CHORTEACH

Volume 13 Issue 1

Practical Teaching Ideas
for Today's Music Educator

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welcome

Welcome to ACDA's online magazine for choral director/music educators. The articles in this issue have been gleaned from state and division online and paper ACDA newsletters around the United States and from submissions by seasoned choral directors with topics germane to the profession.

ChorTeach, our name, is derived from the German word for chorus, chor. It is pronounced, as many of you know, like the word *core*. We hope *ChorTeach*'s articles will be a breath of fresh air for you, provide you with new ideas or techniques that give you a lift, and help your singers reach the goals you and they have set. *ChorTeach* is designed for those who work with amateur singers at all levels.

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Singing Polyphony Today— Why Have All the Flowers Gone?

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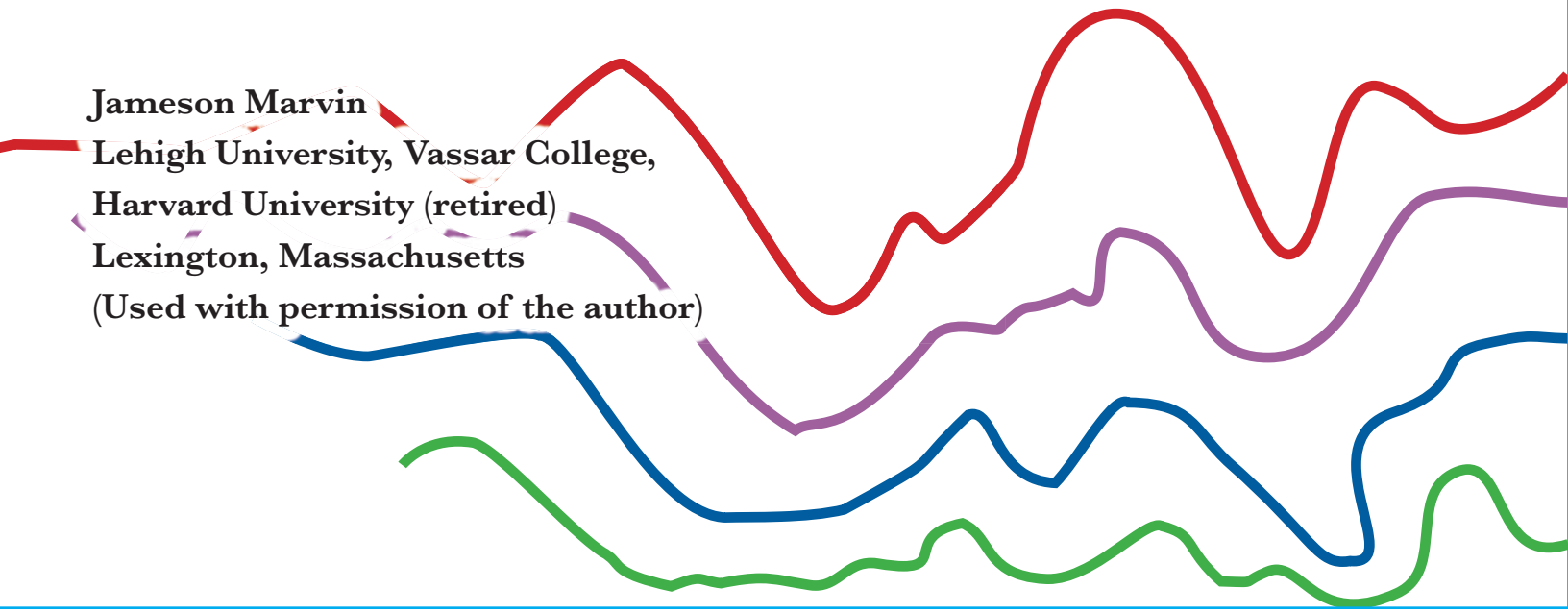

In the beginning, first came melody (chant), then many melodies, polyphony. Harmony was a by-product of simultaneous independent melodies, creating chords of three or four notes. The harmony produced was suspended between well-crafted vocal lines. Throughout history, composers have expressed text meaning through changes in harmony, melody, rhythm, and texture by creating a rich vocabulary of expression, and a mellifluous balance of homophony and polyphony. Special texts required vertical textures to directly serve the text and allow listeners to clearly hear the words.

Today, these historical trends are important to keep in mind because many of us realize that for more than two generations, choral conductors have been raised almost entirely on vertical sonorities. Our central concern is that choruses found in secondary schools, colleges, universities, communities, and churches rarely sing polyphony at this time. This profound realization mirrors my own experience of attending National Conventions of ACDA since 1965, seminars of IMC since 1978, NCCO National Conferences since 2004, and starting in 2010, Chorus America National Conferences.

In our current choral culture, singing homophony seems to be the norm; composers, recognizing this trend, compose vertical music. Publishers publish it. Are singers, conductors, composers, and publishers no longer interested in polyphony? Has singing polyphony become too difficult? Are choral singers no longer experiencing both melodic and independent vocal lines? What I almost never hear at professinal conferences are performances of polyphonic music from the past six centuries. I do hear a great deal of new music. Some of it may be good; virtually all of it is vertical. Are conductors afraid to break the homophonic security of easy-access learning? I think they, and we, are!

Information appeared in the May 2017 issue of the *Choral Journal* written by Robert J. Ward and Leila Heil that offered statistical documentation of choral works performed at National Conferences of the American Choral Directors Association between 1961, the year ACDA was formed, and 2017.[1] Ward and Heil's study divided the styles and genre performed by ACDA choruses at these biennial conferences into twelve categories. The repertoire performed over fifty years, 1961–2017, is listed in ten-year periods by numbers and percentages. The result is stunning! From 1990 to 1999, for example, out of 771 compositions performed, 56 were from the Renaissance, 6.8 percent.

As the authors point out, of all the works performed at these biennial conferences over the fifty-year period, 26% of the choral repertoire was drawn from six centuries: Medieval through the Romantic eras. Their survey also confirms that the repertoire of modern composers (from the early twentieth century up to 2017) makes up 51 percent of the whole, including Ethnic/Multicultural (now changed to World Musics and Cultures), Folk Songs, Spirituals/Gospel, and Hymns/Carols. I believe that about 90 percent of

the compositions written and performed over the past fifty years, 1970-2020, would be almost entirely homophonic.

Ward and Heil especially confirm my innate concern that polyphonic works composed over the three centuries before Bach are rarely performed. Thus, for many years, our students have had only a limited view of the styles, genre, and profoundly expressive compositions written between 1400 and 1700. In my opinion, they also have had little insight into the performance practices of these eras and now lack the musicianship required to sing polyphonic gems and masterworks from Josquin (c. 1450-1521) to Schütz (1585-1672), let alone the grand polyphonic motets of Mendelsohn (1805-1847) and Brahms (1833-1897).

I believe conductors have been strongly influenced by CD recordings of early music ensembles that espouse informed performance, and many conductors have become afraid to be wrong. Conductors are also concerned about performing early music with their relatively large high school, college, community, and church choirs. They ask, "how can my large choral group sound like those ensembles that espouse informed performance?" I think conductors are somewhat intimidated by the concept of informed performance. I do not believe we have to feel intimidated!

I also believe that the loss of performances of polyphony that has occurred over the past fifty years is actually a generational experience or response. I believe many choral conductors today have been reliving the educational premises and values of their predecessors. By the 1970s, CDs of informed performance were in full swing, often by professional small ensembles heard singing choral music from about 1350-1750. Informed means the way it ought to be done, or the way it was done.

As knowledge of performance practices grew, many conductors did not have the opportunity to take courses with specialists in Renaissance and Baroque performance practices. Beginning about 1970, I believe intimidation truly set in. It was not long before conductors began to feel that they might be wrong. The next generation of their students, the 1990s, mirrored that inclination and lack of confidence of their teachers and choral conductors from the 1970s. They felt unprepared to conduct polyphonic choral music from 1400-1700. That also led to a significant loss of performances of polyphonic motets of the nineteenth century. With today's generation some conductors still lack experience in conducting polyphonic music, thus undermining their confidence in performing Renaissance choral music and polyphonic works of the last two centuries.

Based on my observations above, I offer this summary. It has been a rich confluence and a combination of perspectives that:

• informed performance and the lack of training in early music performance practices that began in the 1960s

• resulted in the 1970s when conductors became intimidated and did not teach or conduct early choral music. Consequentially,

• students lost the ability to sing polyphony, so

• composers did not compose polyphony; therefore,

• publishers did not publish it!

By the 1980s, the habit of not conducting and singing polyphony became confirmed. As a result, I believe we are losing the western choral tradition! Singers have lost self-confidence in singing polyphony.

William Dehning offers another perspective. He poignantly wrote in a letter to the editor of the November 2010 *Choral Journal*: "Programming music of the past that others might know could be viewed as a risk because they might not agree with our interpretation." Truth be told, I think this is the real reason some choose not to perform a Brahms motet, for instance, at a convention. We're simply scared silly to put music out there that many may know, not because we think that choral musicians are tired of hearing it.

Today, if a choir and its conductor want to sing polyphony, questions still arise. How can I get my choir to sound stylistically informed when they sing Josquin or Schütz or composers in between? How can I make each melodic line be so expressive? Will my large choir ever be able to perform Renaissance music and all polyphony in a clear, musical, and expressive manner? My answer is a resounding yes!

The question we should ask ourselves is, how can we use our stylistic and analytical insights in an informed way to bring polyphony alive today, regardless of the size of our ensembles or for fear that some colleagues could think we might not be informed concerning details of the style? Do choirs today have to sound like the Tallis Scholars or Voces8? No! Is that how Palestrina's choirs sounded? No! Can I perform Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with my eighty-voice con-

cert choir? Yes! Can my chamber choir of twenty-five singers perform Monteverdi madrigals written for the virtuoso soloists of the Italian courts? Yes! Can I perform Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* with my 250-voice community choir? Very definitely! Today is the time. We must come together on this issue to sing polyphony or face losing our wonderful western choral heritage.

Conductors, just imagine when your choir performs polyphony, and each part learns to maintain rhythmic and melodic independence. Imagine the relief of your altos liberated from their harmonic filler part as they become equal partners with S, T, B colleagues.

In polyphonic textures, imagine how liberated the sopranos might feel imitating the melody initiated by the tenors, or having the new experience of serving as an important harmonic filler in an SATB contrapuntal texture. Tenors singing independent lines no longer have to be the sopranos' duet partner. You can even initiate your own motive. Basses, can you imagine being liberated from always singing the roots of chords and enjoying the independence of your own melody unhinged from the SAT parts and singing your vocal line expressively!

Having heard many excellent choirs performing at ACDA and NCCO conferences, I have witnessed many choral colleagues who are filled with insightful teaching acumen and whose choirs sing with excellent ensemble rhythm, intonation, matched vowels, and with inspired expressivity. These same qualities can also be offered to choirs through the truly important oral conduit of polyphony. Offer your experienced teaching, conducting, and rehearsal skills to your choirs. If they have not performed polyphonic repertoire for a while, tackle a Brahms or a Palestrina motet with them.

In doing so, confirm with your singers in advance that motets can be a new experience when they sing their vocal lines unhooked vertically from another. At first it may feel somewhat intimidating, but it will feel freeing in many cases!

Colleagues, I offer a benign and simple teaching suggestion, totally known to all. Assuming sopranos and tenors sing the same melody and rhythms several times, ask the sopranos and tenors to sing their melody together in parallel octaves to learn the correct notes and rhythms. Then ask them to sing their separate melodic/rhythmic vocal lines separately as written in the score. Consider the same solution with the alto and bass parts. Soon each part will be singing delightful duets as written. Then they will sing their enticing polyphonic quartet unhooked.

In achieving choral confidence, your choir can be weaned from singing homophony exclusively. Remind them of the positives of having experienced the richness of new repertoire that they have rarely or maybe never explored. Your choir by now may have sung two Renaissance motets and an incredible motet by Schütz, as well as one or two by Brahms! The results are that the choir will have become more accomplished polyphonic singers, and the complex contrapuntal (polyphonic) vocal lines of Bach can now be tackled. At the same time, an interesting experience may have dawned on your singers. The contrapuntal style of Brahms is based on the music of Bach and Schütz! Now they have not only the responsibility of singing the right notes at the right time but each part with separate expression! Your singers, rehearsing and performing polyphony, will have developed self-confidence, independence, an awareness of style, and musicianship.

After retirement in 2010, I formed an adult community choir of about sixty singers, some of whom had sung with me at Harvard. We sang a wide variety of genres and styles, among them were some polyphonic works that they seemed to especially enjoy. I decided to ask them why they liked singing polyphony. They wrote to me via email many reasons they enjoyed singing polyphony. In conclusion, I offer nine brief paragraphs from some of those singers.

• I love to sing polyphony. Each singer is responsible for holding his/her own part while remaining closely attuned to the other lines. It makes me happiest to be making music with others. Each of us is responsible for carrying our own part while being exquisitely aware and responsive to the other parts.

• I find working with adults in particular that singing polyphony can act as a metaphor for human understanding, harmony in the spiritual rather than musical sense. *E pluribus Unum*—from many, one—unity, though independently supporting each other, knowing when to take turns.

• I like singing polyphony for several reasons. Each part provides an opportunity for individual expression, which is more satisfying as a singer. With an expert composer like Josquin or Palestrina, you can really appreciate the genius and the special moments from the inside.

• Singing polyphony offers independence and awareness, performing pitches and rhythms correctly, but also creating individual gestures and lines within. We acquire an awareness of function in polyphony that leads to better awareness of function in singing homophonic music.

• Having sung with a wonderful ensemble that performed chant for years, I find this topic [polyphony/homophony] particularly interesting. I had to think a lot about the value and beauty of homophonic music when I was singing it, having all my life taken for granted that beautiful music was polyphonic. I got there, but it took a while.

• I know next to nothing about music theory. My first experience of hearing polyphony was watching the Harvard Glee Club perform. There was such an organic sense of motion in the music. I was immediately captivated by the beauty of how lines of music can be traded off from part to part in a cyclical style. Putting that music together made it come alive for me.

• Singing polyphony enlarges our understanding of western music. Because piano is the entry point for so many musicians (myself included), we all start out with a stunted view of history, i.e., Bach and beyond. That's all wonderful except that there are a good three centuries of music that go before the three centuries we are most familiar with. Polyphony aids in a mastery of all music styles. The connection to the great age of fugue is easy to grasp—shaping the independent vocal lines and finding your place in a texture. In singing polyphony, a choir will not simply park itself on the cadence but will continue to think, listen, and tune accurately.

• From a high school choral conductor: I'm trying to teach the idea that vocal polyphony represents a conversation. Singing homophony is fun and rather easy, two sure ingredients toward success in human beings, but individualism is another important ingredient. People tend to see polyphony as complicated, but it should be furthering an initial point and, in the end, giving voice to more individuals and ideas.

• Polyphonic music offers singers a challenge and an opportunity. It challenges them to know their own part well, to emphasize its important passages, and to de-emphasize its less important parts. It gives singers an opportunity to weave together a rich tapestry of sound. Rehearsing polyphony teaches singers to rely upon one another, to build on each other's strengths, and to unite as a group through hearing their own part. In the end, polyphony gives voice to more individuals and ideas, both separate from yet united with the other parts.

• The author adds one additional comment. "In performing Renaissance polyphony, singers frequently have told me that over time, in rehearsal after rehearsal, this sound-continuum produces in them a mesmerizing, quasi-ethereal, neither here-nor-there feeling. As I often have confirmed with them, these inherent emotions are amplified by the expressive power of the modes. The result is that choral singers, listeners, and I often experience a sense of euphoria with frequent moments of transcendence."

In conclusion, I urge choral conductors whose choirs have not yet sung polyphony to:

• use your twenty-first-century stylistic knowledge based on the wide range of current published information about performance practices for motets.

• employ the musicianship that I have frequently observed over many years of attending conferences. Your in-depth musical insights and rehearsal acumen were projected in a clear manner. Those showed, without a doubt, that all conductors can bring alive polyphony today! In so doing, students in your choirs will automatically develop self-confidence, independence, style, and musicianship. That is powerful music education, and it is informed and obtained by singing polyphony! CT

NOTES

[1] Robert J. Ward and Leila Heil, "Repertoire at ACDA National Conferences: 1960-2017" *Choral Journal* 57 no. 10 (May 2017): 36-42.

Critical Thinking in Rehearsals

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Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." When in-service teachers are encouraged to learn and implement some new and innovative pedagogical tool or strategy, some may see it with strong disapproval or mistrust. It's in human nature to find comfort with that which is known or familiar. Too often, the inclusion of critical thinking in choral rehearsals is seen as something that would require the rehearsal to cease and slow down concert preparation.

Emerson's quote speaks to this author as to living a life of intention, to test the waters of the unknown, and to actively search and know that the path you are on is truly the best path for you at this time in your life. In choral teaching, critical thinking can be used as a pedagogical tool to speed up the learning process that leads to inspired and meaningful musical performances. It is the purpose of this article to show how critical thinking can be achieved quickly in rehearsal, often throughout the learning cycle, and can be used in both the warm-up period and during the rehearsal of repertoire.

In order to grasp what critical thinking is, it might be best to start with what it is not. According to the revised Bloom's taxonomy[1] remembering the lines and spaces of a clef, understanding the difference between *staccato* and *legato,* and applying the differences between dynamics do not indicate the use of critical thinking skills. As Matthew Garrett explains, where these are ways that students can demonstrate an understanding of musical content, they do not constitute critical thinking. Critical thinking involves actively using a base of knowledge for a specific purpose.[2]

Critical thinking is, on the other hand, analyzing the score for musical form and structure, evaluating performances, and creating a future rehearsal plan. These brief and limited examples illustrate a key component that is consistent with critical thinking: students use past experiences or other learned content and use them to make reasoned decisions about current or new musical challenges. This concept of using knowledge in new and unprescribed situations is called transfer.

Critical Thinking in the Warm-Up and Teaching for Transfer

Besides the task of preparing students for a rigorous rehearsal, the warm-up can develop and reinforce critical thinking skills through the use of transfer, a learned behavior in which basic skills and knowledge, previously taught by the director, can then purposely be used without prompting by the students to overcome challenges within new repertoire. As with so many skills and behaviors taught to adolescent musicians, the principal of transfer will require some degree of planning, creativity, and assessment on the part of the director and many repetitions by the students. A single "lesson" on transfer taught to the students in September will simply not suffice if transfer behaviors are to be used on a daily basis. The warm-up then becomes an excellent opportunity to develop and reinforce transfer prior to the rehearsal of performance repertoire.

Nearly all of the choral techniques that are required by the repertoire can be introduced and developed in the warm-up. The more successful and consistent students are with their transfer habits, the quicker the repertoire can be learned. Take the opening measures of Haydn's *Gloria* from

his *Heiligmesse,* for example (Figure 1).[3] The choir sings in unison, a fast and rhythmic introduction of the text, *Gloria in Excelsis Deo,* which is capped by *Deo* as the highest note of the phase. For the novice singer, singing a phrase that begins in the middle of the voice that then climaxes in the singers' passaggio can introduce some severe challenges for good tone and intonation.

Rather than only addressing this technique during the rehearsal, this is an excellent skill to develop in the warm-up. In this case, the director could design a vocalise that resembles the repertoire: a triadic melody that begins on the tonic, rises to the dominant, and settles on the mediant. This type of warm-up would allow the students to develop the technique required to sing this passage in tune and with a healthy tone.

Warm-ups are not only for the development and transfer of vocal technique; many elements of phrasing can also be addressed. Take measure 17-20, for example (Figure 2). Here, Haydn writes two consecutive two-measure phrases as the choir homophonically sings the text, *Et in terra pax, pax hominibus.* In this setting, most directors will indicate to their choirs to sing these two-measure phrases with a slight *crescendo* followed by a *decrescendo.* As before, this skill could also be developed during the warm-up. By singing homophonic four-part triads on neutral syllables or on the text in this excerpt, the singers could once again have the opportunity to perform multiple repetitions of the skill of singing two-measure phrases that can then be transferred to the repertoire. Obviously, any musical element found in the repertoire can be introduced,

Figure 2.

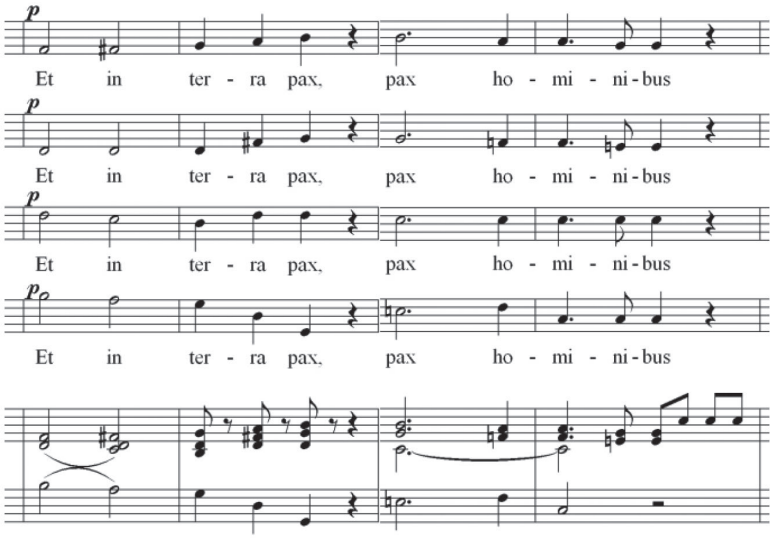
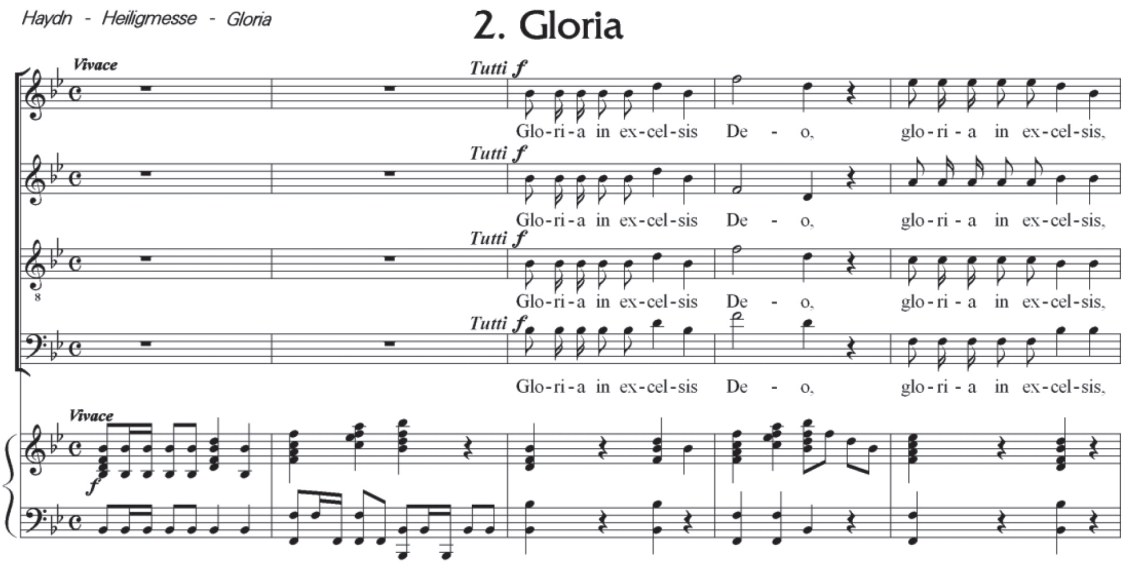


Figure 1.



developed, and mastered through isolated repetitions during the warm-up.

Simply following directions and performing repetitions during the warm-up does not indicate critical thinking, however. Critical thinking happens when students can make the transfers on their own without being prompted to do so. This is where directors must be patient and intentional. Transfer is a learned behavior, and just like any musical habit, it can only be developed through multiple repetitions over time. This means that the director must make many of the early transfers for the students.

Show them in the repertoire how a particular warm-up relates to the music. Teach them to analyze the problematic passages and how to apply the correct knowledge and/or skill to solve it on their own. If even half of the choir can successfully problem solve a difficult section of music on their own, fewer repetitions would be needed, and the director could move on to other musical priorities sooner.

Critical Thinking during the Rehearsal—Repertoire Rehearsal Dialogue

Whereas the concept of transfer can be developed during the warm-up and used throughout the rehearsal, dialogue that is specific to the repertoire and done quickly can have valuable impact on the students' understanding of the music. This is an area where many directors become leery of critical thinking in the rehearsal.

It is common for undergraduate programs of music education to teach their students to use as little teacher talk as possible. The use of and length of teacher talk must, however, be a site-based decision by the director. Ensembles that are quick to go off-task could benefit from more singing and less teacher talk. Conversely, research has indicated that ensemble performance ratings are not adversely affected by lots of teacher talk conditions.[4] Depending on the behavioral situation of the choral ensemble, meaningful dialogue about the repertoire can quickly lead the students toward the critical thinking levels of analysis, evaluation, and creativity.

To engage your singers in brief dialogue about the repertoire, beginning questions with "why" or "how" can quickly lead your students toward analysis and evaluation. For example, "How is the textual meaning in mm. four similar (or different) to the textual meaning in mm. 24?" This is critical thinking because differentiating the meaning of text is a form of analysis. "Why did the composer repeat the text three times in this section but only once in this other section?" is another form of analysis by means of deconstructing a composer's particular point of view.

Although it would initially be much faster for the director to lecture about the aforementioned analyses, taking one or two minutes occasionally from rehearsal to analyze various aspects of the music leads to the students having a deeper understanding of the music, which in turn leads to a more inspired performance.

Brief repertoire dialogue in terms of evaluation is another means of allowing choral students to engage in critical thinking. Traditionally, the director is primarily responsible for evaluating and adjusting the sound of the choir. Students should be taught to share in this responsibility. Not only does this improve the ability of the students to evaluate choral ensembles, but it also provides the students with insight into the musical priorities of their director. Knowing or anticipating what the director expects also helps speed up the learning process. Of course, any musical element can be checked or monitored during the rehearsal. There are countless ways to creatively and quickly engage the students in evaluation.

Such means of student engagement with evaluation can be done with individuals, in small groups, or with the entire ensemble. Inviting individuals to the front of the ensemble as the stand-in director has many benefits, but it must be structured so that it is a successful and affirming experience. Directors should focus the attention of the individual student on a specific and observable musical behavior that is also familiar and relatively recognizable. This activity has the potential to build confidence in a student plus building pride and trust within the choral ensemble.

Evaluation in small groups or sections of your ensemble allows students to develop their evaluative skills within a small group social dynamic. This has many other social and community benefits. Similar to the previous example, this experience should be structured in a way that allows all members of the group or section to have equal opportunity to share their evaluation in an environment of trust and compassion. Once the group discussion is complete, the director could have the groups offer their suggestions to the ensemble as a whole to move the rehearsal forward.

Finally, the entire ensemble can participate in the evaluation process together through written evaluation forms or through non-verbal hand signals. Written evaluation, both in terms of self-assessment and of the ensemble as a whole, can be a valuable way for students to organize their thoughts and suggestions more completely than if they were put on the spot in front of their peers. As with all three examples above,

try to focus student attention on specific observable behaviors to make the evaluation more valuable for that phase of the learning process. Written performance evaluation can be done most efficiently if multiple copies of the form are already in the students' folder and ready to use.

Non-verbal hand signals are another quick means of evaluation. Directors have frequently used five-finger scales and thumb scales to have students evaluate their performance or their mastery of content and skills. As with any formative assessment or evaluation process, the director could use this information to guide the rehearsal moving forward.

According to the revised Bloom's taxonomy, creativity is the highest form of critical thinking. Frequently, directors look to composition and/or improvisation when attempting to include the creative form of critical thinking. These are more advanced activities and require specific knowledge and skills to produce successfully. Because of this, many directors may shy away from creativity as a whole. Fortunately, there are many forms of creativity that trigger critical thinking in our singers.

Have the singers hypothesize why the director is using a particular conducting gesture. Again, this is another example of when the director would traditionally tell the singers outright what the gesture means and for them to follow it. It's an excellent opportunity for creativity. In this conducting example, the students would analyze the gesture by the conductor and then create a hypothesis as to its purpose. This activity could take less than two minutes but could reinforce the importance of singers watching their director. For the director, this could also be very useful as to the effectiveness of his or her gesture.

Planning is another aspect of choral teaching that is traditionally left solely to the director but could be an opportunity for students to create. As the director is going through the process of preparing the choir for a concert, certain priorities are put in place based upon various diagnostic and formative rehearsal assessments. Students could be given the opportunity to be included in this planning process. If the director routinely gives feedback to the choir as to their progress toward the concert and if students are involved in the evaluation of the ensemble, then certain logical plans could be generated. Tell the students, "Based on our work in this song this week, how should we go about rehearsing it today?" If the director followed up this brief discussion with a "why" question, that would be evidence of even more critical thinking.

Rewriting the text of a poem that is set to music is a powerful and meaningful way to engage choral singers in the creative process. Have the students analyze the text of one of the songs for the concert, then based upon an agreed theme or subject, have the students re-write a portion of the text to create a more individualized meaning for students in the ensemble. They could work in groups or as individuals as they create within the confines of the rhythm and rhyme scheme. This project will take a few minutes a week for up to six weeks to complete, and in the end the choir could vote on and select the particular version that best represents their community. Experiences in which the repertoire can be directly representative of the group's identity help make the repertoire and, by extension, the learning process more relevant and concrete for the singers.[5]

Conclusion

Developing a choral classroom that includes daily doses of transfer, analysis, evaluation, and creativity is an intentional process that can have a truly positive impact on a choral program. Critical thinking can include a variety of activities that can be done quickly within the rehearsal and often throughout the learning cycle. If done well and often, both the singers and the director will reap the benefits of a faster learning process and a stronger choral program. CT

NOTES

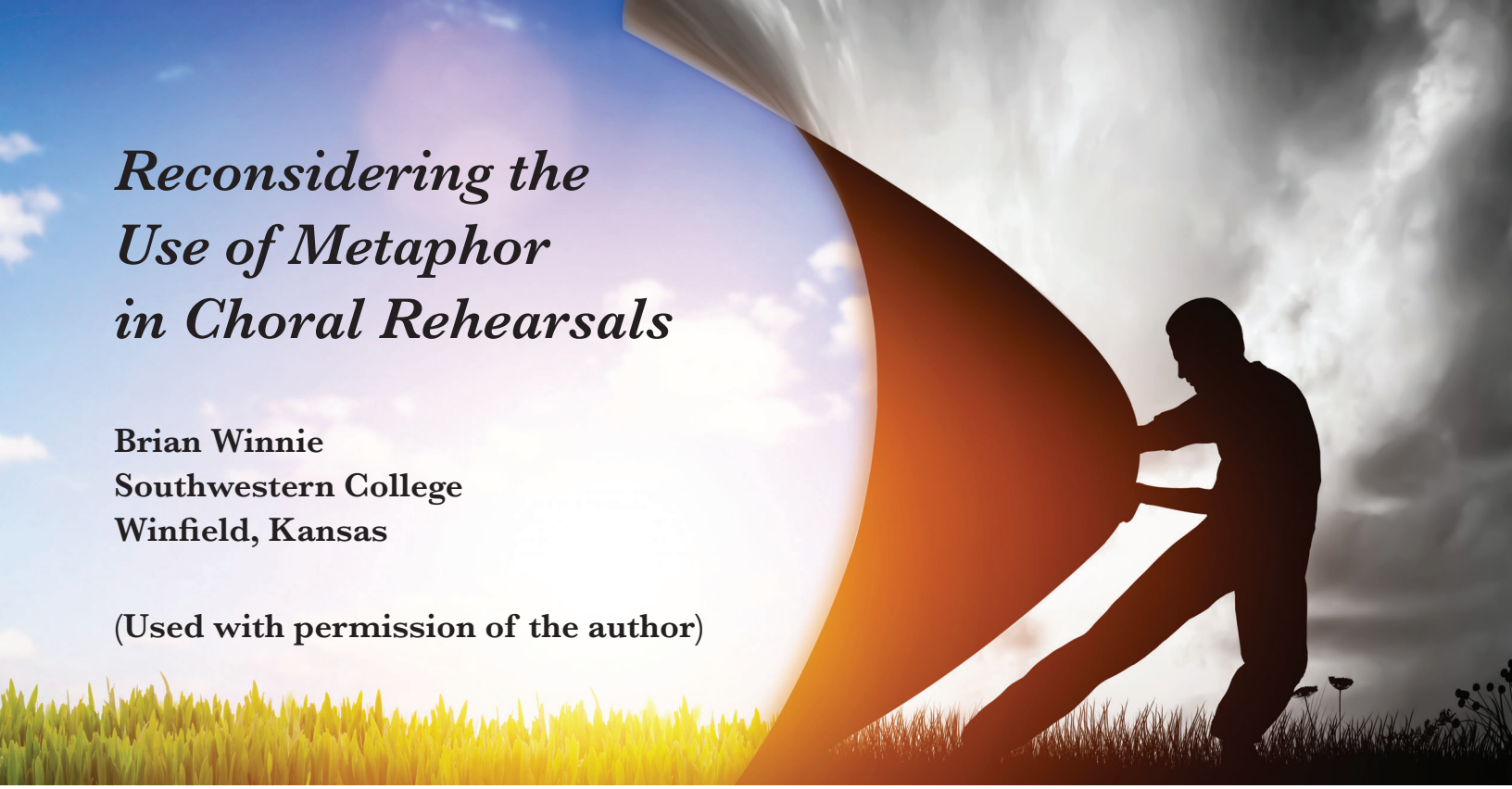
[1] Lorin W. Anderson et al., eds., *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (New York: Longman, 2001).

[2] Matthew Garrett, "Teaching for Transfer: Developing Critical Thinking Skills with Adolescent Singers," *Choral Journal* 54, no. 10 (2014): 27.

[3] Joseph Haydn, "Gloria, from Heiligmesse," ed. by Michael Gibson, CPDL.org, accessed December 18, 2019, http://www1.cpdl.org/wiki/images/1/14/Hayd-102.pdf.

[4] Jessica Napoles, "The Effect of Duration of Teacher Talk on the Attitude, Attentiveness, and Performance Achievement of High School Choral Students" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2006) Dissertation Abstracts International, A 67, no. 10 (2007).

[5] Ryan Shaw, "How Critical Is Critical Thinking?" *Music Educators Journal* 101, no. 2 (December 2014): 65-70.



Reconsidering the Use of Metaphor in Choral Rehearsals

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The bell rings, students have their folders in hand; the teacher has completed physical warm-ups and begins vocalizing. The teacher then models an ascending and descending penta-scale on an [i] vowel, and the singers echo that pattern. Without skipping a beat, the teacher provides feedback stating, "Very nice, let's try that again, but this time use more air and imagine your voice is a dart being thrown across the room."

As we examine this micro-teaching example, it is evident that the teacher has developed a plan, executed it, informally assessed the vocalise, and provided feedback. Although the feedback was delivered in a timely and succinct manner, the students do not know what was "very nice," how to "use more air," and how to correctly connect the image of a dart being thrown across the room to their vocal production.

Many choral directors have been in the situation of feeling tongue-tied or at a loss for describing what vocal quality is needed for a specific vocalise or selection of repertoire. When this occurs, directors sometimes resort to imagery or metaphor, as with the previous example, yet imagery and metaphor can cause confusion and produce unintended technical and musical problems.

Can we guess what the choral director's objective was in the previous example from his/her feedback? Perhaps it was to get a louder, better supported, or even more focused sound. Yet, these phrases do not help students know how to achieve the results. There are many interpretations that the students can image from that type of feedback.

Some students might already be using enough air, and adding more air could cause hyper-adduction of the vocal folds or a pressed phonation. Others might be using breathy phonation and adding more air might make the quality even more breathy.

This tells us choral directors that we should refrain from utilizing imagery or metaphors that can be interpreted differently by individual students such as support from the diaphragm, place your sound in the mask, or sing forward.

Students ask: What is being supported? How do I put my voice in my mask? What is the difference between singing forward and backward?

It is sometimes easier to rely on these sympathetic vibratory sensations rather than focus on the structure within the mechanism that needs attention; however, such phrases can lead students to sing with undue tension and do not help them effectively adjust the element of their vocal technique that is causing the issue. Furthermore, not all students in the classroom experience sound, vowels, or imagery in the same way. The phrase support from your diaphragm provides little help since singers cannot be in direct control of their diaphragm, and it does not support sound.[1]

Utilizing the term "placement" in teaching can cause students to literally try to place their sound in a specific area of the head or neck, causing tension and confusion. Richard Miller suggests that the teacher "understand the acoustic principle of resonator coupling in singing, and find some objective technical language to communicate this informa-

tion."[2]

Thurman and others agree and suggest that "traditional vocal pedagogy (Western opera bias) encourages singers to focus or place their tone in the mask of the face. In inexperienced singers, a common response to this imagery is to raise the larynx and narrow the pharynx, thus robing voices of appropriate fullness of voice quality and increasing laryngeal effort unnecessarily."[3]

In addition, phrases such as "that was flat" or "you are sharp" do not help students understand how to improve their intonation and can negatively affect their psyche and self-confidence. Instead, teachers should find the mechanical reason for the intonation problems. Once students develop a simple language for breath, onset, and resonance, they can begin exploring these elements in the creation of vocal qualities alone and in groups.[4]

This approach requires a basic understanding of vocal pedagogy, voice science, and vocal anatomy. This knowledge can help choral directors create clearly defined goals and objectives in each warm-up exercise and then provide specific feedback. Research suggests that specificity in teacher feedback increases the overall magnitude of the feedback and helps students understand what they did well and what to modify on the next attempt.[5]

There are many avenues of inquiry and professional development within voice science and pedagogy within the United States. Here are a few:

- Estill Voice Training, www.estillvoice.com

- Summer Vocology Institute, http://www.ncvs.org/svi_infous.html

- Voice Science Works (various workshops): http://www.voicescienceworks.org/ CT

NOTES

[1] Scott McCoy, *Your Voice: An Inside View*, 2nd ed. (Delaware, OH: Inside View Press, 2012), 84.

[2] Richard Miller, *The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 61.

[3] Leon Thurman et al., "Singing Various Musical Genres with Stylistic Authenticity: Vocal Efficiency, Vocal Conditioning, and Voice Qualities," *Body Mind &Voice: Foundations of Voice Education*, ed. Leon Thurman and Graham Welch, Rev. Ed. (Minneapolis: The Voice Care Network, 2000), 521.

[4] Brian J. Winnie, "Bridging the Gap between Classical and Contemporary Vocal Technique: Implications for the Choral Rehearsal," *Voice & Speech Review*, in press, (September 2017) http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/23268263.2017.1370803, (accessed September 4, 2017).

[5] Tucker Biddlecombe, "Assessing and Enhancing Feedback of Choral Conductors through Analysis and Training," *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing* 4, no.1 (2012): 16.

Teaching Healthy Singing in the Choral and Applied Studio
Part One: The Pedagogues' Teachings

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Introduction

In vocal music programs, voice majors are required to participate in a choral ensemble and an applied studio lesson as part of their degree completion. While a student may work with multiple singing instructors during his/her studies, each student may come across numerous methods or approaches to developing healthy singing habits. Researchers have found that "misunderstandings can occur when the singer's understanding of specific terms or phrases do not match the voice instructor's or choral conductor's concept."[1] To help expand the literature available for choral and applied voice instructors, a study to determine what approaches pedagogues of singing considered useful in developing healthy young singers was conducted. In this study, the term healthy singing is defined as the ability to produce musical sounds with the voice that incorporate the use of correct posture, proper breath support, full tone quality, evenness moving between vocal registers, and good intonation combined with the singer's natural talent.

Materials and Method

To determine how choral and applied voice pedagogues define healthy singing and work toward developing healthy singers, a qualitative approach was used. The participants consisted of three choral and three applied voice pedagogues. They were selected from a purposeful sample of pedagogues in higher education, along with one student of the pedagogue participants from each institution. Interviews with the pedagogues served as the primary sources of data collection, supported by observations of choral and applied studio instruction and student interviews.

Results

While the choral rehearsal focuses on group vocal instruction and the applied voice studio on one-on-one instruction, understanding the methods used by current pedagogues allows instructors of vocal music to examine their teachings and the opportunity to see what approaches may be used in creating healthy young singers.

Case 1: Emily (Choral Pedagogue)

Emily considers the warm-up vital in ensuring healthy singing in her choral rehearsal. Completing warm-ups that are "nice, easy, *legato* exercises" provides the "opportunity to focus on the vocalism" and "helps the intonation." While not having a wide variety of warm-ups, Emily has eight vocal exercises that she alters from day to day, making sure that the "focus [is] on technique and not having to learn something new."

Beginning with the middle range of the voice, Emily starts her rehearsals with a three-note scale on a voiced consonant. This exercise serves as preparation for the vocal folds to adjust from the daily speaking voice to singing. While keeping the beginning exercise limited, it allows the students to

listen to each other without the complexity of vowels and get in touch with the breath. Taking the exercises and building among them, Emily typically moves to a sustained pitch that allows focusing on the vowel, matching pitch, intonation, and listening. Once the warm-up process is complete, the students will have covered a majority of the approaches Emily would take in correcting techniques throughout the repertoire. This allows the students to have a reference point on how to fix issues such as intonation, dynamics, vowel formation, and approaching notes in different registers. While the exercises presented here are a small portion of what Emily includes in building a healthy singer, this has helped strengthen the rehearsal process.

Case 2: Ryan (Choral Pedagogue)

Ryan describes healthy singing to his students as having "as little tension as possible." While a significant amount of time is not spent on discussing posture, Ryan makes his students aware of their posture, identifying areas of tension, and working to eliminate this sensation as much as possible.

Determined to have a sound that is "quite open," Ryan challenges his choir "to sing with enough depth, enough openness, and enough breath support to have a lively sound without forcing it." The choir may be asked to alter the shape of its vowels or by completing exercises such as panting, yawning, sighing, or sirens to help achieve the sound desired. When teaching resonance, Ryan says that keeping the mouth arched open, tongue out of the way, and back of the throat open allows for space inside the mouth and opportunities for shaping the vowel. While Ryan may use various analogies to help his students understand the sound wanted, a good amount of the work comes through "emulation."

Case 3: Tommy (Choral Pedagogue)

Tommy considers a student with a "free vocal sound" to be a healthy sound. He also thinks of a healthy singer as "someone who understands where his/her core sound is, sings there, and then builds vocal expansion from there." During performances, Tommy can identify the "relative vocal health" of his students through listening while identifying tension issues based on their posture. Although posture is not a topic that is discussed often during his choral rehearsal, Tommy's strategy for teaching proper posture is through his conducting stance. He believes singers should imitate his stance.

Tommy also mentions the importance of the vowel when singing, considering it to be an essential part of resonance. Tommy will remove text during the beginning stages of the learning of repertoire to help students build a unified, clear, and strong resonant sound. He also has his students think of each vowel as a different instrument, saying things like "this [vowel] is a French horn, that one is an oboe. You have to be very careful when you're changing vowels; it's like becoming another instrument."

Case 4: David (Applied Voice Pedagogue)

David considers proper breath support and postural alignment essential components of healthy singing. Building on these two aspects, David says that a healthy singer is one with "a nice free tone with vibrato." To help his students recognize the importance of a good expanded breath, David has his students lie on the floor, asking them to breath naturally. When the breath is natural, the ribcage does not move, and the bones are quiet, causing the belly to go up and down during inhalation and exhalation. Reminding his students that breath should remain the same when singing, David may include exercises such as singing a sustained pitch, such as [zi] or [si], focusing on the steady flow of breath.

When considering posture, David thinks of alignment as "nose to chin to sternum to belly button."

> The practice session is to remind students to maintain a straight line from their head to the abdomen. Many of us have terrible posture. Shoulders are collapsed. The head is sometimes tilted to either the right or the left. We slouch from one knee to the other. 'Top to bottom,' 'straight line,' alignment reduces this tendency to lock the body with tension. That, coupled with the practice of reminding the student about aligning the back of the head to the spine, hinders the tendency for lifting the chin. Such action bunches the back of the nape, creating tension around the larynx. Over tucking the chin downward constricts and chokes laryngeal movement. This 'back of the head to the spine,' line also enables the singer to keep his/her head over the shoulders without the head jutting forward over the torso.

Through the use of analogies and demonstrations, like those described by David, students can limit the amount of tension that may impact a healthy sound.

Case 5: Lucinda (Applied Voice Pedagogue)

Lucinda believes that a healthy singer has "a healthy tone, free of tension, and free of nasality." While voice instructors may have their own desired sound, Lucinda prefers a "clear and warm" tone. To help in the development process, Lucinda uses *The Estelle Liebling Vocal Course* (1981) textbook because it incorporates exercises focusing on intonation and breath support through *legato* singing, agility, sustained tone, and head voice and the *messa di voce.*

While the textbook may assist in a portion of the development process, Lucinda also uses analogies and demonstrations when teaching healthy vocal technique. When discussing proper posture, Lucinda uses the analogy of visualizing yourself as a book with a nice spine down the middle and the shoulders back similar to the pages of a book to help "lengthen the spine." Lucinda is also a pedagogue that avoids mechanics when teaching breath support to first-year students since they may become overwhelmed with the physiology. When teaching breath support, Lucinda has the students think of a "slow leak in the tire," which requires the singer to sustain a hiss while trying to not release too quickly. The air is moving. This exercise allows the singer to feel the ribcage and the diaphragm's function during the breathing process. While these are a couple of the exercises used during Lucinda's voice lessons, most of the techniques come from her experiences as a student in the voice studio.

Case 6: Jesse (Applied Voice Pedagogue)

Jesse believes that healthy singing consists of an individual who uses his/her instrument correctly by singing consciously with "*legato* on the breath." Jesse describes conscious singing as "not simply relying on talent," but "those students who have taken time to understand how to play the instrument no matter what the style is." Teaching what he calls "registration singing" calls for the student to sing through the *passagio* with "nice, fluid, smooth transition."

To be successful with registration, vowel modification and proper breath support should be included in lessons. Encouraging his students to have an "open throat" and "relaxed pharyngeal wall" helps in producing the sound Jesse desires and can be created with a "freely, floating larynx." To help his students better understand the sound desired, Jesse will often demonstrate and use other exercises as necessary.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the six pedagogues' approach to teaching healthy singing in their choral and applied voice studio settings. By analyzing the data provided, seven major themes emerged: background and training, healthy singing and techniques, student abilities, repertoire choices, rapport, the structure of lessons/rehearsals, and agreements/disagreements among students and pedagogues. The second theme, healthy singing and techniques, will be reviewed since it looks at how the pedagogues define healthy singing and how they teach vocal technique during their rehearsals and studio lessons.

While each of the pedagogues used multiple approaches in teaching healthy singing in their choral rehearsals and studio lessons, the use of analogies, imagery, and demonstration was thought to be most appropriate in the learning process by the author. The analogies used by pedagogues such as David and Lucinda were found to help the students comprehend what was asked of them rather than overwhelm them with technical terms.

In the descriptions provided by the pedagogues, each participant highlighted aspects of vocal technique suitable for developing a healthy singer. Posture, breath support, and tone quality were mentioned the most and found to be of importance in the beginning stages of developing a young, healthy singer.

• Posture. While the pedagogues may not spend much time on posture during rehearsals or studio lessons, participants such as Ryan, Tommy, and Lucinda note the importance of eliminating as much tension as possible. Two choral pedagogues, Emily and Ryan, find themselves completing exercises such as stretching and back rubs to help the singers recognize good body alignment to release tension.

For Tommy, it is hoped that his choral students understand and can reproduce proper posture as it is shown through his conducting stance. In the applied studio, David and Lucinda mention the importance of "lengthening the spine," or keeping a line from the "back of the head to the spine," that not only eliminates muscle tension but provides a proper stance needed for singing. While the choral pedagogues use physical demonstration or modeling to teach posture, it is interesting to note that the applied voice pedagogues use imagery to explain the same technique.

• Breath support: While the pedagogues note the importance of breath support, David and Lucinda provide a detailed description of an exercise used in their applied studios to help with the breath. While Lucinda's "slow leak in the tire" and David's "lie on the floor" exercise focuses on the breath, neither exercise is combined with the act of singing. The two pedagogues believe that these exercises help the singer recognize the movement involved around the ribcage during the process of inhalation and exhalation. Using a hum or a vowel on a sustained pitch will encourage the singers to connect to the steady stream of air being used.

• Tone quality: While pedagogues may have their own ideal tone, they mention different aspects that may play a part in a choral or individual singer's tone quality. To achieve the desired tone, the pedagogues in this study use vowel modification, various descriptors, or modeling based on the repertoire or exercises being performed. For choral pedagogues, Tommy, Ryan, Emily, and applied voice pedagogue Jesse, they tend to focus on vowel modification when achieving the tone quality wanted. For applied voice pedagogue Lucinda, she prefers a "warm" sound and uses descriptors like this when describing what she wants from her students. It is interesting to note that the choral pedagogues focus on vowel modification when achieving the desired tone. This may be due to them working with multiple singers at one time and attempting to match the overall sound of the ensemble.

Conclusion

While singing pedagogues may use multiple approaches of teaching in their applied studios or choral rehearsals, performers and educators of singing should share the techniques that they find helpful in developing a healthy singer. Though the pedagogue's definitions of healthy singing may vary, the study shows that:

• posture whether presented through modeling or imagery is an area that is beneficial to producing a healthy sound;

• effective or efficient breath support requires that the breath remain natural; and

• the pedagogues may have their personal choice of tone, vowel shaping, and the use of descriptors to make an impact on what is heard.

The research also shows that there are many techniques and approaches used by choral and applied voice pedagogues that should be shared, as they may be beneficial for all singing teachers and their students. For this reason, this is a call for singing instructors to join together as more overlap may be found among the choral and applied voice settings. CT

NOTES

[1] H. Apfelstadt, L. Robinson, & M. Taylor, "Building Bridges among Choral Conductors, Voice Teachers, and Students." *Choral Journal*, 44 no. 2, (2003): 25-33.

[2] D.L. Thompson, "A Collaborative Approach: How Pedagogues of Singing and Their Students Navigate the Solo and Choral Realms" (Doctoral dissertation, 2019). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (13884375).

Teaching Healthy Singing in the Choral and Applied Studio Part Two: The Students' Perspective

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Part one of this two-part article looked at how choral and applied voice pedagogues defined and implemented healthy singing in their choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons. While the six pedagogues' definitions of healthy singing varied, the study showed that a focus on posture, breath support, and tone quality were three areas of importance in developing a young, healthy singer. The study also showed that using analogies, imagery, and modeling was the most common approach in teaching their students. This article looks at how the pedagogues' students defined healthy singing and which techniques were deemed useful in their choral and applied voice pedagogue's teaching methods.

Results

To arrive at a definition of healthy singing, the students were asked to share their thoughts on five characteristics of good singing: correct posture, breath support, tone quality, vocal registration, and resonance. The students were then asked to share how their instructors taught these concepts during the choral rehearsal or applied studio lesson and how this has helped them in becoming a healthy singer.

Case 1: Kaitlyn - Choral Student of Emily

A healthy singer uses proper technique. All of these components, posture, breath support, plus knowing when to mix and knowing when to use the chest voice are important. They take care of their bodies. Also, knowing when not to sing.

Kaitlyn sings in Emily's mixed chorus, crediting this experience with how much she has learned about her voice and how to use it as an instrument. Through Emily's choral rehearsal, Kaitlyn has determined that proper posture sets you up so that you are able to keep your ribs open, and it helps the breath move efficiently. During the rehearsal, she recalls Emily asking the choir to sit on their "sitz bones" or alternate feet. This serves as a reminder for the students to sit tall. Once proper posture is produced, Kaitlyn believes that well-developed breath support will emerge along with excellent tone quality. For Kaitlyn, it is during the warm-up that Emily tends to discuss breath support. A favorite breathing exercise from the rehearsal is pretending that the choir is engaged in a tug-of-war with Emily. Students pull an imaginary rope while Emily tugs the other direction. Kaitlyn is not exactly sure how this exercise helps with the breath. She believes that this exercise really engages the breath.

Continuing to draw the connection with how proper posture sets up the breath, Kaitlyn is reminded of the breath's impact on tone. If you are not using your breath efficiently and you let air escape in your tone, you have un-vocalized air. That's not the tone quality you want. Remembering that Emily will have the choir focus on vowel shaping when achieving the desired sound, this may include making a [u] more rounded or a [ɑ] taller. With vocal registration and resonance, Kaitlyn recalls imagery to differentiate head and chest voice. This may include the thought of chocolates representing a rich chest sound.

Case 2: Kimberly - Choral Student of Ryan

Kimberly is a non-music major who sings in Ryan's chorale at the university. Feeling confident in her growth, Kimberly has noticed a change in how she manages her voice, including breath and volume control, by singing in the choir. With the musical experiences provided, Kimberly describes healthy singing as "having good breath support and making sure to have my soft palate lifted and not just pushing on my vocal cords. I think that having really good posture is a good foundation, starting with planting my feet then extending my ribcage. This allows for a deep breath. Then I can sing without strain."

For Kimberly, it is during the warm-up that healthy singing evolves. As Ryan incorporates movement and includes different syllables and articulation during the warm-ups, Kimberly benefits greatly. While she considers posture an essential aspect, the choir spends most of the rehearsal standing to help sustain proper posture modeled by Ryan in his conducting stance. When seated, Kimberly notes that Ryan will ask students to sit on the edge of the chairs to reduce the temptation to be somewhat lazy.

Kimberly notes that it is also during the warm-up that breath support is mentioned. While panting and yawning exercises may be completed to help focus on the breath, she recalls how Ryan will demonstrate proper breath support by breathing deeply and moving his hands downward to help visualize what a deep breath might look like.

Once students have become familiar with their repertoire, they begin to focus on tone quality. While sirens are one way of exploring tone quality, Kimberly acknowledges that the singers may sing in their throats. Then he has us essentially going through the spectrum, all the way to really nasally, bright sounds. This helps us explore the different tone quality types.

Kimberly also notes that siren exercises are often used to help in making a connection with vocal registration, noticing when the singers switch from head to chest voice. While the anatomy of the voice is not mentioned often, Kimberly recalls how Ryan may use lifting the soft palate and accessing the space in the singer's head when discussing resonance, along with mentioning the importance of vowel shaping.

Case 3: Leslie - Choral Student of Tommy

According to Leslie, a healthy singer should be able to sing in multiple styles and create many different sounds while still feeling relaxed and not strained. The breath is very important, and breathing properly is extremely important to healthy singing because it is the source of the sound. She also thinks that posture and how you hold your body are very important because they will reflect the sound that then comes out. "I think that as long as you have that foundation, that is really the core of what a healthy singer needs to be."

Leslie sings in Tommy's Chamber Choir at the university where she considers a significant growth has taken place along with applied studio lessons and performing in musicals. In her third semester of studies in Tommy's choir, Leslie has learned how to "manipulate" to achieve health tone and color and create a sound that blends with the other singers. While Leslie also studies applied voice with a different instructor, she finds that Tommy's approach to manipulating the sound is more metaphorical than her voice instructor who focuses on the anatomy of the voice and the use of imagery to adjust the sound.

Leslie finds that Tommy is often reminding the choir to sit in a standing position in order to remain tall. When this does not work, the choir stands. Believing that good posture leads to proper breath support, Leslie finds that Tommy does not explain breath support during the choral rehearsal. Leslie does mention that when the breath is not how Tommy would like it, he stops and asks the choir to make the changes that are necessary.

While realizing that many of the chorus members are music theater majors who usually sing with a bright sound, Leslie recognizes that Tommy will use the analogy of singing with a surprised German voice to obtain the darker, warmer tone quality desired. To help understand a particular sound, Leslie says Tommy will often model a specific word or vowel. Being accustomed to the saying, put it in your mask, when discussing resonance with musical theater, Leslie finds that Tommy will use the analogy from barbershop singing, which calls for a pure, very filtered sound that is clear and focused.

Case 4: Skylar - Applied Voice Student of David

Skylar studies voice in David's applied studio. While also singing in the university choir, Skylar recognizes that her singing abilities have grown surprisingly quickly while studying with David. Through her studies, Skylar believes that a healthy singer is someone who does not push too hard. They focus on how they physically feel when they are singing, and they are able to articulate that. A healthy singer takes good

care of her/his voice and does not strain or push past personal limits. A healthy singer drinks a lot of water, takes good care of the body, and has good control over breathing techniques.

While Skylar may not have the best posture, David will often remind her to keep her shoulders back and keep the head at eye level, which will help produce good posture. When Skylar's stance is not correct, she notices that her breath fluctuates. When her posture is in the proper state of supporting the breath, she acknowledges that David then discusses the importance of vibrato as it forces you to connect to the breath.

Before studying with David, Skylar believed that her mouth had to be open wide to achieve the appropriate tone in higher registers. Realizing that a forward space and the necessary shaping help create the sound needed for a particular vowel, Skylar now focuses on the space and limits the jaw's movement. While she is transitioning from soprano to mezzo-soprano, David finds repertoire in several keys to allow Skylar to find what works best for her voice.

Case 5: Abigail - Applied Voice Student of Lucinda

Abigail studies applied voice in Lucinda's studio. Acknowledging that her voice has grown, Abigail also recognizes that it is a learning process since every voice lesson may not go the way that she would like. Based on her singing experiences, Abigail believes a healthy singer includes having good breath support because if you are constantly running out of breath and trying to push the sound out, it is not good. Not having the best space is really bad because sometimes you seem to squeal. She knows that singing in the back of her throat is not necessarily unhealthy, but it does not make the best sound. She says the most important thing for her healthwise is not just the quality of the sound. Equally important are breath support and posture and then the space that you have in your head.

Remembering her posture before studying with Lucinda, Abigail knew she had grown and that Lucinda's ideas had carried over into her lessons. Now realizing that avoiding slouching and having the body straightened and tall and the sternum lifted, her sound is better and more comfortable for her. Abigail thought that in the early stages of voice lessons, breathing low meant more in the chest cavity. After discovering where the diaphragm was, Abigail notices the expansion around the middle of her torso, realizing that it is not just sticking my stomach out or raising my ribcage.

With tone quality, Abigail is aware of Lucinda's desired sound: warm. Realizing that tone quality is more about where the sound is directed and how the mouth is shaped, Abigail has become analytical in her practice. She recalls that Lucinda will ask her questions related to her tone, such as did you like that sound? What was it that you did not like about the sound? Abigail considers vocal registration to be one register. Some singers can get confused when considering multiple registers, recognizing that the move from head voice to chest voice should feel connected. For Abigail, keeping the vowels in the same place, whether in the lower or higher registers, helps her to not notice a significant change in registers as she sings.

Case 6: Alivia - Voice Student of Jesse

Alivia studies in Jesse's applied voice studio. During this time, Alivia has realized that studio time has allowed her voice to grow more than through any other singing opportunities. While continuing to learn healthy singing techniques, Alivia considers a healthy singer to be cognizant of what is going on inside her body. Also, she believes that she should make sure that she is working out in some way to help build her stamina. She hopes she knows that you are not singing from your stomach but from your diaphragm. Posture is very important. It is not healthy for your shoulders to rise every time you breathe. A healthy singer knows that you have to keep the energy going for you to project any tone. A healthy singer takes care of herself when she is sick.

Alivia considers posture to be foundational when it comes to singing correctly. During Alivia's studies, Jesse has taught her the anatomy and the effect lousy posture has on the singing voice. Before studying with Jesse, Alivia used an analogy, a sipping breath and a smelling breath often. The sipping breath is considered a breath that you take similar to that of sipping from a straw, giving you less inhalation. The smelling breath is a breath that you take with your nose, giving you a different inhalation feeling that is fuller than the sipping breath. By using the sipping and smelling breath, Alivia can set up her thinking when focusing on where to breathe and how to breathe when performing her repertoire. Alivia has also learned the analogy of pushing the gas, meaning to push the air, keeping it moving.

While Alivia considers her sound to be naturally darker, Jesse has encouraged her to get darker, since it allows her

falsetto to come in more. Realizing the importance of a consistent sound, Alivia notes that whether producing a darker or brighter sound, she reaches pitches in the upper and lower range with ease. She uses the analogy of a diving board to allow her to move from *falsetto* to her chest voice.

Discussion

While the purpose of this study was to examine, three choral and three applied voice pedagogues' approaches to teaching healthy singing in their choral and applied voice studio settings, the study also wished to get the students' perspective. Like the pedagogues, the students had different definitions of healthy singing, although all mentioned aspects such as posture and breath support. It is interesting to note that most of the student participants indicated the importance of listening and taking care of the body, unlike the pedagogues. Overall, many of the students had similar responses to their pedagogues.

• Posture. Although choral students have the opportunity to sit during the rehearsal, the chorus students mention how their instructors stress sitting as if they are standing when singing. While Kaitlyn recalls her director using sayings such as sit on your sitz bones or alternate feet, Kimberly and Leslie are simply asked to sit at the edge of their chairs. The students also recognize that their choral directors are demonstrating proper posture by modeling it through their conducting stance.

Unlike choral students, the applied voice students stand for their one-hour lesson. While the choral students discussed the overall choirs' posture, the applied voice students immediately began discussing how their stance looked in early lessons compared with now. A common thread among the applied voice students was that they identified with slouching or shrugging their shoulders as a sign of bad posture. Overall, the students recognized that their choral and applied voice instructors taught proper posture through modeling and analogies to help them understand what posture should look like.

• Breath support. While Leslie mentions that her choral director doesn't explain breath support, choral students Kaitlyn and Kimberly recognize that breath support is discussed during the warm-up period. For Kaitlyn, this is completed by demonstrating a physical activity such as the tug-of-war exercise. While this is an exercise that Kaitlyn enjoys and believes helps build breath support, she cannot explain how it helps, which shows a lack of understanding. For Kimberly, she recalls physical movement such as stretching while incorporating the breath or panting or yawning exercises.

To connect with the breath, the applied voice students pointed to the body as a whole. Abigail begins by recognizing where the diaphragm is and feeling the breath there, allowing her to control the intake of air. Skylar makes sure that her posture components are aligned, drawing the connection to proper breath support and connecting that to the use of vibrato. While the students here can make connections of the breath to another area of singing, these same students also show how important it is for instructors to state what proper breathing consists of clearly.

• Tone quality. While explaining how tone quality is presented by teachers during the choral rehearsal or applied studio lesson, the students recall the use of analogies, vocal exercises, modeling, and gestures as approaches their instructors have used. For most of the students, their choral director or applied voice instructor will discuss the importance of shaping to achieve the desired tone. For Kaitlyn, her choral director may use hand gestures to help the students form the vowel, while Skylar and Abigail's instructors may discuss the importance of space and where the focus of the sound should be. Students such as Kimberly and Leslie notice that their instructors simply use terms such as bright or dark to describe the tone quality that they are trying to achieve. Although each of these approaches is suitable, the author believes they must be explained to the students in detail over time.

Conclusions

While this study represents a small number of choral and applied voice pedagogues in the field, it allows us to take a look at how singing instructors around the world are teaching healthy singing in their studios and rehearsals. The study also allows us to see how students respond to their instructors' methods of teaching and their ability to comprehend what they have learned. While the pedagogues in this study used analogies, imagery, and modeling as forms of teaching, their colleagues likely used other tools. Thus, it is essential for choral and applied voice pedagogues to share what may or may not be working in their daily teaching. It is also vital that our students continue to share their experiences so that

they understand better that there is more than one teaching method to teach the same techniques. It is through this approach that choral and applied studio teachers will be able to join together in the journey of building young, healthy singers. CT

NOTES

[1] H. Apfelstadt, L. Robinson, & M. Taylor, "Building Bridges among Choral Conductors, Voice Teachers, and Students." *Choral Journal,* 44 no. 2, (2003): 25-33.

[2] D.L. Thompson, "A Collaborative Approach: How Pedagogues of Singing and Their Students Navigate the Solo and Choral Realms" (Doctoral dissertation, 2019). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (13884375).