



Knowing the Score: Where Pedagogy and Classroom Management Meet the Unexpected

Thomas Blue

(Used with permission of the author)

Knowing the choral score leads to a better understanding of vocal and choral pedagogy and a more student-centered approach to what is in the music. Knowing the score results in the teacher having to focus less on time-consuming and often energy-draining classroom management.

This article will share an approach to score study focusing on vocal and choral pedagogy for adolescent singers and how this focus can improve one's planning, teaching, and performance. Rehearsal strategies and an example of music from the Renaissance will be used as tools to assist in lesson design. This will result in a student-centered classroom environment with music at its center. A renewed appreciation for score study and its usefulness in applying pedagogical principles will lead to greater student engagement. Positive classroom management will more likely be achieved.

To set the stage, let's start with some terms that will serve as background to what we need for a clearer understanding of our need for detailed score study. The choral score is our musical textbook. So how should we view and approach the choral score? It is the source of our pedagogy and classroom focus and our source of inspiration. It is our guide. It contains the musical ele-

ments of melody, harmony, form (architecture), rhythm, and timbre. It is our source for musical activities like describing, listening, creating, and performing. The score can also be an opportunity for student leaders to mentor other students and student-interns.

Pedagogy is the work, the obligation, of a choral teacher. The art of teaching meets the art of choral singing at the intersection of the choral score and pedagogy.¹ It is where we begin sharing the unexpected surprises, joys, and interesting features of music.

Classroom management refers to the wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during a class.² Our understanding of the score and the necessary vocal and choral pedagogy become our means of classroom management. It is how we keep our students focused, engaged, on task and musically productive. If our students are engaged in the musical experience, then the need for classroom management is reduced to the students making music. This becomes their expectation, their desire.

Classroom management can be thought of in terms of rehearsal planning, and when we consider the adolescent brain, a multiple intelligences approach,³ we have

an opportunity to engage students in a multi-faceted approach to understanding the music. With the current educational focus on subjects like visual-thinking and deep-learning, the work of Howard Gardner at Harvard's Project Zero⁴ and his theory of multiple intelligences comes to mind. A refined definition of intelligence, according to Gardner, is a bio-psychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture."⁵

Picture the choral score as an opportunity for our students to engage their bio-psychological potential for solving problems (understanding the score) or re-creating products (music performances) within a cultural context that are valuable to our diversity and culture. In the same book, Gardner shares this idea: "I much prefer occasions where students can perform their understandings publicly, receive relevant critiques, and go on to enhance their performances and their understandings."⁶ Our choral performances are an opportunity for students to perform their understandings publically and then complete an evaluation or critique about the performance both as an ensemble member and as individual singer.

It is through planning and rehearsal that pedagogy becomes a tool for understanding the score. In Henry Leck's book, *Creating Artistry through Choral Excellence*, he outlines three principles that should be considered as our guide for score choices and how we may approach the score. He suggests that we must choose high-quality literature, teach an understanding of the music, and, most importantly, communicate the text.⁷

As choral directors, our leadership and guidance comes from knowing the score. We should look for questions in the score for our singers, unexpected musical surprises, joys, and other interesting issues.

In *The Art of Possibility*, Benjamin Zander describes how he came to see the importance for him as a professional conductor of enabling his players to "lead from any chair." Zander states:

I had been conducting for nearly twenty years when it suddenly dawned on me that the conductor of an orchestra does not make a sound. His picture may appear on the cover of the CD in various dramatic poses, but his true power derives from his ability to make other people powerful.⁸

Teaching our students to understand the score and how to gain their own musical knowledge from it is how we, as teachers, mentor our students to "lead from any chair." Through score study and pedagogy, we are mentoring. Tim Sharp states in his book, *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts*, that for the mentor, the desire to pass on information and life experiences is part of generativity—contributing to the good of the profession and to the good of another individual.⁹

The Score

For our musical example, I have selected Hans Leo Hassler's *Cantate Domino*,¹⁰ highlighting those questions, unexpected musical surprises, joys, and other interesting features. As we teach from the score, these are the things we can have students look for, make musical connections with, and hear and sing the surprises and joys. It can be found in the choral public domain library (CPDL). To find this work online, go to http://www3.cpdl.org/wiki/images/d/dc/Hassler_-_Cantate_Domino.pdf. It is also listed at the very end of this article.

Below are items I have pointed out and asked students to observe.

Background Information¹¹

- Title: Cantate Domino (4 voices)
- Composer: Hans Leo Hassler
- Source of text: Psalm 96: verses 1-3
- Number of voices: 4 (SATB)
- Genre: Sacred, Motet
- Language: Latin
- Instruments: A cappella
- First published in 1601 in Sacri concentus. Reissued in 1612, no. 6

Architecture of the Work¹²

- time signature and key signature – m. 1
- metronome marking – m. 1 (and how/why this would be editorial only)
- choice of the use of semi-bar lines – editorial throughout
- musical form - overall
- homophonic (m. 33-37) and polyphonic sections (m. 38-42)
- places of quartet singing (m. 1-3) and places where double-duets occur (m.4-5)
- multiple points of imitation (m.8-11)
- unexpected color chords (m. 23) and (m. 34-35)
- something new (m.26) and something new that's repeated (m.30)
- ending chord is the same as the opening chord but different spelling and a different sound

Assessment

Knowing the score can also be used as an opportunity for student assessment. The use of a rubric¹³ allows one to stay focused on the finished product, and in the case of the MSVMA rubric (that I use), it gives me musical ideas and the necessary vocal and choral pedagogy to focus on in my

Halt for Surprises, Joys and Other Interesting Stuff
Listen for ...

trans. **Cantate Domino** (full text)
Hans Leo Haßler, 1564-1612 — music era
aus "Sacri concentus", 1601

A Quartet
♩ = 108
Can - ta - te Do - mi - no can - ti - cum no - vum can - ta - te Do - mi -
Can - ta - te Do - mi - no can - ti - cum no - vum can - ta - te Do - mi -
Can - ta - te Do - mi - no can - ti - cum no - vum can - ta - te Do - mi -

B Imitation
no om - nis ter - ra. Can - ta - te Do - mi - no,
no om - nis ter - ra. Can - ta - te Do - mi - no,
no om - nis ter - ra. Can - ta - te Do - mi - no,
no om - nis ter - ra. Can - ta - te Do - mi - no,

C Quartet
- ta - te Do - mi - no, et be - ne - di - ci - te
- can - ta - te Do - mi - no, et be - ne - di - ci - te
te, can - ta - te Do - mi - no, et be - ne - di - ci - te
mi - no, can - ta - te Do - mi - no, et be - ne - di - ci - te

D Quartet
no - mi - ni e - ius, et be - ne - di - ci - te no - mi - ni e - ius, An - nun - ti -
no - mi - ni e - ius, et be - ne - di - ci - te no - mi - ni e - ius, An - nun - ti -
no - mi - ni e - ius, et be - ne - di - ci - te no - mi - ni e - ius, An - nun - ti -

2 Duet
An - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te de di - e in di - em sa - lu -
a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te de di - e in di - em sa - lu -
a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te de di - e in di - em sa - lu -

20 Color chords unexpected
sa - lu - ta -
re e - ius, an - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te in - ter gen -
ta - re e - ius, an - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te in - ter gen -
lu - ta - re e - ius, an - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te in - ter gen -
ta - re e - ius, an - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te in - ter gen -

25 something familiar
e - ius, an - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te in - ter gen -
ta - re e - ius, an - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te in - ter gen -
e - ius, an - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te in - ter gen -
ta - re e - ius, an - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te in - ter gen -

30 Quartet
tes glo - ri - am e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
tes glo - ri - am e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
tes glo - ri - am e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
tes glo - ri - am e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -

35 Quartet
mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -

40 Color chords - unexpected
mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -

42 Diff. than opening chord
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -

Example 1- Hassler – with annotations/analysis

teaching. The key elements in the rubric are tone quality, pitch, rhythm, diction, interpretation, and presentation.¹⁴ These elements provide a basis for the pedagogy that can be taught along with the score elements.

Key Thoughts

Knowing the musical score and the necessary pedagogy becomes the basis for instruction. It reduces the need for classroom management, I find. Some key thoughts or questions that should be considered as we are preparing for each concert are ideas that provide the initial thinking behind our personal preparation for instruction and instructional design.

The first question concerns teaching. What are those musical ideas that need to be teacher driven? What are the ideas that can be student directed? The second question is about classroom climate. How do we envision our classroom functioning? For me, I envision a classroom that is quick-paced, structured and yet somewhat organic, intentional, has musical purpose, and is increasingly challenging for the student singers. However you envision your classroom, you should strive to create a sense of flow.¹⁵

The final question that guides our initial thinking is that of repertoire. I try to choose repertoire that is meaningful, age-appropriate, increasingly challenging, and evolves gradually into more and more part singing (unison to multi-part).

Personal Reflection

Every summer I travel north and teach for a couple of weeks at a fine arts camp. In the nearby town is a store called The Hokey-Pokey. Yes, the song goes through my head incessantly. But for me, the song has come to be a reminder of an important question. Is the hokey-pokey really what it's all about? As I think about the ideas I have shared, knowing the score and the pedagogy involved in teaching it, are they giving me a possibility of achieving good classroom management? I truly believe the answer is yes, and yet experience has pointed me in other directions occasionally.

Maybe score study and pedagogy allow us to create a sense of community. Sharp also states that the community known to musicians as an ensemble is both a vibrant learning environment and a subtle mentoring environment. The fact that the ensemble is part of an ancient profession obscures the fact that in the twenty-first century, the musical ensemble emerges as a robust learning community and social

organization.¹⁶

Maybe score study and pedagogy are what Rilke, the great thinker, calls the grace of great things? Parker Palmer says in his book, *The Courage To Teach*: "I realized that our conventional images of community ignore our relationships with great things that call us together, the things that call us to know, to teach, and to learn. By great things, I mean the subjects around which the circle of seekers has always gathered—not the disciplines that study these subjects, not the texts that talk about them, not the theories that explain them, but the things themselves."¹⁷

Finally, my incessant reminder, as a choral conductor, is a James Jordan quote found in *The Musician's Soul*. "Music is the binding stuff of community. The community is nourished by music or the grace of great things. Without the great things, community is reduced to inter- and intrapersonal relationships that are usually built on outside perceptions rather than the soulfulness of all involved. Music is the vehicle by which souls individually examined and explored speak to the world at large. Human beings communicating directly with one another through great things speak powerfully and with one voice. That voice will be characterized by the sublime beauty of all the elements of music."¹⁸

This article is based on a presentation that the author gave at the ACDA Central/North Central Conference in 2018.

NOTES

¹ <http://www.dictionary.com>

² www.edglossary.org

³ Gardner H. (1983). *Frames of Mind: The theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

⁴ <http://www.pz.harvard.edu>

⁵ Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York: Basic Books, pp.33-34.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 114

⁷ Leck, Henry, *Creating Artistry through Choral Excellence* (Hal Leonard, 2010).

⁸ Zander, R. S., & Zander, B. (2000). *The Art of Possibility*. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press, p.68.

⁹ Sharp, Tim, *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts: Helping Others Find Their Voice*, GIA, 2011.

¹⁰ http://www3.cpdl.org/wiki/images/d/dc/Hassler_-_Cantate_Domino.pdf

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ www.MSVMA.org

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper & Row, 1990.

¹⁶ Sharp, Tim, *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts: Helping Others Find Their Voice*, GIA, 2011.

¹⁷ Palmer, Parker J. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

¹⁸ Jordan, James M., *The Musician's Soul: A Journey Examining Spirituality for Performers, Teachers, Composers, Conductors, and Music Educators*, GIA, 1999.

Cantate Domino
Hans Leo Haßler, 1564-1612
aus "Sacri concertus", 1601

♩ = 108

can - ta - te Do - mi - no om - nis ter - ra. 10 Can -
no om - nis ter - ra. Can - ta - te Do - mi - no,
no om - nis ter - ra. Can - ta -
no om - nis ter - ra. Can - ta - te Do -
- ta - te Do - mi - no, (2/♩)
- can - ta - te Do - mi - no, et be - ne - di - ci - te
te, can - ta - te Do - mi - no, et be - ne - di - ci - te
mi - no, can - ta - te Do - mi - no, et be - ne - di - ci - te
15 (3/♩) (2/♩)
no - mi - ni e - ius, et be - ne - di - ci - te no - mi - ni e - ius.
no - mi - ni e - ius, et be - ne - di - ci - te no - mi - ni e - ius. An - nun - ti -
no - mi - ni e - ius, et be - ne - di - ci - te no - mi - ni e - ius. An - nun - ti -

2 sa - lu - ta -
An - nun - ti - a - te, annun - ti - a - te de di - e in di - em sa - lu -
a - te, annun - ti - a - te de di - e in di - em sa -
a - te, annun - ti - a - te de di - e in di - em sa - lu -
re e - ius, 20 30
ta - re e - ius, an - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te in - ter gen -
lu - ta - re e - ius, an - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te in - ter gen -
ta - re e - ius, an - nun - ti - a - te, an - nun - ti - a - te in - ter gen -
e - ius, 35
tes glo - ri - am e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
tes glo - ri - am e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
tes glo - ri - am e - ius, in om - ni - bus po - pu - lis mi - ra - bi - li - a e -
mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, 40
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius.
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius.
ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius, mi - ra - bi - li - a e - ius.

Example 2 from Choral Public Domain Library