing an increased emphasis on the actual teaching opportunities within the music education program. This can help to avoid a scenario where young people travel from surviving the class-to-deadline-to-class-to-deadline life of a student directly into the bell-to-bell-to-bell life of a teacher. Where is the joy? Though it can also be scary, experience provides not only the best instruction but a true glimpse into the joy that awaits a lifelong music educator and, yes, the challenges as well. Rather than the "misery loves company" style of connection, the early career teacher can then begin to use this learned sense of enjoyment and passion as a guiding light to making collegial connections in the workplace. They need not be overcome with the fear of the unknown that so often stands in the way of experiencing joy, and can also lead to feelings of isolation, but channel this positivity, learned through guided experience, into resilience.

Another aspect of the school support system beginning teachers will navigate socially is the relationship they develop and maintain with school staff. We can-

not shy away from making sure our future teachers understand these relationships are not a box to check but a reservoir where they may find resilience. Not only can these relationships see them through their most precarious moments, but often they become some of the most personally valuable, long-lasting, and impactful.

Within the school environment, the relationship between the teacher and student is the most central support system to teacher resilience, and the one upon which so many educators rely, especially when all other systems seem to have failed. This connection is best established through the shared experience of the craft itself. The "doing" that takes place in the music classroom. Harkening back to the characteristics of personal magnetism, this support system yields resilience when care and willingness are exhibited and reciprocated. What does this look like? While some aspects and specifics will differ classroom to classroom, this is precisely the question we can begin to answer while our future music educators are still students themselves. Students, who chose choral music education as a major, did so because of the great influence of a music teacher at the elementary or secondary level. The behaviors that inspired them must be reinforced in their training so that they will exhibit them as teachers. Punctuality, organization, planning, forethought, creativity, discipline, expectations, and even in consequence can all communicate care. These are the learned behaviors of a teacher who cares, and if they are evidence of intrinsic qualities, reinforced when the teachers were still students, they will become the resource from which they can find support and exhibit resilience as teachers.

The second support system a teacher must navigate in order to build resilience is the community. What is the support needed from the community that travels right to the heart of the shared goals within a musical classroom? Well-attended performances, especially by parents and administrators, serve as wonderfully validating and gratifying punctuations to the process of music education, but is there anything that compares to the experience of taking students to perform outside the regular school environment? The level of appreciation shown by audiences that do not usually get to hear live choral music making, especially by young people, is unique and celebratory in a way all its own. The energy of such reception and feedback can energize young music teachers and students enough to get through a semester or even a year.

These endeavors also allow opportunity for teachers to hone their craft, and for their students to travel and interact with individuals and cultures outside their school, neighborhood, state, and even country. This increases the sense of value in what music teachers are doing with their students, and provides a beautifully cyclic reminder of the experiences that inspire most to choose the profession in the first place. The performing arts offer the unique opportunity for young people to learn an artistic craft, but it becomes exponentially more meaningful and valuable when they get the chance to share that craft, and in so doing, create meaning for others. These kinds of experiences and performances build legacies of value with human interaction, expression and vulnerability at the epicenter of the event. The educating of pre-service teachers must continue this aspect of being a choral musician. Perhaps it could even allow them the chance to create these opportunities themselves, at least locally, recognizing that this is the crucial bridge between the inspirational experiences these future teachers had as students in high school, and the career endeavor of attempting to recreate them with their own students.

The final support system that can prove pivotal to teacher resilience is the network or community within the profession of choral music education. This profession is so unique in that it reaches every corner of the globe, but the network of educators is not overwhelmingly large. This network therein is the umbrella under which the imperative mentor relationship can be found. Personal mentors, friends, and family members can certainly play pivotal roles in keeping educators grounded, inspired, and supported, but a mentor from within the profession is an absolute necessity. The mentor relationship gives us the stability of a lifeline, and also a collection of experiences we can carry with us in addition to our own.

Local, state, and national associations can open up new worlds to pre-service and early-career educators, and also allow them to see their work through

new, evolving lenses. These associations often provide the first opportunity for beginning educators to seek value outside of the classroom that can be taken directly back into the classroom. Early-career educators can become leaders and challenge themselves in new ways, thus increasing a sense of value and adding another facet to their identity as a choral music teacher-conductor. ACDA provides a strong net of support that can catch a choral music educator at any stage or while dealing with any challenge. Only in such a network is it possible to celebrate the resiliency of an art form that has survived centuries, the profession of teaching it, and those who are preparing to teach it. CJ

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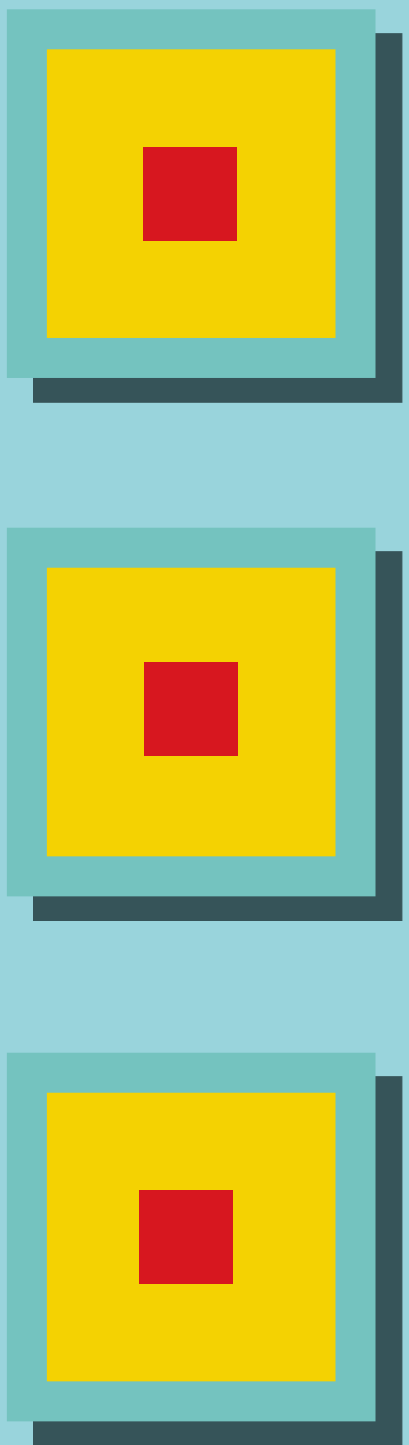

Stepping off the undergraduate graduation stage and into the choral rehearsal hall comes with mixed emotions: excitement and nervousness, joy and anxiety. The hard work, late-night study sessions, and countless hours of practice has paid off, but the true work has just begun. Regardless of the structure, duration, or rigor of the music education degree in hand, we can all agree there are some realities in the classroom that we cannot prepare for or anticipate. This is complicated exponentially by the sudden removal of a "guardian angel"—a college professor or practicum mentor teacher observing our every move in the classroom providing feedback and guidance. The first few years of teaching and conducting are an exciting time with endless opportunities and the freedom to make your mark on your school, church, or community. However, it can also come with feelings of insecurity, self-doubt, and uncertainty in the future.

While this may seem daunting, we find comfort in the reminder that one of our greatest resources is each other. The guardian angel college professor is an e-mail or a phone call away. The student teaching cooperating teacher continues to be a mentor but now is also a colleague. Former classmates are now experiencing similar situations and issues. The learning does not, and should not, stop after graduation. We can continue to improve our skills and grow our network of peers and mentors.

Reflecting on my first few years as a public school choir director, I offer the following advice for early-career conductors: (a) get involved with your local and state ACDA chapter, (b) attend conferences and professional development interest sessions, (c) ask the advice of mentors in your field, and (d) keep in touch with why you chose this career. Additionally, one of the most impactful decisions I made as a young conductor was to seek out and attend intensive choral conducting workshops to continue the development of my skills as a musician and leader. Through these experiences, I gained more than technical skills or rehearsal tips. I grew as a musician and gained friendships and connections that last to this day.

MAKING THE CASE

THE BENEFIT OF INTENSIVE CONDUCTING WORKSHOPS FOR EARLY-CAREER CHORAL CONDUCTORS

BY JOHN MCDONALD

Interviews with Daniel Bara, Deanna Joseph, Pamela Elrod Huffman, and Eugene Rogers

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"There is no end to learning."

—Robert Schumann[1]

In this article, I want to encourage early-career choral conductors to adopt a philosophy of lifelong learning through a variety of professional development opportunities. Interest sessions and conference master classes are invaluable to the learning and development of conductors at any stage. However, intensive workshops can provide a more in-depth and well-rounded experience that more closely resembles the collegiate instructional format. These opportunities allow participants to learn from nationally recognized conductor educators, learn an array of new repertoire, build a network of peers, and stay in touch with current trends in choral music.

Researchers in the field of teacher development have identified key elements of design and implementations that render effective and successful teacher education programs. This research, summarized by Laura DeSimone, indicates that effective professional development includes instruction that is content-related, specific to the curriculum and not "one-size-fits-all," and provides opportunities for active learning.[2] Alfredo Bautista and his fellow researchers summarize active learning in professional development as "when teachers are engaged in exploration, reflection and discussion, and with contexts for collective participation and collegial sharing."[3] Additionally, high-quality professional development also includes opportunities for constructive feedback.[4] Intensive conducting workshops clearly encompass these qualifiers.

To explore and explain the benefit of intensive learning opportunities for early-career choral conductors, I interviewed the directors of three different workshops, listed below. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many workshops and conferences are making the effort to move to an online medium. Even in this new format, workshops hold the same value and create connections across geographic barriers.

Editor's note: Each year the April issue of the *Choral Journal* includes a listing of summer festivals and workshops to explore for continued learning. You can also contact your state or region ACDA leaders for local recommendations.

Atlanta Summer Conducting Institute

Daniel Bara, Director of Choral Activities and Professor of Music, University of Georgia

Deanna Joseph, Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities, Georgia State University

Southern Methodist University
Advanced Choral Conducting Workshop

Pamela Elrod Huffman, Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities, Southern Methodist University

University of Michigan
Choral Conducting Symposium

Eugene Rogers, Director of Choirs and Conductor of Chamber Choir, University of Michigan

What are the benefits of an intensive workshop opportunity?

DANIEL BARA: Watching the progress of the conductors in the conducting master class from a Monday to a Wednesday or Thursday is amazing. It is truly amazing to see the participants experiment with new ideas and instruction and to see the metamorphosis over the course of the week. We try to give each conductor podium time every day so they can practice new techniques throughout the week. This is something that just cannot be done in one session. Also, the discussions we have develop out of response to the conducting master classes or other sessions. These discussions tend to take on a life of their own by the end of the workshop. As more people are participating, more ideas are shared. The more ideas that are shared, the conductors start putting things together and asking more questions. By the end of the week, everyone is engaged and seeking out more information and ideas.

DEANNA JOSEPH: Those of us who participated in this type of workshop as young teachers or young conductors see the value. When I was at the Oregon Bach Festival, for example, I felt that I grew as a conductor in an entirely different way because of the structure, the amount of instructional time, and the podium time. Another benefit to the participants is receiving feedback and instruction from two instructors with different teaching styles. We see the world differently and this is a strength that we have to offer. We each present different lecture sessions and we alternate on conducting feedback. This also increases the chances of diagnosing an issue in the gesture and finding a method or approach that will effectively communicate the solution.

PAMELA ELROD HUFFMAN: One benefit of the workshop setting is the community. We decompress as a group at the end of the day, and professional relationships are inevitably established. The career path we have chosen is relationship oriented. I remain close friends with other conductors who started their careers around the same time I started mine. The workshop participants are establishing their village and, with a small group, they can accomplish this rather easily. I love it when we have a mix of conductors with some at an earlier stage of their career and others who are more experienced. Everyone has bad habits, and you build camaraderie by having this in common and working together and supporting each other. As a result, mentor-mentee relationships are established. Intimacy and immediacy of relationships creates more opportunities for learning.

One of the aspects of our workshop that is beneficial is the fact that we cap the enrollment so that everyone is ensured of ample time on the podium. Conductors are up there every day, typically more than once. They get a lot of practical application during this time. Having enough time on the podium to apply the skills and topics discussed and to start playing in your new sandbox is very important. You then start to see immediate results through the video review. This aspect of selective enrollment and small class size is extremely helpful in this regard.

EUGENE ROGERS: You are dealing with the difference between exposure versus immersion. An immersive musical experience, just like in studying a new language, is always more rigorous, more rich, and more in depth. As a participant experiences our immersive symposium, they see and interact with the same peers every day and see growth, not only in themselves, but in the other conductors as well. What we do in our time together involves so much—the ear, the mind, and the body. It is a workshop designed to work all three areas every day, creating a deeper, more immersive experience. This is the difference—personally revisiting topics covered, working on skills, coming back to them—this repetition and day-to-day rigor is more immersive and gets a stronger result.

From your experience, what skills and concepts are important for early-career choral music educators to strengthen and improve?

DANIEL BARA: Rehearsal techniques and choral tone. Deanna and I are both eager to have our students "move the needle" as fast as possible in the rehearsal. Get the sound to change. It is about quickly determining what needs to be fixed and doing everything we can as creatively as possible to get something to change quickly. We try to espouse this practice as an aesthetic so conductors are focused on making change, improving the ensemble sound or accuracy, as quickly as possible. So we discuss language that we can employ and techniques we can use to get the job done.

For the early-career conductor, they are still finding their confidence and building their tool belt of techniques. Therefore, we try to share our tool belt a bit. For rehearsal technique, we start with a presentation and discussion of the general aesthetics over what constitutes good rehearsal technique, and what are elements of poor rehearsal technique. We discuss the hierarchy of rehearsal elements—pitch, rhythm, diction, and so on—and how we combine them in the learning and teaching process. Then we discuss the diagnosis pro-

cess and how to quickly address what we hear, identify, isolate, and fix the issues, and put things back together. I put it into the terms of always knowing where you are in the rehearsal process between now and the perfect recording. A conductor with strong rehearsal technique knows what they should listen for and what tools to implement throughout this entire process.

To cover the topic of choral tone, I talk about some of the warmups and activities I do when I am meeting with a guest choir or my own choir at the beginning of the year. Then we discuss the realities and challenges of choral singing. This includes the ranges of each section and the ensuing issues. For example, a discussion on what the choral soprano sound should be and how we can find this sound, or the challenge of the tenor sound in the upper range and balancing this with the alto section. Part of it is just an acknowledgment of the challenges of choral singing and coming to some basic rules of singing in a choir. We are striving for a sound that is elegant and does not sound forced or strained. We talk a lot about resonance like *chiaroscuro*—brightness and darkness—and the balance between these elements. We discuss what the voice naturally wants to do at the upper register versus the lower register. We delve into vowel modification and elements of diction that can help serve vocal technique and airflow. We try to identify some of these things in the repertoire to reinforce during the conducting master classes as well.

DEANNA JOSEPH: From a gestural standpoint, every conductor is inexperienced after graduating with just two semesters of conducting. One item I talk about is teaching mode versus conducting mode. Many times, young teacher-conductors do not differentiate between these two roles. Then, after their first couple years of teaching, they forget what they learned in conducting class and develop bad rehearsal habits. In our institute, we give the conductors more practical practice with the rudiments of conducting gesture and how to quickly solve problems. We talk about how to know where you are in the rehearsal process and to avoid letting your teaching mode sneak into your polished performance version of conducting gesture.

Giving the participants space to practice in front of an ensemble with feedback and then talking about these issues in order to increase awareness is extremely helpful. The podium time during the institute provides more opportunities for being in conducting mode because the choir is made up of professional singers who come with the music prepared. The conductors make this mental differentiation throughout the week so they can focus on refining their gesture. When in teaching mode, many of us are not thinking about our gesture. We are walking all over the place and coaching the ensemble. Then, as the singers are able to look up, we make the mental shift to begin presenting the most refined elegant version of our conducting mode.

At the institute, we provide the conducting fellows opportunities and feedback to discover what conducting mode looks like and feels like in the body. Then they will hopefully be able to recognize and recreate this sensation back in their own rehearsal hall and on stage in performance. Additionally, the community element allows the participants to keep in touch with each other and with us. This network and community of support is a meaningful connection for new teachers.

PAMELA ELROD HUFFMAN: One of the issues, particularly with someone who is just coming out of an undergraduate program, is the lack of experience as a conductor and not being settled in technique. Having taken, typically, two semesters of conducting, they may not yet have the coordination or the arsenal of tools that experienced conductors gain over time. This is an important factor because when you do not trust your technique, you begin to rely on other things such as constantly talking in rehearsal or trying to do too much. This results in the ensemble receiving more information than is helpful when what they need is clarity.

Lack of experience, not only as a conductor but as a teacher, provides a lot of opportunity for growth. Our workshop addresses this by immediately getting the conductors on the podium. Participants are assigned pieces from the repertoire list beforehand and are expected to study and mark their scores for the first day. At the first conducting session, we watch to see

where they are and set initial expectations. We have two instructors who have had similar paths and are very compatible in their teaching styles and philosophies. The participants gain the advantage of hearing feedback from two different angles. Sometimes we are seeing the same thing but addressing it differently, and while my approach may not make sense to the conductor, Robert's might click or vice versa. The initial diagnostic is to see what the conductor is doing and immediately make a list of what is getting in the way.

One of the great things about being in a workshop is being able to not only get on the podium and bear your insecurities and take risks, but also to watch and learn from others.

Then we look at the score marking because this tells us to what degree they can unpack a score, which leads to the score study discussion with the whole group. As soon as possible we want to get into what the individual issues are and teach them the way we would teach our students.

Conductors in their early career also often do not feel centered or comfortable in front of a group. They may lack the ability to clear their mind and think about what they are going to say next, or assess what is coming up in the music that they need to anticipate in their gesture. Being able to predict what is going to happen comes with experience. Nothing can replace experience, but participating in a group learning experience with conductors from various levels and diverse musical backgrounds is helpful. In these settings, through group discussion, participants find out that everyone is insecure about something. Conductors with less experience might have a longer list of insecurities, but even conductors with more experience still have insecurities. This gives a participant permission to say, "Okay, nobody has all the answers so it is okay that *I* do not have all the answers." Then you have an instant village of people who are helping and supporting your growth as you are supporting theirs. If you can clear out some of the voices that get in the way of learning and feel safe, you are put at ease right away so learning and growing occur.

Musicianship is also important. Are you a solid enough musician to be able to lead? Or are you following an accompanist or a rehearsal track? Are you a solid enough musician to walk in and know the music better than anybody else in the room? Conductors need an effective, thorough method of score study and analysis where they make all the decisions about the piece before they walk into the room. Regardless of the difficulty or complexity, know how you are going to go about teaching it. What goes along with musicianship is preparation, so the more we can help our participants learn and discover new ways to prepare, the better.

Dr. Bode and I both are firm believers that good musicianship comes from a solid foundation of music literacy. We stress that conductors need to have a technique, a plan, and a dependable procedure that works. The great thing about the Robert Shaw techniques is you are not trying to do everything at once. First you need to know the piece—know the structure, know what you want out of the piece, and make decisions about every aspect. Then you can disseminate this information efficiently and build the skills to gradually shift accountability from the podium to the ensemble, so you are not forced to do it all for them.

If there is one thing that you see with young professionals, and I was guilty of it too, you get in the rehearsal and you are so desperate to help that you just start doing it all for them. Over-conducting, lunging, singing with them, mouthing the words—these things are not helpful and add more confusion than clarity. So the idea of building accountability and transferring accountability is an important aspect of Shaw's techniques. You can learn a lot in an hour about a rehearsal procedure, and then you can appropriate that into your own methods and setting. One of the great things about being in a workshop is being able to not only get on the podium and bear your insecurities and take risks, but also to watch and learn from others.

EUGENE ROGERS: There are four main areas new teachers generally need to strengthen. Three of these relate to musical training, and the fourth is classroom management. Strengthening the three musical areas helps with classroom management. In many situations, issues with managing a choral rehearsal, are due to the lack of appropriate musicianship and pedagogical skills. Strong musicianship should be all encompassing. It is both an understanding of the notation reading tradition and the oral tradition. It should include the ability to change the way one presents the learning and exposure to music. It should also include a knowledge of the physicality of singing and conducting.

Building this broad level of musicianship that encapsulates multiple approaches is important for teachers of any level. This is why we include Dalcroze training in our symposium. It is also strengthened through daily sight reading and the practice of score study. We have a score study session the first day with tips about how to analyze a score, introducing or reminding them of techniques that they can use throughout the week on the repertoire they are conducting. Additional musicianship training comes from instructors demonstrating exercises that the participants may use with their own ensembles in order to build ensemble skills.

The second area is repertoire knowledge. We focus on not just the new but also utilize "tried and true" pieces so that young conductors can learn about a wide range of repertoire. The beauty of partnering with Hal Leonard is we have, what I call, daily "hymnals" that include a large quantity of repertoire that is both new music and pieces selected by the instructors. We have a full list of repertoire including the reading packets and the pieces prepared for the conducting portion of the symposium. Participants will not conduct every piece on the list, but watching their peers conduct, singing in the lab choir, and learning from observing the various feedback is very beneficial.

We also study a choral-orchestral masterwork of a traditional concert composer to expose the conductors to the depth of musicianship that a work of this magnitude requires. Participants study the full score—voices, strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion—and we challenge them to think about style and the gestural technique that one needs to be able to conduct and lead an ensemble of musicians they may not know. Even if the conductor is not programming masterworks every season, church choir directors tend to bring in instrumentalists periodically, and high school and middle school teachers will hopefully combine with their wind and orchestral colleagues. They should be able to feel comfortable in these situations. These are skills they may not need every day, but it challenges them to think about the depth of musicianship that is developed, and an understanding of performance practice and style that we all can improve.

The third area is overall pedagogical technique. We explore some of the "tried and true" pedagogical techniques and tips. This is why we have sessions such as working with treble voices, working with lower voices, dealing with cultural appropriation, discussing underrepresented voices that we need to know and how can we have this conversation with our singers. We try to introduce twenty-first-century topics that we as conductors will need to face and address in the classroom that are perhaps different than we experienced in our undergraduate training. We find it important to expose our participants to pedagogical techniques and skills to address these various topics.

The fourth area is classroom management. While we cannot address all of the issues in managing a choral classroom, many of the topics we address do relate. We demonstrate different approaches for different types of learners using the Dalcroze approach. We also introduce rote songs conductors can use as warmups or group gathering songs. This allows them to witness different types of approaches. If they have a class or ensemble where the students are rebelling against notation reading, these are exercises and songs to get them engaged.

What is the layout of your institute?

DEANNA JOSEPH: The Atlanta Conducting Institute is a five-day experience, Monday through Friday. We cover a number of topics through instructor-led presentations and discussions. In the afternoon, all institute participants—conducting fellows and auditors—sing in a choir with a group of additional professional singers. Each of the conducting fellows receives podium time with this ensemble on an assortment of repertoire. Toward the end of the week we have a music vendor, Beethoven & Company, present to sells texts, scores, conducting batons, and other resources we have discussed over the course of the week. The end of the week also includes a reading session covering works appropriate for middle school, high school, and church choir. We also plan a social evening of dining for all participants and singers to simply relax and have fun.

DANIEL BARA: The topics we cover in the morning sessions include a general discussion about our aesthetic approach to gesture. This is a refresher of the fundamentals of conducting and what we believe to be the technical reasons why the basics are the basics. There is usually a more specific session on gesture that includes problem solving difficult spots within the repertoire from the afternoon conducting master classes. Score study and score marking is another topic. We use this discussion to connect how what we discover in the score shapes rehearsal technique. That leads to a broader discussion on rehearsal technique. We also have guest presentations such as a session on vocal technique from the voice teacher's perspective. Discussion then leads to vocal-choral techniques from the choral conductor's perspective, where we talk about warmups, aesthetics, and techniques. Another guest session covers movement in the choral rehearsal and ways to incorporate that fluidly. That is an interactive, kinesthetic, experiential type session where everyone learns by trying. We also do a session on the choral conductor in front of an orchestra, working with instruments and instrumentalists and some of the "do's and don'ts" of those situations.

The repertoire for the conducting sessions typically includes some majors works, possibly some accompanied recitative for advanced conductors, and octavos accessible for immediate use in the participants' classrooms regardless of level.

PAMELA ELROD HUFFMAN: The Southern Methodist University Advanced Choral Conducting Workshop is a three-day experience that is organized and co-run by myself and Dr. Robert Bode. We generally work on approximately eight pieces of music covering a variety of stylistic periods and difficulty levels. We always include one or two movements from an accessible choral-orchestral work. For example, the Schubert *Mass in G* or Mozart's *Coronation Mass*—a masterwork the conductors can get into pretty easily and also something they may have the opportunity to program at some point in their careers. For each session, we begin with either a guided round table discussion or a presentation and then move into a conducting master class. Each conductor spends a lot of time on the podium conducting and receiving feedback from both instructors. We videotape each session, upload it to a folder, and the participants are expected to review their video and return the following day prepared to talk about what they observed. We end each day across the street at the hotel restaurant as an important time to decompress and review the day, as well as create a sense of community.

The network created is one of the best things about the workshop. During the day, other than the conducting master classes, we always include some aspect of score study techniques. This tends to show an inequality between what young conductors and seasoned professionals bring to the table. We usually include a discussion on working with orchestras, at times including a conducting session with a string quartet that serves as a demonstration group. We also include sessions on conducting and rehearsal techniques. I will lead a discussion on the Robert Shaw rehearsal techniques and warmups. Some important topics, like score study, we

include every year, but sometimes we will add new sessions such as programming, or the process of commissioning a work. The conducting master classes are an opportunity for the conductors to receive feedback on their gestural communication. We want to see what things they are doing well in terms of clear communication and what things might be confusing the issue.

EUGENE ROGERS: The University of Michigan Choral Conducting Symposium has been offered for around fifteen years. It was originally started by my former colleague, Jerry Blackstone. I have continued to expand it during my tenure as director of choirs. The goal of our program is to provide training for public school teachers, church choir directors, and aspiring graduate students. Workshop participants study a range of topics, smaller choral works and octavos, and also excerpts from a major work with depth. Each of the five days typically begins with a reading session followed by a topic session or discussion. Then we break out into smaller conducting classes before coming back together for more sessions.

Symposium participants conduct every day, sometimes twice a day, in a conducting master class format with me, Mark Stover, or Julie Skadsem. Every day the participants receive a reading packet, distributed through Hal Leonard, so they are exposed to new repertoire for all voice types and levels appropriate for church, community, or school. Every summer we bring in a composer-in-residence through our partnership with Hal Leonard. Rene Clausen has been a composer-in-residence, for example, and the summer of 2021 will feature Rollo Dilworth. The composer spends a day with the symposium participants working on his or her music and various pedagogical approaches to repertoire. This day ends with a community sing of this repertoire, which is open to the entire Ann Arbor community. Session topics and discussions include score study, Dalcroze techniques, working with treble voices, working with lower voices, social justice issues, and African and African American repertoire.

We intentionally give the evenings off so that participants can use this time to build a community and work together to support each other's learning. This also gives participants time to practice and digest the material from the day. This time is equally important as the time we spend during the day. It is a non-auditioned program, and it is designed to be open to participants of all levels. We try to have each participant conduct as often as possible and create an environment that is open and supportive so that, regardless of level or previous experience, each conductor finds the type of rigor they are looking for in this summer program.

What non-academic benefits have you observed from your institute?

DANIEL BARA: The fact that everyone recognizes one another as a part of the resource and benefit of the week. They start to see each other as a meaningful connection and a meaningful resource. They connect and ask questions, for example, "You have a middle school program? What were your five best pieces this year?" Creating and cultivating this environment is a valuable benefit.

DEANNA JOSEPH: Some people have a fear of getting in front of their peers and conducting but the supportive environments of institutes can provide confidence for people who are worried about their gesture or feel too inexperienced as teachers. The participants all encourage one another and create a good feeling in the room. This benefits the growth and learning of the conductors.

PAMELA ELROD HUFFMAN: Workshop participants experience some level of emotional recharge. There is so much affirmation from this sort of experience. It has to be an intentional design on the part of the people who are teaching. This is the basis of the way I teach, through affirmation and not through negativity, and Robert is the same way. Because as soon as you feel like you are being helped and supported and there are no mistakes, the learning can

happen much more easily.

Conductors come out of our workshop feeling like they learned new ideas and were challenged, but they do not come out injured or with battle scars. I think everyone deserves this approach because our own self-judging is harsh enough. Our self-criticism of not being good enough, prepared enough, or not having the same resume as that person—this is a tough enough existence. This is particularly challenging for conductors at early stages of their careers because it is hard to fake confidence. When you have opportunities where you can improve in a supportive and positive atmosphere, and an environment that is built for success, you need to seize these opportunities.

EUGENE ROGERS: People are challenged to be better musicians. This, in turn, raises one's personal commitment to bring their absolute best to their singers when they return home. Seeing the love that the participants exude from singing together is sometimes the most cathartic to our spirits and also renews our passion for what we do. The time in the evening where they come together as a group is also vital. An intergenerational community develops where a first-year teacher meets and connects with someone who has taught twenty-five years. What we do when we struggle together, learn together, and support each other as conductors and colleagues strips away age, race, religion, identity, and it brings us together. Hopefully we challenge people through some of our sessions to consider our impact as leaders. I hope people feel inspired to be more actively engaged in their community, whether that is dealing with social justice issues or seeing their students in such a way that they can be a better resource to them, regardless of their background.

Conclusion

The benefit of workshops are clearly evident. Beyond a singular, limited session, intensive opportunities allow the participant more time for reflection and discussion as well as extended hands-on learning activities. Furthermore, participants' networks are extended and lasting relationships are developed. As each of the interviewees pointed out, the mentor/mentee dynamic and a broad coalition of support is one of the most important byproducts, especially for early career conductors.

In a 2003 survey of music teachers in their first two years, researchers found that seeking help and advice from others was one of the most common and helpful tools to ease the transition from university pre-service education into the first stages of the teaching career.[5] As a result, research has also found that mentorship can lead to a higher teacher retention rate.[6] The more opportunities for positive collegial support, focused and active learning, and reinvigoration of musical passion will increase the likelihood of a successful start to a conductor's career and a positive impact on our field as a whole. CJ

NOTES

[1] Robert Schumann, *Advice to Young Musicians,* trans. Henry Hugo Pierson (Leipzig: J. Schuberth & Co., 1860) 34.

[2] Laura M. DeSimone, "Improving Impact Studies of Teachers' Professional Development: Toward Better Conceptualizations and Measures," *Educational Researcher* 38, No. 3 (2009): 184.

[3] Alfredo Bautista, Xenia Yau, and Joanne Wong, "High-Quality Music Teacher Professional Development: A Review of the Literature," *Music Education Research* 19, No. 4 (2015): 457.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Kathryn Roulston, Roy Legette, and Sarah Trotman Womack, "Beginning Music Teachers' Perceptions of the Transition From University to Teaching in Schools," *Music Education Research* 7, No. 1 (2005): 73.

[6] Elizabeth Eaton and Wendy Sisson, "Why Are New Teachers Leaving? The Case for Beginning-Teacher Induction and Mentoring," *ICF International Presidential Transition* (2008): 1-7, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED532589.pdf.

Are You Zoomed Out?

Dealing with Zoom Fatigue in the Virtual Classroom

Jamila L. McWhirter

As I write this column in late May for a *Choral Journal* issue that will arrive in September, we are all anticipating the look of the educational landscape. By the time you read this article, you will be in the beginning of the academic year attempting to deal with physical spacing, virtual classrooms, and a host of other issues. No one really knows at this point what the beginning of the academic year holds.

My first inclination was to write on curricular ideas for the virtual classroom, or perhaps to enter the ongoing debate of how we can safely sing. However, having recently completed a semester in which all of our classes were transferred to online learning, I decided to delve into the issue of what we can do as choral directors and choral music educators to tackle the issue of Zoom fatigue in ourselves and our students.

If you have felt drained or exhausted at the end of a day of Zoom teaching and meetings and wondered if you imaged it, you did not. The further my students progressed into the online and Zoom semester, the more they remarked about lacking motivation. A former student of mine, who now teaches music in a metropolitan area, referred to his seemingly endless meetings as Zoom Purgatory. Zoom is a wonderful virtual tool, which hopefully allows us to achieve a level of authentic communication with our students and colleagues. However, Zoom fatigue is much more than a byproduct of too many meetings. Social scientists present the view that Zoom fatigue is the "result of the sudden mass adoption of technology that's disrupting the normal, instinctual and finely-tuned way of communicating that developed to help humans survive."[1]

In addition to teaching online, we find ourselves on meetings and social calls using Zoom. In some cases, pausing physical contact has caused our social lives to become even busier and social engagements harder to avoid.[2] The constant eye contact with numerous individuals at once compounded by the awareness of one's own facial expressions can be exhausting in itself. Elizabeth Redcay, at the University of Maryland, has discussed that many of the nuances of in-person contact that we crave, such as following the direction of each other's gaze or mirroring each other's gestures, are missing from most online exchanges.[3] Therefore, we work even harder when online to achieve authentic communication with our students and colleagues.

Additionally, fatigue comes from nonstop hours at the computer. For those of us who are required to spend a great deal of time on the computer researching, writing, emailing, creating reports, committee work, and so forth, teaching online means never escaping the computer screen.

We love to teach. We love to make music. We love to create. We love to physically interact with our students. Not being able to do all of this in real time in a physical classroom is frustrating, to say the least. This adds to our feelings of fatigue. It feels unnatural to me to teach sitting down. I am sure I am not the only one with this feeling. So how can we minimize this feeling of fatigue for ourselves and our students?

Control Your Physical Space

When teaching, or in a physical meeting, our physical space is defined by role and choice. When teaching, we have an area from which we teach. Our students have assigned places or choose their seats. We use the physical space as a teaching tool itself. Now, the online world is our physical space as well as where we use technology.

Fatigue can be combated in the online world of Zoom in several ways. First, the Breakout Room feature allows students to be placed in separate discussion spaces. I teach using small groups in several of my class, so this feature has been an excellent tool. I still assign students a role, such as facilitator, recorder, and reporter. Students can examine different excerpts of music or have an in-depth discussion on an assigned topic. Zoom allows the host to enter and leave each of the smaller groups. Also, the groups can signal the host if they have questions or would like input. This allows your students to focus on fewer people and the discussion has more freedom. As host, it allows you as the teacher to focus on smaller groups of students at one time on screen. And yes, Zoom allows you to assign students to each room or in a random manner. It is limited in that, unlike walking around a room observing multiple small groups at one time, the host can only be in one small group at a time. However, it allows a freedom that does not occur within the one large group Zoom setting. Additionally, I instruct students who are experiencing fatigue to switch to a speaker view setting. This way they are not focusing on multiple individuals on their screen at one time and can focus only on the one person speaking.

Second, especially as singers, be mindful of your physical set up with regards to your neck and back. Remember, your head weighs approximately twelve pounds. When angled down, the strain on the neck becomes equal to approximately sixty pounds. Therefore, keep your laptop at a comfortable height. Avoid using your cellphone for Zoom meetings, which may tempt you to constantly look down at the screen. Another option is to set up an external webcam instead of using the laptop camera. This way you can move the webcam into a more comfortable position with more distance between you and the laptop.

Third, plan breaks in your classes and between meetings. Even with varied activities, such as screen sharing, breakout rooms, presentation sharing and more, you and your students need built-in breaks. The fatigue from a three-hour graduate lesson on Zoom can still be felt the next day when trying to begin fresh with an early-morning ninety-minute class. Therefore, build in breaks away from the screen. Instruct your students to walk, drink water, and step outside for a few moments to help combat sluggishness. Remind your students that the break is not for completing other tasks. This goes for the teacher as well. Completing other tasks during the break defeats the purpose of refreshing the mind and body. Additionally, we may not be able to control the times we teach, but if at all possible try to allow time between your teaching and meetings. When setting a meeting, be courteous to all by setting not only a specific start time but an end time as well.

Set Boundaries and Schedule Off-Tech Hours

Only you can protect your personal time. No one else will do this for you. Therefore, it is up to you to set office hour boundaries outside of teaching hours. Technology is wonderful in that we can take it anywhere. This is also what makes it dangerous.

If your eyes feel dry or achy or you are experiencing blurred vision or having headaches, this is a sign that you are dealing with screen-induced eye fatigue. This is an indicator that you are spending too much time on screens of all kinds, including laptops, iPads, cell phones, etc. If this is happening with great frequency, you may not be setting enough boundaries for your own well-being.

Physically leave your teaching/office space for the day. Have an actual ending time in which you physically change your environment. This will help you transition back into personal time mode. It is also beneficial to continue professional dress so that you can also change clothes, signaling you are done with teaching and meetings for the day. I made it clear to my music education majors that their appearance on camera was to be the same as their appearance in the physical classroom. Some may argue that since there is only a limited camera view, what is the point? However, neat appearance requires them to be in a state of preparedness

and signals inwardly that it is time for learning. Learning to be prepared is a trait that they need to develop as they transition into music educators. Additionally, this allows them to transition into personal space when classes are completed for the day by relaxing their appearance.

Unfortunately, the expectation with technology use is that we as educators and advisors should be available 24/7. Additionally, we as a collective group of choral educators want to help, assist, and be available. However, it is important to realize that personal time, family time, and creative time has worth. Highly productive people recognize and accept responsibility, but they also recognize the need for rejuvenation. We need to teach our students this as well and lead by example. CJ

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NOTES

[1] Besty Morris, "Why Does Zoom Exhaust You? Science Has the Answer," *Wall Street Journal*, March 27, 2020, accessed May 29, 2020, https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-does-zoom-exhaust-you-science-has-the-answer-11590600269.

[2] Joe Sugden, "Zoom Fatigue is Real," *Wall Street Journal*, April 23, 2020, accessed May 29, 2020, https://www.wsj.com/articles/zoom-fatigue-is-real-11587652460.

[3] Elizabeth Redcay, et al., "Live Face to Face Interaction during fMRI: A New Tool for Social Cognitive Neuroscience," *Neuroimage* 50, no. 4, (2010), 1639–1647, doi: 10.1016/j.neuroimage.2010.01.052.

The ACDA GENESIS PRIZE

A NEW initiative of the ACDA Composition Initiatives Standing Committee, seeking to stimulate art as a response to our current time of crisis.

Grants of **$2500** for composer and **$500** for a collaborating poet to be awarded to two composer-poet pairs to create new choral works.

No entry fee; composer applicants must be current members of ACDA; proposed new collaborative work may not yet be published/performed; the work may not be funded by any other source.

Application deadline: August 15, 2020

Visit **acda.org/acda-genesis-prize** for full details and application

ACDA 2021

March 17-20

Dallas Symphony Chorus

Simon Halsey-
Belshazzar's Feast

World Youth Choir

Formosa Singers - Taiwan

Invited Headliners/ Ensembles include:

Entre Voces, Coro Nacional de Cuba

Tenebrae

Voctave

TMEA All-State Mixed Choir

Call for Poster Presentations

2021 ACDA National Conference
March 17-20, 2021

The American Choral Directors Association will sponsor a research session at the National Conference on March 17–20, 2021. The intent of the research poster session is to bring current research to light that impacts and informs the choral profession. The poster-session space will include an easel that will accommodate a poster up to 36" x 48". The poster should be a single full-color document lightweight enough to be attached to the display board with push pins.

1. Abstracts submitted for presentation must comply with the following guidelines. If the data have been presented in whole or substantive part ay any forum or at previous research sessions, a statement specifying particulars of the presentation must be included with the submission. Papers presented at other conferences will be considered only if the audience was substantially different (e.g., a state meeting or a university symposium). The paper may have been submitted for publication but must not be in print or in press prior to the submission deadline of the conference.

2. The research may be of any type, but a simple review of literature will not be considered for presentation. Manuscript style of articles representing descriptive or experimental studies must conform to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th edition, 2019). Authors of other types of studies must submit manuscripts that conform to either *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (K. L. Turabian, 9th edition, 2018) or *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th edition, 2017).

3. The following items are required for submission: An abstract of no more than three thousand characters (including references) summarizing the research purpose, method, results, and conclusions. The name(s) or affiliation(s) of applicants must not appear in the abstract. Incomplete submissions (e.g., those discussing proposed research without any findings) will be rejected.

4. Financial responsibilities. Presenters must be current members of ACDA and are expected to register for the conference. ACDA will not assume financial responsibility for travel, food, or lodging.

5. The submission portal will be open on October 1, 2020. Submissions must be uploaded to:

   https://cmt3.research.microsoft.com/ACDANRPS2019 by November 1, 2020.

   All submissions will be blind peer-reviewed by a committee of scholars.

Applicants will be notified of the status of their submission via email by December 15, 2020.

ACDA Book Authors Display

2021 ACDA National Conference
March 17-20, 2021

The American Choral Directors Association is sponsoring a display of books authored by ACDA members at the National Conference on March 17–20, 2021. Purposes are to highlight the role of ACDA members in furthering the choral arts through published books, make these resources known and readily accessible to members, and generate dialogue among musicians and publishers for future publishing endeavors. This event will include space to display books, author/publisher fliers, and "Meet the Author" conversations.

Guidelines

a) Book topic is relevant to the ACDA purposes (https://acda.org/about-us/).

b) Submitting author or editor of a critical edition or chapter book is a current ACDA member. Submissions by chapter authors are not accepted. Multi-author and multi-editor books represent a single submission.

c) Book has been vetted, edited, published, and distributed for purchase by a publishing company. Submissions of self-published or unpublished books are not accepted.

d) Book is in print and available for purchase by retailers. Note: publishers and distributors at the conference will be provided a list of books on display.

Submission Requirements

a) Book title, author/editor name(s), publisher, date of publication, and ACDA member number.

b) A description of the book (100 words or less).

c) Category of participation:

- Book Display Only—author/editor does not plan to attend the conference. A copy of the book and optional publisher/author flier are hand-delivered to the event and removed afterward by an on-site publisher, distributor, or choral colleague. For Ebook-only publications, authors may provide a publisher/author flier.

- Meet the Author—author/editor plans to register for the conference, make books and fliers available at the event, and, contingent on scheduling, participate in discussion. Note: ACDA will not assume financial responsibility of travel, food, or lodging for Meet the Author participants.

Submission Timeline

Submit required information by email to Research and Publications Standing Committee member Alan Gumm at gumm1aj@cmich.edu between October 1 and November 1, 2020. Status of submissions meeting the guidelines will be sent via email by December 15, 2020.

IJRCS International Journal of Research in Choral Singing
The Scientific Research Journal of the American Choral Directors Association

Call for Nominations
Editorial Board and Associate Editor/Editor

The editor of the *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing* requests nominations for membership on the Editorial Board (2021–2026). Nominations are additionally invited for the position of Associate Editor (2021-2022), with intention to serve as Editor from 2023-2026. Electronic files of nomination materials will be accepted through September 15, 2020, addressed to Patrick K. Freer, IJRCS Editor, at IJRCS@acda.org.

Editorial Board. Nominees should hold a completed doctorate and have a record of research publications. Nominations must include: 1) a letter of nomination from another individual that includes description of the nominee's qualifications to evaluate quantitative and qualitative research manuscripts; the letter should also highlight the nominee's most important research publications and any previous editorial/reviewer work; 2) the nominator's ACDA membership number/membership expiration date; 3) the nominee's Curriculum Vitae; and 4) a PDF or direct link to a representative published research article selected by the nominee. International nominees need not be ACDA members. Application materials may be emailed directly by the nominee; the letter of nomination may be sent separately, if desired.

Associate Editor. It is assumed that nominees would accept membership on the Editorial Board if not selected as Associate Editor; please inform if otherwise. Nominations must include the four items outlined above. Complete nominations will additionally include, as a fifth item, a letter of recommendation from the editor of a journal for which the nominee has served as a member of the review board; this letter should address issues of scholarly contribution to the review process, timeliness, and collegiality.

Research Report

Bryan E. Nichols, Editor <bnichols@psu.edu>

Singing as a Life-Long Educational Endeavor: Research Bridging the Divide from Childhood to Adulthood

by Bryan E. Nichols

Recent reports in the press suggest that overall, people sing very well, with some suggesting everyone can sing[1] and others suggesting some practice helps, too.[2] Regarding the latter, the two variables of experience and instruction are difficult to parse, but they are important: schoolchildren who sing at school each year tend to sing more in tune across the elementary years, while adolescents and adults who lapse in their singing indicate lower levels of tunefulness.[3] However, what has been commonly referred to as singing accuracy is a narrow definition in the research literature: precisely how in tune one can sing is only one factor in the construct of singing. Yes, everyone can sing, though the current research tells us mostly about the degree of tunefulness—even to the tiniest degree—not whether people can "sing" beautifully.

Music in the media has an influence on students and offers implications for our singers in schools, colleges, churches, and community choirs. Naturally, what teachers and conductors offer and what students want can differ in classrooms of all subject areas. Choir, however, is a "subject" where students' knowledge base is already rich and diverse. Children hear music everywhere, memorize lyrics, sing and rap for one another, and dance to music. In American schools, music is generally elective after the transition from childhood to adolescence, and teachers/conductors who consider themselves "passionate" about the subject can be presumed to want their students to continue singing throughout the lifespan. But what outcomes are important for children in general music, choir or other ensembles to encourage singing throughout their lives?

A starting point is honest instruction, like exists in math and English, and support and encouragement to continue in elective coursework. Conductors for singers of all ages must give accurate and constructive feedback which helps the student accomplish two things: 1) improve weaknesses, and 2) improve strengths. Children and adolescents must be asked to sing individually or in small groups to develop the ability—and the confidence—to sing alone and with others. When they do, they are deserving of effective, supportive "feedbacks" that improve their singing. When constructive feedback is balanced offered alongside the notion that anyone can learn to do it—just like in math and other subject areas—singers may be more inclined to continue participation into college and community choir years.

What Does it Matter if Everyone Can Sing if No One Wants to?

An emphasis on being in tune can be detrimental to the idea

that everyone should enjoy singing when it suggests only "really good" singers should do it. This idea is at odds with the idea of teaching and learning: to learn it you must not have known it before. Anecdotal evidence suggests westerners have the notion that only those deemed good singers should sing, but other cultures value singing whether it is deemed technically "good" or not.[4] Indeed, our mainstream culture is a listener culture with a dividing line between the stage and the audience, and this rings true (pun intended) for classical and pop music alike. When artists like Brandi Carlisle sing with an orchestra, they sometimes invite the audience to participate; she leads them in not one but in two or even three parts. Audience members like to sing—and can, which is often proven when they are invited to do it as part of a big crowd.

There is a great threshold in the transition between school-aged years and adulthood. Researchers in music participation are now writing about how to lead in the twenty-first century, represented by two major ideas. First, what kinds of music practices encourage students to be capable readers and performers of music after schooling ends and there is no conductor around to help? We might think seriously about when music reading is important in students' futures (it is!), and when is it a hindrance. Secondly, there is a great pop music movement in the schools our singers attend, sometimes called the modern band movement, where music teachers are helping students to learn solo instruments like ukulele, guitar, and other instruments. Maybe we can introduce tablature or the keys of the piano and at the same time make singing a priority too.

Of course, the transition from high school to adulthood is a time of active decision making for individuals. Regardless of their intended major, some research suggests students make the choice to participate in collegiate music ensembles well before they arrive on campus.[5] In another study, college participants saw themselves as better singers than those who chose not to participate in college, and some of them cited a general lack of information about musical opportunities on campus.[6] Importantly, some students may not have thought they were good enough to sing in college choir, which is unfortunate: students still have to take math and English perhaps wondering whether they are good enough.

Nothing Feels Good like Singing Feels Good

There is a great deal of research on non-musical outcomes related to singing. Generally, taking music is associated with good grades, it

offers links to being healthier, and it promotes social activity for people of all ages. For individuals with dementia, it means connecting to certain memories when others have disappeared. There is less research, though, on this aspect of singing: evidence of feeling good while singing. It feels great to take a deep breath of air and sing it back out. I contend it feels particularly good to sing loudly, whether on your own or by participating in a choir.

Little is known about how people participate simultaneously in different kinds of music-making, or even about how people with music training of any kind go on to be consumers of music.[7] Gates put forth that there are professionals and apprentices, and also amateurs, hobbyists, recreationalists, and dabblers,[8] and he was always suggesting everyone is musical. The more conductors promote that everyone is musical (not just choristers) in the same way we can all write, read, and do math, the more students may seem themselves doing musical activities as a part of their future selves.

Conductors may agree the ability to sing in tune is important, followed closely by the ability to sing out with tone that matches the genre. If life-long music-making is a chief goal of conductors, the "curriculum" might include teaching students about their individual ranges so they can identify songs that suit them or know in which keys to sing them. How to find a starting pitch, and even knowing on which pitch one is beginning, might be considered primary goals for singing in choir that could lead to individual music making. This could be an important reason for introducing students to the keyboard: to be able to find one's way around the piano keys, whether virtual or physical.

Finally, a large repertoire of songs may not be a sufficient curriculum agenda for younger or older children to promote continuing participation in music, even in singing. Learning folk songs from our culture and others, as well as patriotic or parochial music—for schools that deem it important—are worthy goals, but they must be paralleled by developing the ability to: 1) sing in tune, 2) find starting notes and suitable ranges for one's own voice, and 3) invent harmony to sing along with others. Singing is a noble activity, and we conductors are the gatekeepers to elective participation in secondary schooling and beyond.

A Final "Note" (or Text Box)

Christopher Small thought of music not as a thing, but an activity.[9] To repeat, everyone can sing, and everyone should. What they used to call a "tin ear" is really a misconception: experience and instruction help us all to enjoy singing with our friends—the louder the better. CJ

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NOTES

[1] Malia Wolan, "How to Sing in Tune," *New York Times Magazine* (Feb. 26, 2020).

[2] Dua Eldeib, "Study: Singing More of a Learned Skill than Natural talent," *Chicago Tribune* (Feb. 18, 2015).

[3] Steven Demorest and Peter Pfordresher, "Singing Accuracy Development from K-Adult," *Music Perception* 32 (2015): 293-302.

[4] Personal correspondence.

[5] J. Bradley McDavid, *A Study of Factors Influencing Nonparticipation in Collegiate Band Programs among First-Year Students in the Pacific-10 Athletic Conference.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of Washington (1999).

[6] Bret Amundson, *Factors Related to Continued Choral Participation: A comparative study of participants and non-participants in college choir.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of Washington (2012).

[7] Bryan Nichols, "The Musical Participation and Consumerism of Two Non-Music Majors Enrolled in a University Men's Glee Club," *Contributions to Music Education* 40 (2015): 131-146.

[8] J. Terry Gates, "Music Participation: Theory, research, and policy," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 109 (1991): 1-35.

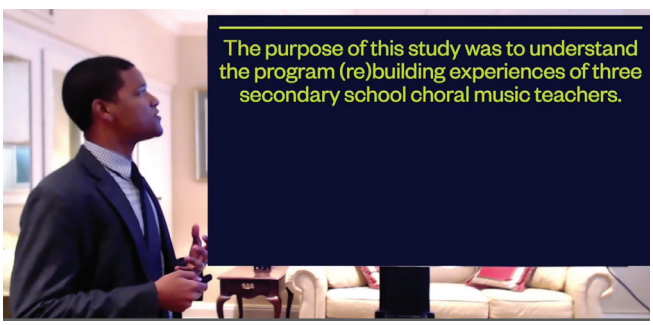
[9] Christopher Small, *Musicking*, Wesleyan University Press (1998).

2020 SYMPOSIUM ON RESEARCH IN CHORAL SINGING

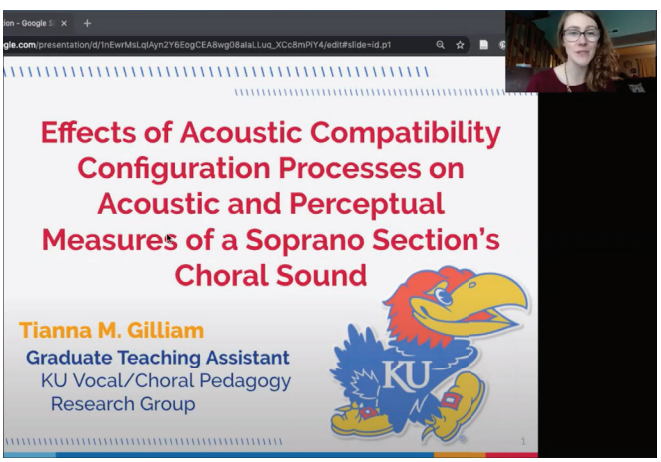
by Patrick K. Freer, Symposium Chair <pfreer@gsu.edu>

The second Symposium on Research in Choral Singing was held virtually from May 15 to July 15, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the Symposium from its original, planned meeting at Georgia State University (Atlanta, GA) on May 1 & 2, 2020. At the time the format change was made, all proposals had been vetted and acceptance notifications had been delivered. The reconstituted Symposium proceeded in a virtual space with an online collection of videos, papers, and posters uploaded by presenters. The "virtual exhibit room" was open for viewing by all ACDA members. Several state ACDA chapters were able to incorporate the Symposium materials within their individual virtual summer conferences.

Abstracts of all accepted presentations were printed in volume 8 (2020) of the *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing* (see https://acda.org/2020/04/ijrcs-volume-8). The abstracts were compiled and edited by Bryan Nichols (Symposium Program Chair) and James Eldreth, both of Pennsylvania State University.



"(Re)building the secondary school choral music program: A multiple-case study" Justin West & Jason Bowers, Louisiana State University



The Symposium's virtual exhibit room was developed by Scott Davis, ACDA's Information Technology Project Manager), and members of the *IJRCS* Editorial Board served as the Program Committee: Scott D. Harrison (Griffith University, Australia), David Howard (University of London), Jeremy Manternach (University of Iowa), Jessica Nápoles (University of North Texas), Elizabeth Parker (Temple University), Julia T. Shaw (Indiana University), Bridget Sweet (University of Illinois), and Graham Welch (University College of London). The Coordinator of Performing Choirs was Jennifer Sengin of Georgia State University.

The primary goal of the Symposium was to define the current state of research in choral singing, and to identify and coordinate issues and methodologies for future efforts. Participants represented multiple colleges and universities in the United States, several European universities, and two public school districts. The Symposium was developed to generate a body of scholarship that might be published in the *IJRCS.* The *IJRCS* is accessed online, free of charge, through the "publications" tab at www.acda.org.

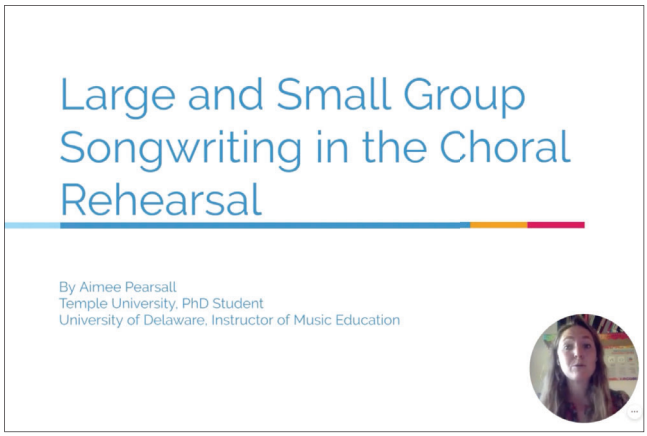
The following is a sample of Symposium session titles included in the published abstracts and virtual exhibit room:

- *Real voices, virtual ensemble 2.0: Perceptions of participation in Eric Whitacre's virtual choirs;*
  Stephen Paparo
  University of Massachusetts Amherst

- *Pedagogical strategies for developing style(s) and conceptual knowledge of contemporary African choral music;*
  Elijah Adongo
  The University of Florida

• *Examining a composer-in-residence project for elementary choristers*
Sarah Bartolome
Northwestern University

• *Middle and high school director's pedagogical techniques used to teach world music*
Stefanie Cash
Berry College



• *An examination of undergraduate vocal pedagogy courses for preservice choral music educators*
Joshua Chism
University of Oklahoma

• *Amateurism in music education (1967-2019): An examination of three calls to action*
Tom FitzStephens
Georgia State University

• *The influences of facial expression and conducting gesture on college musicians' perceptions of choral conductor and ensemble expressivity*
Jessica Nápoles
University of North Texas

• *Effects of clavicle stretches on perceptions of singing ease in choral singers of a variety of ages*
Melissa Grady
University of Kansas
and Melissa Brunkan
University of Oregon

• *Assessment and individual student achievement in the choral classroom;*
Elizabeth Hearn
University of Mississippi

• *Choral directors' self-report of accommodations made for boys' changing voices*
Jan Killian
Texas Tech University
John Wayman
University of Texas-Arlington
and Patrick Antinone
Texas Christian University

• Video appearances by the Georgia State University Singers (Deanna Joseph, conductor) and the Atlanta Homeward Choir (Dónal Noonan, Executive Director)

The 2020 Symposium on Research in Choral Singing was a project of the American Choral Directors Association through its National Standing Committee on Research and Publications chaired by John Silantien (University of Texas at San Antonio), with members Elisa Macedo Dekaney (Syracuse University), Patrick K. Freer (Georgia State University), Alan Gumm (University of Central Michigan), and Jessica Nápoles (University of North Texas). Thank you to all! CJ

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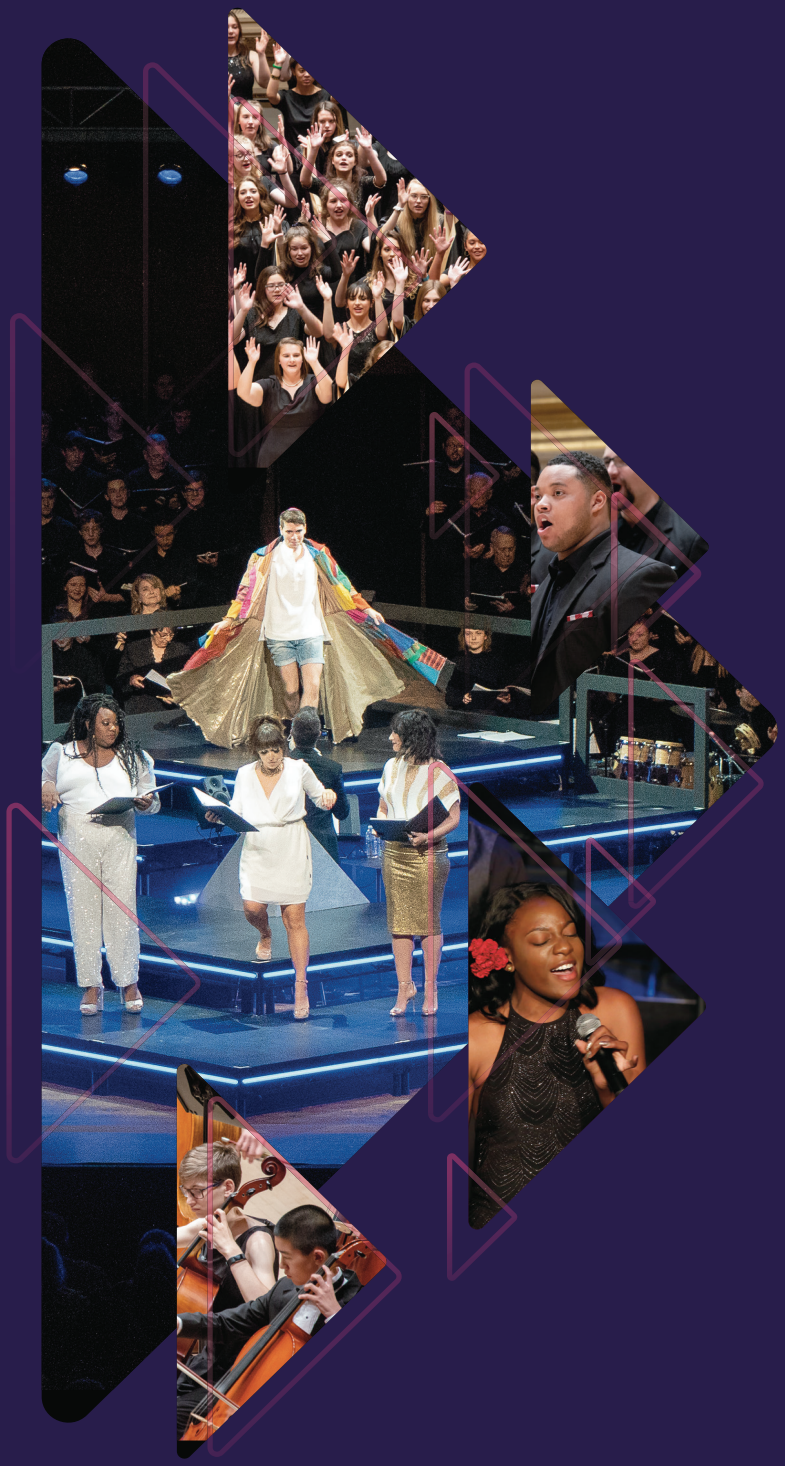

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Rehearsal Break

The Music Literacy Conundrum

by Adam Kluck

> "Many parents are simply unable to believe that music can and should be understood by all children because they, themselves, were not given the opportunity to learn to understand music as children."
>
> —Edwin Gordon

As conductors and teachers of music, we face many challenges to sustained success. Many of these challenges stem from issues surrounding music literacy. My experience, and the experience of many colleagues, is that young singers are becoming less adept and perhaps even less interested in reading music, and long-term effects can be seen even in collegiate ensembles. This problem is not new, but it has arguably become more pronounced. Middle school and secondary teachers are doing remarkable things every day to bring music literacy to as many of their students as possible, and in the article I recommend some ways to address the problem efficiently and creatively.

Background

Maybe we should begin with the question, "Do we need to be able to read music at all?" Technology has made many things possible and solved some problems in the field of music. While many can compose music without any piano skills or even much knowledge of music theory, I think most music educators would agree that the ability to perform from and understand musical notation is our goal. As David Waller notes, "The public assumes that music teachers teach students how to read music."[1]

Furthermore, literacy is an essential hallmark of democracy.[2] We all understand that repeating pitches and rhythms from exclusively aural sources comes before connection to the written notes, and so I am of course not discounting the importance of this aspect of musicianship. However, music notation will not cease to be the way in which we communicate musical ideas. I believe we can improve the structure of our ensemble rehearsals—no matter the level of ensemble—in order to achieve better literacy for each and every one of our students.

If we define music literacy as "The ability to convert musical sounds into signs and musical signs into sounds,"[3] then we can begin discussing audiation as a key component of music literacy. Musicians cannot achieve a deep understanding of music without the ability to converse in musical language. Music literacy is not just sight reading, nor is it simply the ability to read notes. Music literacy encompasses all aspects of musical language, including the ability to read and write, communicating spontaneous, independent musical thought. Any discussion of how music is acquired

must include the concept of audiation. Christopher Sommervelle's study and others have shown that audiation is the most important skill for any musician. Audiation is the assimilation and comprehension in one's mind from written notation or from aural memory.[4]

Skill in audiation is essential for real music literacy, but many trained musicians do not possess this essential skill. The central concept of tonal understanding—audiation—is the ability to understand the musical sounds without the score, and the score without the corresponding musical sounds. Kodály, Orff, and Suzuki all recognized the importance of developing audiation as the foundation of music performance expertise. Studies of composers such as Mozart, Schumann, Berlioz, Wagner, Tchaikovsky, and a host of others suggest that they thought and processed music with this level of fluency; they all had the ability to hear and read complex notation, understanding it in a similar way as they would the text of a book in their native tongue. In Beethoven's case, a further—yet still essential—step is illustrated: that of recognizing and understanding music without the ability to physically hear it.[5]

Every human brain comes equipped with two separate sound processing systems: linguistic and musical. Research suggests that music is as natural for humans as language. Every element of music is present and important in both systems. Indeed, by the time we are born, we already can process, group, and even differentiate between a remarkable number of sounds. Music is as natural for humans as language.[6] Interestingly, as psychologists have found, "Music acquisition keeps pace with linguistic development, even in Western cultures where it is not on an equal educational footing with language. If musical development appears to be slower and more effortful than language acquisition, it seems to be largely a product of culture, not biology."[7]

The way that we acquire expertise in music is very similar to the way we acquire expertise in language. This has been asserted many times before, by many researchers, and it is widely accepted that there are a large number of parallels between music and language acquisition and performance. The process of listening and copying remains the dominant method through which humans learn language and music in most world cultures, and within these cultures, there is often no distinction between musician and non-musician. This was true even in the western classical tradition until a significant shift in music performance expertise occurred toward the end of the nineteenth century, in correlation with print music's exponentially greater prevalence. As a result, the approach to acquiring music performance expertise fundamentally changed.

The way we teach students in the music academy is now centered on reading and executing notated music, but lacks opportunities to create or converse in musical language. In our training of music teachers and performers, there exists a limited writing component and audiation training that sometimes lacks useful context. Furthermore, these important aspects of literacy are addressed outside of ensemble rehearsals at the collegiate level and are often inadequately addressed in methods classes. Our music education systems at every level are now almost exclusively based upon performing pre-composed works in ensemble formats. This naturally de-emphasizes the importance of individual self-expression and prioritizes the replication of a composer's ideas.

Learning music now consists of reading while playing. We call performances of music "recitals," and

indeed this term is appropriate—it is akin to literary work recitation. In language expertise, there is a clear distinction between the ability to recite existing words and the ability to spontaneously express oneself, which arises from a mastery of language. We have come to assume that learning and playing written notes on a page causes a musician to become musically literate; this, however, is not necessarily the case.

So, how is this essential skill taught? Our undergraduate music curricula always seem to contain some form of ear training, designed to develop aural skills. However, if you are not in college and not majoring in music, you probably do not receive much training in aural skills. Additionally, many researchers have rightly questioned the effectiveness of this particular type of training in developing audiation skills. Our current teaching methods—both in the academy and, if students are lucky, in secondary ensembles—encourages a mechanical approach to producing sound by decoding symbols rather than teaching and developing genuine audiation.

As David Butler puts it: "Aural training is still a patchwork in American colleges and universities."[8] This illustrates the need for a change in our understanding of sight-reading versus tonal understanding. In the choral domain, we have what could only be described as an "ad hoc" approach to aural pedagogy.[9] This issue will be discussed later, but for now, be encouraged that there are ways to improve your students' audiation in every level of ensemble without taking more than five minutes each rehearsal.

"The most obvious advantage of musical literacy is the ability to engage in independent exploration of music."

Creating Independent Musicians

The most obvious advantage of musical literacy is the ability to engage in independent exploration of music. If our perception of music is so colored by its hearing rather than our investigation of the written notes, we are doomed to imitation and may completely miss the deeper meanings available to us through score study. Illiterate listeners, according to Aelwyn Pugh, "are at the mercy of others, since [they] have no means of making an independent assessment of the relative authenticity of successive interpretations."

This is an important point to remember. If we are unable to truly understand music, we are also unable to react to it with the full capacity of our emotions. Intellect and emotion are inextricably linked, as any performer or audience member knows. If, in our rehearsals, we can strive for an understanding of the essential building blocks of music as we prepare our repertoire, we will create more rewarding experiences for all of our students. There are many amazing composers writing music that sequences repertoire with musical concepts; however, we can do more to prepare our music for our students by deconstructing it into its essential parts in order to foster critical thinking and problem solving in rehearsal.

One of the main goals of content area literacy instruction is to produce students who can read and think critically.[10] If we have established that written music is vitally important, this should be one of our main goals. Even if the vast majority of our students leave our ensembles never to major in music or pursue it as a career path, we must value music enough to give them the tools they need to be competent readers. If students are able to read for themselves, to audiate music and not simply to mimic, it stands to reason that more and more of them will continue advocating for music and music instruction as they go about the rest of their lives.

Jerome Bruner stated that instruction is not a matter of committing results to mind. Rather, we should teach students to participate in processes that establish knowledge.[11] This is simply impossible without music literacy. We must find ways to give our students the tools to find

notes, rhythms, dynamics, and other expressive markings. In this way, we are empowering them to discover and engage with what we all agree is a life-changing and indispensable part of our human lives.

Others might proclaim that those musicians who play only or mostly by ear have better tonal understanding than those who are tied to the written notes. Sommervelle's 2015 study found that only six percent of these musicians showed tonal understanding—or evidence of clear skill in audiation—compared with fifty percent of classical musicians. In the words of an esteemed colleague, "there is nothing to be gained by having poor musicianship skills." Musicianship and music literacy are completely tied together.

Leaving students limited in the area of music literacy restricts not only their development and potential, but that of the ensembles in which they participate. Great composers craft music that is meaningful and presents opportunities for self-expression; we should not settle for mimicry, but for profound understanding when performing these works of art. Estelle Jorgensen describes what perhaps we may have forgotten: "True expression is achieved only through the ability to engage intellectually and emotionally with music. To emphasize literacy in our ensembles at every level gives way to the kinds of intellectual engagement and criticism required in humane and free societies."[12]

In speaking with many wonderful musician colleagues, I began to wonder if we are often unable to define and articulate what it is, exactly, that we teach. Are we teaching music, or are we giving students an experience as ensemble members? Both are important. Making only the latter choice inevitably puts us in the category of "extracurricular." We continually laud the benefits of music and have all given our lives over to pursuing it, but when it comes to defending it to an administration or others in charge, we are often left playing defense. We can and should teach our students to become independent, fluent musicians, which ensures that the ensemble experience is something they are able to pursue long after they leave our classroom. .

If we truly believe that our content is of high value to all students, we must be able to demonstrate its academic benefits. I am not speaking of the studies or quotes that assert music's benefits to other areas; I am speaking of music itself: the written notes. Much like the written word, the invention of the written note is one of the most amazing and incredible feats of humankind.[13] The stewardship, promulgation, and celebration of this music should be our priority. As Jorgensen so eloquently points out: "If preventing the extinction of natural species is a matter of public policy, then surely preventing the extinction of music among other cultural traditions is at least as important."[14]

Jorgensen goes on to cite findings of the Yale Seminar report of 1964. Among them are assertions such as our underestimation of children's potential and the choice of repertoire in ensembles. This resonates at least as loudly today as it did then. Perhaps the most notable point made in this report contends that repertoire is not connected to "the development of theoretical and his-

torical insights." In other words, directors were not using choral repertoire in ways that advanced students' musical understanding, or were not connecting this repertoire to foundational musical concepts. My conversations with current music teachers have yielded many productive ideas, but the one that stands out and is universally discussed is just this: we must continue to develop ways to connect repertoire to foundational musical concepts and to successfully articulate these concepts.

Challenges to Literacy

Sommervelle's study revealed that only a small proportion of highly trained musicians were able to identify and discriminate between sounds in music. Even when asked to notate a simple, short melody, almost two-thirds of these musicians could not do so successfully for two bars, and many could not even follow the contour correctly at all. Edwin Gordon himself remarked in 2011 about the "paucity of graduates' musical understanding." This speaks to our failures specifically at the collegiate level in creating well-versed, independent, literate musicians. If this is indeed the case, we cannot expect these musicians to go and correctly teach skills they themselves do not possess.

I would imagine that most of us use the piano in rehearsal quite regularly in order to teach notes to the ensemble. Many—perhaps even most—of us also engage in regular sight-singing exercises with our ensembles. This may increase the chances that students will be able to sing a given interval correctly with fewer attempts, but they still need the piano in order to know what their line sounds like. Even in many college situations, music is still taught this way—by rote. This illustrates the need for us as music educators to define and articulate a unified music curriculum. What is the content we are teaching in choir? We advocate for music, but are we really teaching ownership of music? Are we giving our students the building blocks they need to discern what a written line of music means?

Our music pedagogy is arguably disconnected from our desired outcomes in a number of ways. The first is in the fact that our standards for music education at the national and state levels vary widely. Additionally, there is a difference in understanding between *standards* and *curriculum*—one is not the other. We do not have a universally agreed-upon music curriculum. Now, this is not our fault; students come to choir at all levels, often with little or no previous singing or music experience, or with varying degrees of success in previous musical encounters. This disparity is perhaps our greatest challenge as music teachers.

The second major disconnect in our music pedagogy centers around the writing of music. Consider the fact that we ask our ensemble members to read music while almost never asking them to write even simple melodic or rhythmic passages. The literature regarding music pedagogy is rife with references to the similarities between language literacy and music literacy, but even incredibly astute and experienced authors completely ignore the writing component.

> **We must continue to develop ways to connect repertoire to foundational musical concepts and to successfully articulate these concepts.**

Compare this to other fields with clear standards of reading and writing. In our choir rehearsal, we give them notes from the piano, dictate to them how they are to sing certain parts, and then together we mimic, but do not create, question, or investigate. Sometimes, we forget to, "emphasize student activity over passivity, empowerment over compliance, and creativity over cultural reproduction."[15] Whether we mean to or not, the way we do things in the choral rehearsal encourages meekness and compliance—traits opposite those we want to foster in young musicians.

As mentioned earlier, there is a problem with how we discuss

sight-reading in the choral field: we equate it with music literacy, when the two are different skills. The musically literate do not bypass the aural process; they internalize what they read, play, sing, or write. Unfortunately, and perhaps ironically, the authors of many articles on this subject bemoan the fact that there seems to be almost no useful research on the specific topic of this type of music literacy.

Numerous studies have been carried out on the many sight-reading methods which exist, but conclusions are not supported by any specific theoretical basis. We have a varied and haphazard collection of empirical studies on singled-out aspects of what musicians do, rather than a holistic study centered around how musicianship is taught and acquired successfully.[16] Furthermore, in the psychology literature regarding music acquisition, there are few references to audiation.

In the choral area specifically, there are unique perceived barriers to music literacy acquisition. As directors, we are constantly assessing and adjusting to those who are new to reading music or new to choir in particular. I submit that, in searching for answers to literacy in the choral ensemble, we should look to the instrumental ensemble for answers. It is very rare for a band student to join in the middle of their secondary schooling; they would be too far behind because of the band curriculum sequence. They would have to learn how to use and make sound on an instrument, and then learn how to read music for that instrument.

This is not the case in choir, because we do not have a firm, universally agreed-upon sequence. However, there is one large hurdle that does not exist for singers: the instrument. Singers can join midway through their secondary schooling and still be successful in choir, even if we adhere to a similar sequence, because they do not have to learn a new instrument. If band students in some states can learn all twelve scales along with fingerings by the end of eighth grade, certainly choir students could learn the same thing without fingerings.

Band students must learn notes and fingerings for those notes in order to play ever-increasingly complicated pieces. We do not have the same scaffolding in place for choir. Singers, uniquely, can sing things more complex than those they can read.

It is telling that music teacher friends of mine, when discussing this subject, feared they would be criticized if they said the following in the company of other choir teachers: there is too much focus on performance, to the detriment of teaching actual content. Instead of focusing on musicianship and literacy, giving students the tools they need, we are frantically trying to work up the most impressive program we can for the next performance or spring festival. I will admit that I used to do this regularly—approach each semester in terms of how many weeks between concerts.

Once I started thinking in terms of "units," or essential concepts they need to know and produce, my ensembles improved greatly. However, the influence of choral festivals and other concerts cannot be overstated when it comes to planning our instruction. The absence of sight reading from more and more state and regional judged festivals can be seen as both a symptom and a cause for this emphasis, but the fact remains that, at times, we are not preparing our choir students to be active learners when it comes to encountering and understanding music.

The connection between literature and literacy has been mentioned, and it is an important one. Perhaps publishers bear some responsibility for divorcing the two, but we as teachers must bear that responsibility as well. The state prescribed music lists for festivals are well and good, but the grading system for this literature is almost arbitrary. The University Interscholastic League Prescribed Music List, for example, simply has no specific grading criteria. Committees composed of, "successful, veteran educators, are established for the sole purpose of reviewing literature for potential placement on the list. Their only charge is to identify the highest quality literature and place it accordingly." We are unable to easily connect literature to literacy if difficulty levels are not somehow tied specifically to objective musical content. We should have an objective system that weighs certain types of rhythms, intervallic content, voice splits, and other ensemble performance considerations.

All of these issues result in the average music student's inability to approach a piece of music as a fully literate equal to its composer. Our students must be fluent in mu-

sic; they must be able to converse in its language. I ask myself if my rehearsal processes are truly enabling my students to know the language well enough to spontaneously have a musical idea, articulate it, and understand it themselves. Students who are unable to do this can develop feelings of inadequacy and habits of deference, and we all want our students to feel empowered and emboldened to make artistic decisions and have emotional reactions. It's what makes what we do so rewarding.

The Symptoms

They may be obvious at this point, but let us examine some of the symptoms of the many problems with our current state of affairs. The first and probably most apparent is the fact that, without a solid foundation in music literacy, our ensembles are limited in the difficulty of repertoire they can perform and understand. This is universally claimed by every single collegiate-level colleague with whom I have spoken. Incoming students' aptitude in reading even the simplest rhythms and intervals in their choir auditions has been noticeably declining since I began my collegiate teaching career. Directors with much more experience than myself have confirmed that this has indeed been a noticeable trend, particularly in the past ten years. I will admit that my rehearsal process was designed to make students readers and imitators, not fully literate equals. I want to do better.

At the secondary level, new music teachers in their first year or two are still learning the basics of how to teach in general: classroom management, discipline, organization, and the like. Moreover, according to many colleagues who teach at the secondary level, we are not doing a

good enough job of teaching new teachers how to teach music literacy. So, understandably, there may be difficulty implementing a long-term vision in the first few years of someone's teaching career.

I was this teacher. I realized that, as a director, I wanted to be in front of an empowered, literate group of musicians. We should be developing and using methods that impart knowledge and address comprehensive musicianship, aimed at creating a foundation that will increase students' confidence.

A choral director friend and I were chatting, and he told me that he will never forget the first time he sight-read something perfectly on the first try. Think about your own experiences. Perhaps it is difficult for some of us to put ourselves in those shoes, or perhaps a number of us still struggle to read something correctly on the first try. Whatever the case, I think we can all be excited about the possibilities of increasing every student's literacy.

The Solutions

The problems in music education have been serious enough for long enough that, for more than forty years, pedagogues and experts worldwide have called for deep educational reform.[17]

We must strive to create independent musicians in our ensembles. The first step is defining and committing to our content—music. When our students are empowered to become fully literate equals, the learning process will be much more rewarding for both chorister and director. Imagine a student who is given the opportunity to write the melody of Hot Cross Buns. That student is given the knowledge that they can reproduce this well-known melody for others to read, and can even use those three notes to create their own spontaneous idea, using their imagination to do so.

The late David Thorsen, who co-founded and helmed the California State Fullerton School of Music, said: "Do easier music better." That is, program music that you can set as a goal for your students to be able to read and understand themselves, without being fed notes from the piano first. Give them the tools to discern for themselves what the music is saying and how it sounds. I believe this will require a difficult shift in priorities for some choral directors (myself included), but will pay dividends in the long term.

Let us insist on the regular use of music as a language in which students must be conversant. To be fair, I believe rote teaching can be useful in building ensemble literacy, and scientific evidence bears this out. The key is to approach it in a purposeful, sequential way. To this end, I have found Carol Krueger's flashcards—part of her *Progressive Sight Singing* textbook and method—to be enormously helpful and perfectly paced. I use them even in my top collegiate choir; I have many music education majors singing in that ensemble, and they will draw on their own ensemble experiences when planning for their classroom.

In every choir, we have a large range of ability levels, and these ensemble literacy exercises—structured as Dr. Krueger lays them out—have helped tremendously in bringing up the ability of those who had little to no previous music reading ability. In my higher-ability choirs, I was able to start them somewhere in the middle of the text and flash cards, and increase the pace at which we introduced new elements. This pace can be adjusted based on the audition threshold for a particular choir. Identify the key elements present in your repertoire and break them down into their foundational components during warm-ups as the semester progresses.

I believe we need to define our curriculum as precisely as possible and then stick to teaching it. Our field will be more respected by others and less prone to drifting off course. What is our core content? If we cannot define it, articulate it, and teach it, we cannot hope to defend it.

I will refer to Dr. Krueger once again here, with her blessing. I have included an excerpt of a curriculum map she has developed. I used a similar system for a few of the more difficult pieces of our collegiate repertoire, and it set them up for success.

I extracted the base rhythmic elements and the base melodic elements from each of the pieces, and we read through them as an ensemble, correcting them if something went wrong. I have included here a sample of Dr. Krueger's curriculum map of Hans Leo Hassler's *Dixit Maria* (Figure 1 on page 63), as well as a sample of my own map of just some of the most difficult rhythmic elements present in James MacMillan's *Domine non secundum peccata nostra* (Figure 2 on page 64).

Figure 1: *Dixit Maria* Rhythmic Patterns

Dixit Maria

SATB | Motet, Hans Leo Hassler | cpdl.org

Rhythm Patterns

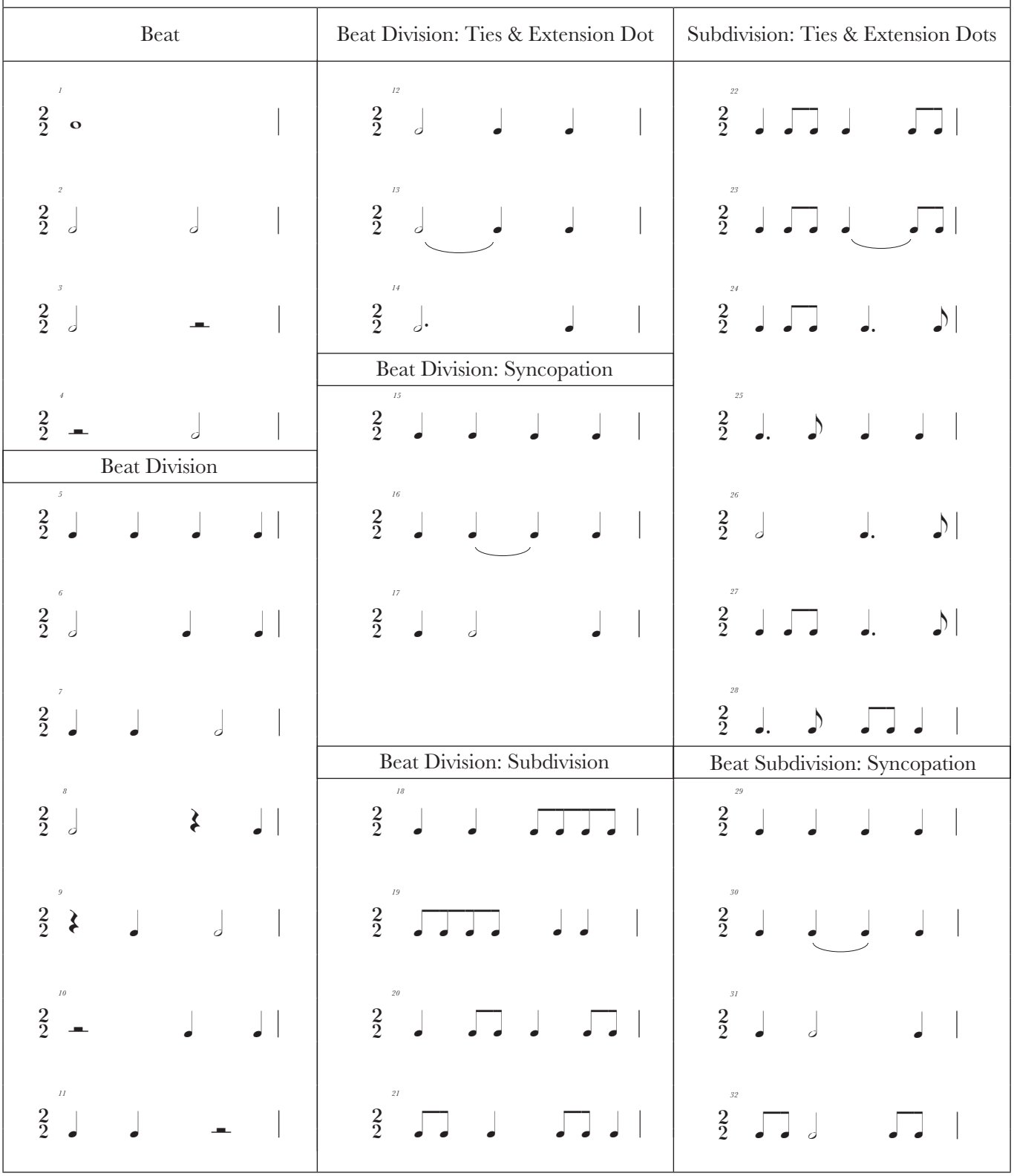


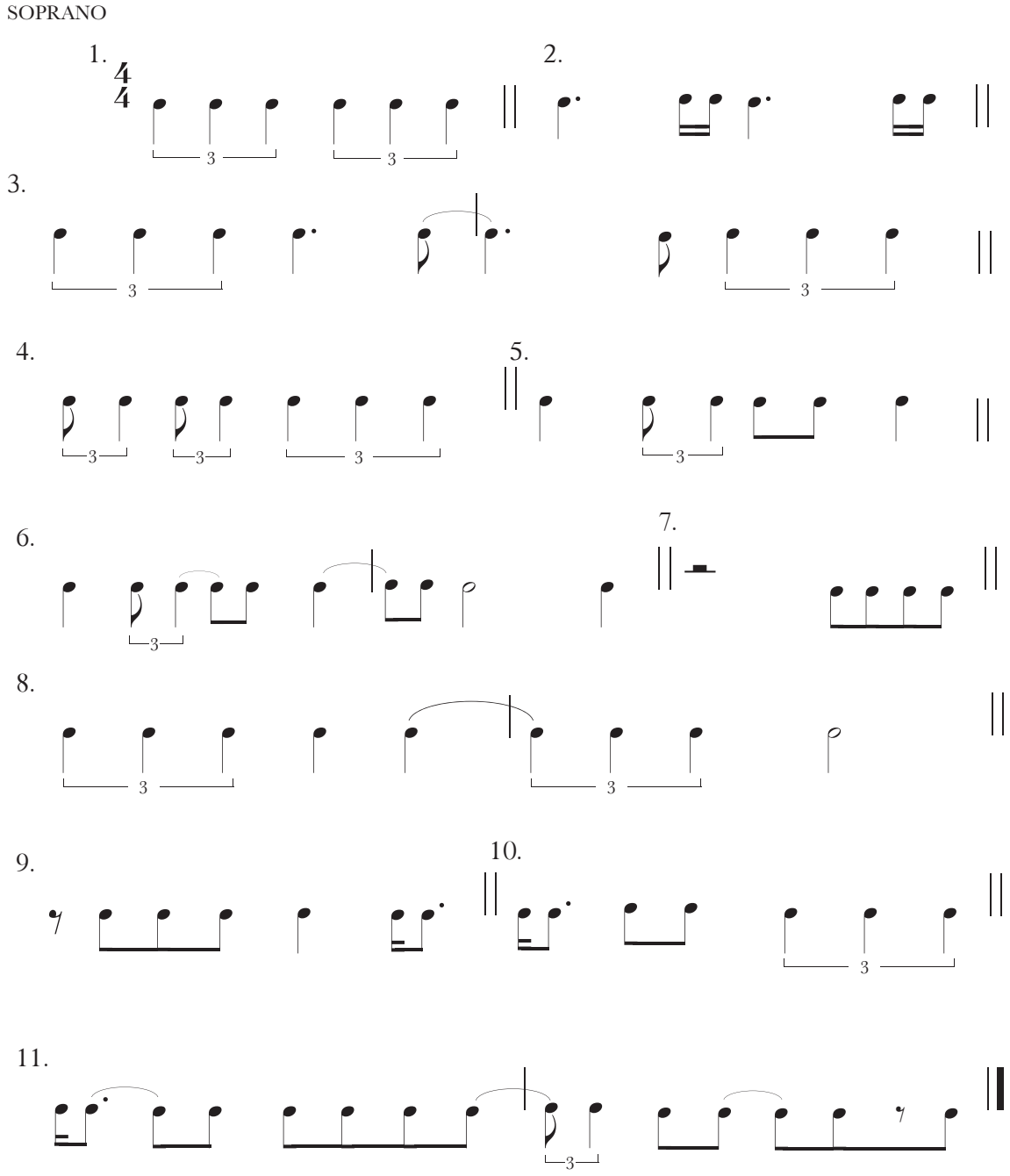
Figure 2: ***Domine non secundum peccata nostra*** **Rhythmic Patterns (soprano only)**

Score

Domine non secundum

Rhythm Elements

James MacMillan



Whatever method one chooses, literacy must be connected to literature. The development of an objective grading system geared toward building literacy through individual components of music would go a long way toward accomplishing this goal. Then, we can help teachers figure out how to assess literacy in their ensembles and use structured interventions that exist inside the already positive culture that teachers have fostered in their programs.

Including literacy education in your rehearsals can be achieved with small steps even mid-semester. One thing we all do is extract musical elements or phrases from our repertoire and use them in warm-ups. A literacy emphasis can be as simple as extracting those elements and writing them out for your students to see and read as they sing them. Gradually, you can introduce flash cards that contain short melodic phrases or one-measure rhythms and increase the pace at which you introduce new types of intervals and rhythms.

I also stole the idea of "rhythm sheets" from a band colleague—sets of full pages of rhythmic exercises, common rhythms found in all pieces that progressively introduce new types of rhythms. These can be any length, although I have found those between four and eight measures long to be the most effective. Reading these together as an ensemble or as individual voice sections will help your students bond, help increase their confidence, and help your assessment. I use flash cards such as these with my top collegiate choir, and their reading and intonation have noticeably improved even over the course of one semester.

Finally, we must move away from the system of read-only literacy. Consider again the standards of literacy in every other field. The most valuable commodity that people need in the twenty-first century is creativity. Consider adding this written element as a writing warm-up, much like your students probably do in at least a few of their other core classes. Start with something you know they will all be successful at identifying, such as a simple four-note melodic or rhythmic dictation. Then, add an activity, such as taking the four melody notes you had them write and make their own four-measure melody, adding their own rhythms. They will be surprised at how well they are already able to do this!

If we give our music students the tools to be creative, to truly understand music and gain the ability to think and imagine musically, then we are fulfilling the field's full potential. Anything less is a disservice to our students and to music itself. CJ

NOTES

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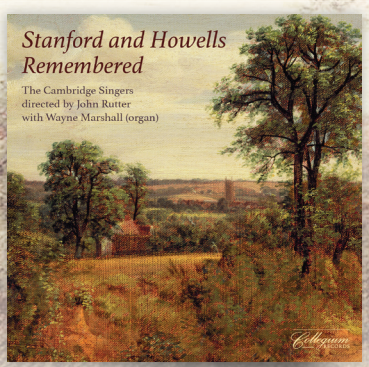

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CHORTEACH

Planning Ahead: Five Considerations for Future Choral Music Classrooms

Andrew Lusher

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Editor's note: A version of this article was originally printed in *ChorTeach,* Summer 2020.

My school community has an unwritten rule: When something goes wrong, take four minutes and fifty-nine seconds to be emotional. Then it's time to move forward. It took me a bit longer—nearly six weeks—to fully grieve loosing the remaining performances of last school year. When the quarantine mandate was issued, my students and I were two days away from premiering a commissioned piece from an internationally known composer, five days away from our annual state assessment, and just over a month away from our annual musical production. It felt like the house that we had been designing and building together suddenly disappeared.

Seeing the choral music community adjust to our new reality has been interesting. Virtual choirs of all qualities grace social media, and videos of past concerts from amateur, educational, and professional ensembles are continually featured online. Classroom teachers used virtual classrooms to review theory skills, suggest creative projects, and try social-emotional activities to encourage developing a deeper musical identity. It's been wonderful seeing the energy and inventiveness with which colleagues have adjusted to the new reality.

But, let's face it: when you take the human connection out of choral music making, you've taken the very soul out of the music. Virtual choirs were cute for a few weeks and asynchronous learning provided momentary instruction, but the heart of it all is missing. Without a practical context in which to implement theory skills, vocal warm-ups, or social-emotional reflections, the value of participating in a choral ensemble diminishes. Our musical life will not return to normal soon, so let's embrace the new look of our profession.

Any assumption that the coming school year will resume as in years past is wishful thinking. It is erroneous to expect normal class sizes of twenty to fifty students, combined large ensembles of 100-200 singers, and that traveling to competitions,

performing at state assessments, or giving various concerts throughout our school and local community will remain. Looking at the far future, the optimist in me believes that when the pandemic finally ends, as people recuperate from their loneliness and isolation, individuals will feel encouraged to join a choir. It's the perfect antidote for our innate need to be a part of a community and to revive a sense of belonging. Cross our fingers that chorus class, as well as church and community choirs, will experience a renaissance.

That said, we need to embrace the present. As I write this, we still have no concrete answers regarding the plan for the academic year. Various studies predict likely educational accommodations, including class sizes of twelve or less, staggered schedules, new calendars, different attendance policies, and the long-term continuity of distance learning. The impact to music classes, to our profession, and to our personal vocation is unknowable. We are treading new territory, and we must embrace the possibilities.

If history is any indication, vocal music performing ensembles will adapt and endure. During the Thirty Years War, Heinrich Schütz famously had to compose with depleting resources. One Sunday he may have had two people on a voice part and a full consort of instruments, whereas the following week he had only a baritone, a soprano, a viol, and a small organ. Yet, due to his resourcefulness and ingenuity we have some of the most flexible, dramatic, and beautiful choral music ever composed. Similarly, the descants sopranos love belting out in church on Sundays were the result of World War II. The number of available men was so reduced in the average church choir that the remaining men and lower voices sang the melody of the tune while the upper voices were given a special harmony—the descant. It was a way of

coping with the strain on the church choir from the ravages of war; now we can't imagine Christmas or Easter without them. Choral ensemble music making will endure, but it will require creativity to maintain the integrity of our unique musical experience. Here are five considerations for our new reality:

1) **Heightened Ownership:** With class sizes intentionally small and student schedules staggered, the size of our ensemble will be dramatically reduced. Having a mass choir with all of our students may be out of the question for the next couple of years. This provides an interesting opportunity for ensemble music making to become more intimate. Our repertoire and our performances will be more like the chamber music of Schubert and less like a full symphony orchestra of Berlioz.

My favorite part of watching chamber ensembles perform is the in-the-moment musicality, where the violin player passes the melody to the viola, their bodies reaching toward one another, their eyes making contact for the handoff. The awareness of the melody, of each part knowing their relationship to the whole harmonic texture, elevates the artistic level of the performance. It's difficult to be tender and assertive with ninety singers, but when the number of performers is reduced, ownership of musical ideas and execution falls more greatly on each performer. This will give the music a level of personality and musicality that is difficult to experience en masse.

Reinforcing the needs of students to be solely responsible for their phrases, managing their breath, and creating clear textual articulations all while creating cohesion among voice parts best exemplifies the unique relationship between the individual and the collective in the choral ensemble. This greater sense of ownership will help every student feel a heightened responsibility and accountability for the success of the team. In music making there are no bench warmers, and this experience is going to ensure that singers of every skill level will feel a personal contribution to the ensemble. A fun activity might be giving individual students the opportunity to lead their small ensemble—be in charge of everything from deciding breath marks and dynamics to assessing articulation and tone color.

2) **Flexible Repertoire:** The reduction of student numbers brings into play a whole new set of skills. With a larger ensemble there is safety in numbers, but in a smaller setting, in addition to being confident and secure on the musical part, one has to be acutely more aware of their volume, balancing to the other voices within a section or across an ensemble, and consistently monitoring vowel modification, clarity of

text, and clean phrases. Reducing the number of singers is going to change the force, impact, and overall sound of the ensemble, but it will offer new nuances with which to experiment.

The key to finding success in our new ensembles rests in choosing flexible repertoire. Finding pieces with lyrical vocal parts, accessible harmonies, and a gentler style will help individuals refine skills to successfully contribute to the small ensemble. This involves knowing your voices; while one set of eight singers may find success with a Moses Hogan arrangement, another set of singers may need a more accessible setting by André Thomas. Choose repertoire that sets your students for success. This experience is new for us all, and the last thing we want is to place expectations and responsibilities that are too high on our singers. Just because level five music was performed last year does not imply it will have to be performed this year; there is nothing wrong with stepping back. If a piece has quality text with quality musical writing, it can still be educational and rewarding.

3) **Differentiated Instruction:** This experience will give us better opportunities of working with individual voices. Cultivating vocal growth and training greater aural skills through differentiated instruction will ensure that no student falls through the cracks. Traditionally, it's easy to let some individuals slide. When you have one hundred singers and one individual with poor intonation or breathy tone, you count your blessings if they don't stick out. With fewer numbers, we will better recognize, develop, and track the growth of individual voices in our ensemble; this is a real opportunity to focus on the quality of individual instruction. It will challenge us to be better teachers with those students who

cannot match pitch, who struggle with singing an independent part, or who may lack reading abilities. Working together as a team, identifying individual needs and nourishing collective support for one another, is going to give each student a refreshing level of confidence and interaction with the curriculum.

4) **Composition:** Creativity and composition are buzzwords being added to curriculum plans and state standards, but, as a profession we have been rather lethargic in implementing truly engaging lessons that give students original opportunities for creativity. Taking advantage of the new classroom is the perfect time to commit adding these concepts to our instruction.

In the Middle Ages, not only were standards of notation rudimentary at best, but there was little need to actually write out early polyphony because the singers were expected to be trained in creating and composing the harmonic lines on their own. The cantus firmus would have been known by all singers, who would then use their aural and vocal abilities to create the harmonies around that theme, effectively creating a totally original song. Even though those singers in the Middle Ages did not have the technology, resources, and professionalized standards that we do today, they still used their voices, their cognitive abilities, and their aesthetic experience to create music. That's what we have been trying to do in our classrooms, and now is the opportunity to try.

Start with students writing or finding a text (preferably something that can be verse/chorus). Discover the inherent rhythm in the text and develop the language's meter. Then, create a melody for the chorus and then for the verses. Notate as you go along, but do not root the experience in notation; let it be an aural and aesthetic experience. This would be a great partner or small group project that students can work on through breakout rooms in Zoom.

5) **No Trophies:** On the very first day of my very first teaching job, I asked my students what our goal was as an ensemble. Their answer: to win. I strongly disagreed then, and I still do today. Although I understand the appetite for winning, have we become too caught up in winning trophies, titles, and blue ribbons?

It's similar with state assessments. I once witnessed a fellow teacher cuss out parent volunteers, organizers, and judges when given his score sheets with an Excellent and not Superior rating. Shouldn't it be about the feedback and not the adjective? Have we reduced the magic of what we do to competitions and state assessments, letting the drive to get a Superior or the biggest trophy direct our instruction? Maybe the changes coming are what we need to step away from these habits and reexamine what it is we're doing and why. How can we give students the same thrill and satisfaction of being "winners" without making that the whole goal of the chorus experience? That's what we should be experimenting with this year. There is more to a great music program than trophies and blue ribbons: keep the students excited and engaged while fostering a love for music making.

In June, I asked students for their vision looking ahead. If class sizes are reduced or school remains virtual, how could I design a learning experience that will continue to engage and excite them? Overwhelmingly, they just want to work together and communicate with each other. So that's what we'll do. We will take things slow, be realistic in our expectations, and continue being open as we push forward together.

In navigating these new waters, let us continue asking: how are we going to keep the chorus experience a human experience? How are we going to preserve the magic of what we do—a group of individuals coming together to sing and communicate? Are we going to change our content into purely theory, philosophy, or vocal lesson curriculums? Or, will we channel our inner Schütz to create something new and lasting that preserves the integrity of our profession? Take four minutes and fifty-nine seconds to accept that our classrooms will be different, and then get excited to embrace something new. CT

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Recorded Sound Reviews

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American Reflections: 20th and 21st Century Choral Music
St. Charles Singers
Jeffrey Hunt, conductor
MSR Classics MS 1660
(2018; 63:33)

The St. Charles Singers, a professional choir based in the Chicago area, toured England in 2017 and collected recorded performances from four different concerts on this album. Highlighting contemporary American choral music from the last one hundred years, this recording includes arrangements of nineteenth-century American folk songs. For those who may be unfamiliar with the group, as I was, this album is a splendid introduction, as they sing with versatile musicality, vibrant tone, and impeccable diction. Other than a few small quibbles with their repertoire selections, this album is a nice balance of well-known American choral music with emerging choral arrangers and composers.

According to the liner notes written by director Jeffrey Hunt, four themes define this collection: Water, Love, Oppression, and Hope. The centerpiece of the album is Dominick Argento's masterpiece, *Walden Pond*; here the St. Charles Singers showcase their musicianship, led by Jeffrey Hunt's sensitive direction. Mr. Hunt writes in the liner notes, "Rarely does one find such perfect companionship of text and music," so it seems fitting that the first line of the first movement ("The Pond")—"Nothing so fair, so pure"—can equally describe the pure, clean tone of the St. Charles Singers. The unaccompanied sections of *Walden Pond* are iridescently sung, while the accompanied sections (the work is scored for three cellos, harp, and choir) are perfectly balanced with both the instrumentalists—unfortunately uncredited in the liner notes—and the cathedral space in which they are singing (in this case, Ripon Cathedral). The fourth movement, "Extolling" (Track 6) was another highlight: as the choir diminishes on their final line of text ("to be the only Walden Pond in the world"), the harp quietly travels up the scale with the choir, and is met with a shimmering glow by the strings in quiet, ethereal wonder.

The album features a collection of American choral music that puts the musical flexibility of the choir on full display, ranging from warm, lyric unison singing on the classic arrangement of "Shenandoah" by James Erb and "Dirait-On" by Morten Lauridsen, to their robust energy on Stacey Gibbs' "Great God Almighty!" The harmonic clusters found in Eric Whitacre's "Water Night" and Jake Runestad's "Why the Caged Bird Sings" are clearly balanced and tuned with care, while never sounding too calculated. Runestad's piece seems a fitting inclusion on this album, given his acknowledged influence by Dominick Argento. Like Argento, Runestad's setting demonstrates a sensitive understanding of the relationship of text to music, and it is sung superbly by the St. Charles Singers. A few tracks feature soloists from the choir, and while all are capable, soprano Marybeth Kurnat particularly stands out for her solo in "Caged Bird," singing with clarion virtuosity in sailing bird-like calls.

If there is one small fault with this album, it is that there are no female American composers included. Surely there are enough recordings of Whitacre's and Lauridsen's music to fill numerous CD shelves, so while the program is well-crafted and flows nicely from song to

song and set to set, the omission of more diverse compositional voices is noticeable. For those looking for printed texts—though you'll rarely need them, given the choir's crystal clear diction—the liner notes are only available with the CD. Digital downloads of this album, though readily available on most streaming sites, do not include the liner notes. Overall, the album is a fine addition to collections of contemporary American choral music, and for those in the Chicagoland area, it is compelling evidence to go hear them live in concert.

Nathan Windt
Davenport, Iowa

Seasons of Life and Landscape
Canadian Chamber Choir
Dr. Julia Davids, Artistic Director
Dr. Joel Tranquilla,
Associate Conductor
Canadian Chamber Choir;
CCCCD003 (2019; 1:12:41)

The Canadian Chamber Choir, under the artistic direction of Dr. Julia Davids and assistant Joel Tranquilla, is an ensemble of professional choral artists from all corners of Canada. This unique group convenes at least twice a year to perform and celebrate the wealth of Canadian choral music. Their core mission is to build community through song by offering hands-on workshops and master classes for singers, conductors, and composers. Their recent recording "Seasons of Life and Landscape" features established and emerging Canadian composers in a selection of works relating to nature and the journey of life.

The music of "Seasons of Life and Landscape" is grouped under the headings Prologue, Autumn, Winter, Spring, Summer, and Epilogue. Dispersed throughout the recording are the five movements of Laura Hawley's song cycle "In Song," set to an instrumentation of piano, viola, bass clarinet, vibraphone, and triangle. The first two movements open the record-

ing with a whimsical excitement, enhanced by a detached melody in the bass clarinet and ringing chords on the vibraphone. The chorus is introduced through a gorgeous duet by the sopranos and altos, the tenors and basses providing a resonant foundation below. The short first movement propels into a lively dance-like beginning to movement two, introducing the season of Autumn. Each movement has its own distinct characteristics, guiding the listener on an exploration of nature, strife, and the journey of life.

Several unaccompanied selections, including "Song for a Winter's Night" by beloved Canadian singer-songwriter Gordon Lightfoot and "There Is a Sound" by Alan Gilliland, showcase the ensemble's impeccable and extraordinarily consistent blend. Tenor soloist Bill Hamm deftly and tastefully navigates Lightfoot's iconic melody, alongside a playful and intricate accompaniment by the chorus, particularly in the homophonic third verse. "There Is a Sound" is an exciting setting of the poem "I Hear Winter" by Rayanne Doucet, a text that captures the adventure of the winter season in Canada. "The Maple" by Garrett Krause, another selection from the Autumn segment, won the Canadian Chamber Choir's Canada 150 Composition Competition. The text, by Charles G.D. Roberts, conjures the scene of a peaceful maple tree and a wistful feeling experienced under the canopy of its branches. The melodies are fluid, enhanced by unexpected and melancholic harmonies.

The closing piece "There Was a Time," by choir member Cy Giacomin, is a stunning setting of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 15, a text that reflects on the seasons of life and its irrevocable end. This work is composed of overlapping, repetitive patterns in rhythm, harmony, form and text, evoking the sense of a dream within a dream. The increasing tempo and meter changes in the middle section usher in a sense of time accelerating to a climax, while the turbulent middle section is bookended by a hymn-like homorhythmic melody, providing clarity of text and a sense of calm. This intricate selection ends with a lesser-known verse, enhancing the mysterious, yet inspiring nature of the text.

"Seasons of Life and Landscape" offers sophisticated yet digestible choral selections for all music lovers to enjoy. Davids helps this group to achieve a polished blend with impeccable diction, and graceful dynamic shading. This recording is an excellent reference for any choral director interested in incorporating works by Canadian composers into their repertoire, or to select a piece for a nature or seasons-themed concert.

Jo Wasicek
Seattle, Washington

Kurt Sander: Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
PaTRAM Institute Singers
Peter Jermihov, Conductor
Keven Keys, Glenn Miller, Daniel Shirley, Vadim Gan, and Evan Bravos, soloists
Reference Recordings FR-731
(2019; 90:06)

The Orthodox Arts Journal hails *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* by Kurt Sander as an "American Orthodox musical milestone." Commissioned by the Patriarch Tikhon Russian-American Music Institute (PaTRAM), *The Divine Liturgy of St. John* is the first complete setting of this Orthodox Liturgy in English. This monumental choral work is modeled on the Russian Orthodox tradition.

The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom itself, named for an early Patriarch of Constantinople, is a regular liturgical structure of the Russian Orthodox Church. While approximately similar in function to the Roman Catholic Mass Ordinary, this liturgy is more complex and has a greater number of distinct parts, as well as more variance in which parts are set to new music. Many small litanies and responses knit the whole together, and each one is carefully elevated as much as the choral sections. Conductor Peter Jermihov describes this work as diverging from preceding sacred music in the Russian Orthodox tradition by making the music subservient to the larger liturgical drama. Rich modal harmonies pervade Sander's work and, together with Jermihov's masterful interpretation, create a deeply rev-

erent and moving whole. Sander also employs a palindromic structure alongside several leitmotifs and thematic transformations that help tie the work together.

The PaTRAM Institute Singers garnered a Grammy nomination for *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom,* which was recorded in the seven-story New Gracanica Serbian Monastery outside of Chicago. The ensemble is composed of about 26 professional singers, including Kurt Sander himself. Sander, who holds a DMA in composition from Northwestern University, converted to Orthodox Christianity in 1993 and has benefited from Jermihov's musical advocacy since 2006.

In many of the shorter, prayer movements in which the choir responds to solo chants, the entire ensemble displays excellent poise and agility to maintain musical momentum. Each of the soloists are excellent in their own right, though Glenn Miller's bass chants during the Great Litany are incomparable in both resonance and clarity. This interplay between the soloists' recitations and the choral interjections draws the listener deep into the musical world of the Orthodox liturgy. Sander also composes longer, set-piece choral movements during which the beauty of the choir shines through. In both the Beatitudes and the Cherubic Hymn, The PaTRAM Institute Singers display immaculate dynamic control and range, and they maintain exquisite balance, tone, and intonation. Altogether, the ensemble projects a profound depth of feeling and mysticism throughout the work.

Luke Duroc-Danner
Chicago, Illinois

Infusion
Jazzchor Freiburg
Bertrand Groger, conductor
Jazzhaus JHR178 (2019; 57:00)

The infusion of vocal jazz into other styles of choral music was popularized in the 1960s by Ward Swingle and his group The Swingle Singers, and their performances of arrangements inspired by composers including J.S. Bach and Mozart. Vocal jazz first evolved thanks to leaders like Ward Swingle, who incorporated music of the classical canon with the roots of jazz and popular music. On *Infusion,* the mixed ensemble Jazzchor Freiburg employs Baroque-style fugal writing, pop music and Gregorian chant to bring new light to twenty-first century vocal jazz.

Infusion begins with "Jóga," Lukas Derung's clean, sleek arrangement linking the Gregorian chant Veni Sancte Spiritus and Björk's 1997 hit "Jóga." Norwegian singer Torun Eriksen is the soloist on this track, and her mysterious voice allows us to hear Jazzchor Freiburg moving from the foreground of the sound to the background.

"Are You Going with Me," "Pools," and "When God Created the Coffeebreak" are three of the most impressive pieces on this recording. "Are You Going with Me," which features 7.5 minutes of wordless singing, contains some of the best ensemble scatting of the recording. The expressivity and meticulousness that each individual voice contributes to Jazzchor Freiburg allows each suspension and dissonance to stand out. "Pools" takes a catchy 1980s tune from American jazz pianist Don Grolnick, and renews it by the addition of lyrics. The unison entrance from the tenors and basses sets the scene of a warm day at the pool. In "When God Created the Coffeebreak," which melds Baroque-style counterpoint and jazz vocals, pianist Simone Bollini performs with great virtuosity and

versatility. Between quick, athletic vocalism and legato phrases that resemble a "sonic landscape," this piece highlights the rhythm section.

Audiences from the United States typically experience vocal jazz through the lens of professional quartets or quintets. It is refreshing to hear a group of twenty-eight singers perform with shared vocal qualities with respect to clarity, weight, and timbre. This recording will undoubtedly serve as an inspiration for vocal jazz groups because of the programming, the rhythm section, and the Jazzchor vocalists themselves. *Infusion* proves that it is possible to make refined sounds with larger professional vocal jazz groups.

Joslyn Thomas
Seattle, Washington

Songs of the Questioner
The Same Stream
James Jordan, conductor
Spiritum/GIA Choral Works CD-1049 (2018; 56:21)

The Same Stream, under the direction of James Jordan, has released a new recording devoted to works by Thomas Lavoy, Peter Relph, Paul Mealor, and Dan Forrest. This is a significant addition to the discography not only because it is The Same Stream's first full-length recording, but also because it features all living composers with a personal connection to the ensemble.

The Same Stream consists of singers with a connection to Westminster Choir College and James Jordan. From the first track, "What of the Darkness?"—the first movement of Lavoy's *Songs of the Questioner,* the title work of the album—the listener is treated to a thoroughly blended and uniform ensemble sound, and exquisite musicianship. In this three-movement work, scored for piano and choir, one is immediately aware of the sensitive collaboration between the pianist and the voices. The next two tracks, "White Stones" and "The Dream I Knew"—both also by Lavoy—showcase the versatility of the group and their ability to produce a vibrant and mature tone.

With a multitude of Latin motets already in existence, it is difficult to bring something new to the canon, but the next three works on the recording succeed in doing so. The first Latin work on the album, *Tenebrae lumini* by Peter Relph, is a setting of the famous morning hymn by St. Ambrose of Milan. Relph's motet opens with a seeming reference to Arvo Pärt's *Tintinnabuli* effect, beginning with the higher treble voices, followed by the lower tenor-bass voices, and finally presenting the material in tutti. In a clever gesture, Relph connects the different sections of the work with one or two parts sustaining a drone pitch, finally ending the piece with a simple 'amen.' This work is followed by a setting of the text Salvator Mundi by Lavoy, which as the composer mentions, references a piece of art by the same name attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. This work is meditative in nature, with long, sustained phrases. Once again, the ensemble's mastery of singing technique is evident here in their breath management. The last of the three Latin motets, *Ave Redemptor* by Relph, serves as an elegy for Mardale Church in northern England. The work is scored for SATB chorus and SATB semi-chorus.

The listener will appreciate the inclusion of one of Paul Mealor's lesser-known works, "Love's as Warm as Tears," with a text by C.S. Lewis. This work was commissioned by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Mealor's simple, homophonic setting features a contemplative tenor solo emerging from lower voices near the end, and is performed effortlessly on this recording.

The final work on the recording is Forrest's "Abide." Composed in 2016, this work is set to the Jake Adam York's poem of the same title. Forrest's setting is largely simple and homophonic; the piano accompaniment serves as a beautiful addition to the voices and never overpowers.

James Jordan and The Same Stream should be commended for this album. The Same Stream succeeds in presenting this collection of twenty-first century choral music with a high degree technical accuracy. Their sectional balance is nearly perfect, and contains impeccable intonation. The performances on this recording should have a wide appeal to twenty-first century choral music enthusiasts.

Gerrit S.C. Scheepers
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