CHOR TEACH

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**Practical Teaching Ideas
for Today's Music Educator**

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From the Editor

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Amanda Bumgarner

This Winter issue of *ChorTeach* features several articles that I hope will be of interest and use to you in your classrooms and with choirs this year. If you would like information on contributing to a future issue, email chorteach@acda.org or visit https://acda.org/chorteach. We would love to hear from you!

Our "Ask a Conductor" question this month focuses on assessing middle school singers for vocal range, and we have two educators weighing in. Trevor Tran's article, "Building an Ensemble of Growth," is based on his interest session from the 2023 ACDA National Conference. He shares five steps toward facilitating an ensemble of growth and developing students with a greater growth mindset.

In "Resisting the Tyranny of the Barline," Stephen Kingsbury attempts to "demystify the repertory by explaining the complexity of Renaissance rhythmic practice." This article will interest music-educators working with high school singers, in the hopes that they can learn an efficient and effective method for teaching rhythmic structures.

We are also reprinting an article that was published in *Choral Journal* in 2016 with an updated introduction from the

author, stating, "We must have a compelling reason for why we do what we do." Consider revisiting (or creating!) a personal philosophy of music education for 2024. Finally, this issue contains a selection of repertoire suggestions for combined choirs from educators in the Eastern ACDA Region.

We hope you enjoy this issue! Consider ways you might contribute your knowledge or expertise to an upcoming *ChorTeach* issue in 2024. You can also write a "Letter to the Editor" with feedback or additional insight on any articles.

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CHOR TEACH

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Ask a Conductor

How do you assess your middle school singers to determine vocal range?

Welcome to the "Ask a Conductor" section of *Chor-Teach*. In this reader-generated Q&A format, readers submit questions related to teaching, conducting, rehearsing with, or singing with K-12 students. Educators who either currently work in K-12 or who have past experience in K-12 will answer the question, with a new question appearing in each issue. Our goal is for this to be a very practical section that applies directly to current concerns in the choral classroom. Readers can submit questions via the link in this Google form (https://forms.gle/oVcamzqp4KwXfo5M9) or by visiting the QR code below.

Ask a Conductor Submission Form

Question: How do you assess your middle school singers to determine vocal range?

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It can be difficult to find the time to assess your middle schoolers' vocal ranges. They're frequently being pulled in other directions for assemblies, make up work, special schedules, testing, or extracurriculars, not to mention all the things that are on our plates. In this article, I will suggest several options that could be used to achieve this goal.

I have found that the most efficient way to determine vocal ranges with my students is during rehearsal/class time. I teach 7-12 choir, and when I meet my 7th graders for the first time, I spend the first few weeks of school prioritizing vocal range exploration. During warm-ups, I go through a large part of the vocal range, from high soprano to low baritone (roughly C3-C6). I have everyone try to sing through everything, while emphasizing self-regulation, telling my students to challenge themselves without causing strain. We explore chest voice vs. head voice/falsetto, and I state clearly and frequently what a typical range is for a soprano, alto, or baritone, using terms like "comfort zone," "hitting your ceiling," or "bottoming out" to give the students an idea of how they might feel when singing certain notes, and therefore in which section

they should most likely sing.

Another method is to use accessible repertoire when helping students explore and discover their voice part. I pick a short, easy rote song voiced in either three-part-mixed or SAB, and teach every part to the whole choir. We explore how each part feels in their voice to help them decide in which section they'd feel most comfortable.

Some cases will arise where you will need to meet with a student one on one to check their vocal range, especially in guiding males through their voice change. It is in these instances where finding a common free time would be helpful, like having a group of baritone friends come down to the choir room for lunch and sing together, even when you only need to hear one of them. This small group environment can bring a level of comfort for the students, especially if it's early in the year and you are still building relationships with them.

Throughout this entire process, there are a few rules that I try my best to follow:

• Make each voice part sound appealing. Advertise each voice part in a way that students can get on board with. The ultimate goal is for students to avoid choosing one voice part over another for the wrong reasons (popularity, friends, etc.) You want to try and make each voice part seem equally as enticing.

• Stress the importance of open communication and self-advocacy. It's crucial that students feel comfortable enough to approach you about their vocal health, and hopefully have some basic terminology to describe how their voice is feeling when they sing. Then you can ask them questions to guide them to a diagnosis and proper steps moving forward, whether it is an issue with technique, vocal health, or switching voice parts.

• Avoid using gendered terms. Especially in younger choirs, not all sopranos or altos are female. It needs to be normalized that males can still be sopranos or altos in middle school, and that everyone's journey through the voice change is different. It doesn't need to be made into a huge deal, just casually mentioned that males can be altos/sopranos at this age too.

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For a sixth-grade or seven/eight treble group, I actually don't assess their ranges. I just assign students to parts randomly. However, I ensure that everyone has a chance to sing the top or bottom part over the course of the year.

For TB groups, it is more integral to look at ranges. I usually do it organically: I have all students sing a simple folk song, and then listen for students who should be singing the bass versus tenor as we sing the song all together. Middle school students are so self-conscious, and I feel strongly about helping them feel safe in my classroom. Having them all sing alone can be anxiety-provoking and also is difficult in terms of management, so that is why I choose to do it in this manner.

For my select groups, I do hear students individually, and I will use vocalises to hear their ranges. In addition, I will have students sing "America (My country tis of thee)" in different ranges to see where their voice might fit best in an ensemble. CT

Building an Ensemble of Growth

Trevor Tran

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This article is based on the auothor's interest session presented at the 2023 ACDA National Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, titled "Growth Mindset: Striving for Improvement in Your Choir and Yourself."

When we look at successful people, we often wonder, how did they create their success? How did they persevere through adversity despite their failures? There are many possible explanations, but I am of the belief that it is because of their mindset. These greats believed that with enough work they could grow and achieve, and that mindset fueled their drive and success.

This idea of a mindset comes from the work of psychologist Carol Dweck.[1] Her research focuses on the link between your belief in abilities and intelligence and your performance through adversity. Mindset exists on a spectrum where one side is a "fixed" mindset or belief that abilities and intelligence cannot be significantly developed. The other side is a "growth" mindset or belief that abili-

ties and intelligence can be developed with effort, learning, and dedication. Dweck's research contends that students with a growth mindset have better intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and perseverance. By believing that effort can develop their abilities, students are more apt to grow and achieve success in their education and overall lives.

As stated earlier, mindset exists on a spectrum, so you cannot have either a fixed mindset or a growth mindset. In addition, your mindset is changeable, and it shifts based on your experience. With the right conditions, it is possible to foster a growth mindset environment in your ensemble, and creating this environment has considerable benefits. In this article I will share steps I have taken to facilitate an ensemble of growth and develop students with a greater growth mindset.

1. Prove it. Where's the evidence?

At the beginning of the school year, I give a lesson on the human brain and how our brains learn. Inadvertently, there are always comments like "Why are we learning this?" and, "This is not biology class!" As we progress through the lesson, the students realize how this is applicable to learning any subject. We talk about brain plasticity

and how our neural pathways expand and strengthen the more times we engage in an activity. For the students who have difficulty comprehending, I use the simple analogy of walking through a forest.

If you happen upon a wild forest and you decide to walk through it for the first time, it is tough. There are branches and bushes blocking your way, and there is no easy trail to walk along. But if you walk the same path every day for thirty days, you start to create a track, and each day the walk becomes easier. This is how our body works when we begin a new activity or learn something new. Our neural pathways from our body up to our brain start narrow and weak. However, the more times we do an activity, the pathways will strengthen, and the activity becomes easier.

Another example is a study that looks at the differences between the brains of individuals born with auditory impairments and the brains of individuals without auditory impairments.[2] The study is an example of how our brain changes depending on the activities we engage in. Through brain scans, scientists have found significant increases in the visual cortex of auditory-impaired individuals compared to non-auditory-impaired individuals. Because of the auditory impairments in the deaf individuals, their bodies rely more on sight and build stronger visual neural pathways. As a result, the visual cortex grows as an accommodation for increased sight reliance. Seeing this research provides evidence to our students that our brains adapt and grow depending on the activities we continually engage in.

Understanding our brain and how our body learns is crucial to building an environment of growth. This understanding facilitates the belief that you can learn and change by continually working at it, and that belief fuels things like intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and perseverance. As you start to build your environment of growth, give your students reasons to believe they can learn. That belief can become reality.

2. Create goals to grow toward

After showing how our brains learn, we need to create goals to work and grow toward. One effective way to craft goals is using the S.M.A.R.T. acronym, which was created in the business world.[3] S.M.A.R.T. stands for specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and timebound. A goal is more likely to be achieved when it is crafted with these five items in mind. For example, a goal of increasing breath capac-

ity: I will increase my breath capacity by tracking how long I can hiss an air stream every day, and I aim to increase the length by five seconds in one month's time. Creating a goal that addresses all five S.M.A.R.T. items requires great specificity, but it gives a clear objective and is easily assessed for achievement.

Furthermore, in my ensembles I break down goals into two categories: broad ensemble goals and specific individuals goals. When creating ensemble goals, a great starting place is the state or national music standards. Sometimes the standard may be quite broad, so this can be broken down into more specific goals that lead to the overall standard. For example, a common state standard for a vocal class is to develop proper vocal technique. Since proper technique requires so many different aspects, you can break it down into multiple specific objectives like engage in proper alignment or demonstrate active breath support to address each aspect. In addition, some ensemble goals should be made in collaboration with your students. These ensemble goals can address what the group wants to achieve during the year. This provides group objectives for everyone to work toward, and it helps bring an ensemble together.

Individual goals make up the other side to goal setting. It is important to have individual goals in order to track individual progress, and individual improvement will translate into improvement of the entire ensemble. In order to create effective individual goals, an element of individual instruction is needed. One way is to provide quick individual lessons, which I named "Vocal Check-ins" in my classroom. These are done multiple times a year typically during the downtime after a concert or at the end of a quarter grading period.

During these vocal check-ins, I meet with each student and see how they are progressing vocally. This time allows me to hear the student's individual voice, assess any vocal issues, and clarify concepts that the student may have been struggling with. From this individual lesson, the student and I then craft specific individual goals for them to work on. Having these goals in place provides an objective to strive for, and growth becomes a product of our progress toward these individual and ensemble goals.

3. Put in the work

Now that we have goals in place, it is time to put in the work. Professional athletes refer to this as "the grind,"

where you continually work on your craft. During this time, it may be difficult to motivate your students and you may hear phrases like, "Do we have to warm-up today?" and "Why do we need to do this again?" These moments can be difficult to navigate, but reminders about how we learn and improve can help.

Another helpful practice during this time is to differentiate or change up how you work toward your goals. In this day in age where attention spans are shorter and stimuli are changing at ever faster rates, we can find more success by changing how we present the exact same information. For example, using a variety of warm-ups that work on the same concept instead of the exact same exercises each day. Or, you can use different activities and games to work on interval skills instead of purely constant repetition. This approach of changing up our instruction and routines is helpful especially when working with students who have difficulty with focus. Not all students have the personality to "grind it out," so we can help them with how we present our material.

4. Evaluate execution and provide feedback

Feedback is the way students adjust to achieve proper execution, and how we present feedback can facilitate or hinder growth. Just like in stage three, feedback differentiation is useful for greater student understanding. By explaining something in multiple ways, students have more opportunities to understand the feedback, which helps with engagement. For example, using a kinesthetic or vocal modeling to achieve the desired sound instead of only verbalizing the feedback. Often, an ensemble will fix an issue faster with a simple kinesthetic instead of a verbal explanation.

Additionally, feedback can only lead to growth if the ensemble is given the opportunity to execute the feedback. Sometimes teachers will give feedback but then immediately move on to something else. When this happens, students are not given a chance to be correct, and then proper execution is never experienced or ingrained. An effective way to ingrain proper execution is to have the students correctly execute their task, praise their success, and then have them execute it correctly multiple times in quick succession. This builds muscle memory and leads to more consistent and retainable improvement.

Furthermore, the type of feedback we give can encourage or discourage growth. In *The Growth Mindset Coach*, these types of feedback are labeled as "person" and "process" feedback.[4] With person feedback, praise or critique focuses on a student's personal traits and qualities, and it conveys the message that the student succeeded because of inherent qualities. For example, the phrase, "You're a natural musician." On the other hand, process feedback acknowledges effort, strategies, or actions that contribute to success. This conveys the message that the student succeeded because of the amount of effort put in. For example, "Great job! Your solo at the concert was amazing because of all the work you put in."

With these two types of feedback, process feedback does more to encourage growth, while person feedback can actually discourage growth. This is especially true with negative feedback and failure. Take, for example, the sentence, "You aren't singing in tune possibly because your ear is tone deaf." When someone gives negative person feedback, that failure becomes the result of innate lack of ability. Since person feedback implies abilities are naturally born, there is little hope to overcome the failure and improve because you cannot change your abilities. To really encourage growth and overcoming challenges, we need to celebrate the effort. With more process feedback, effort becomes a positive and allows students to believe success is in their hands.

5. Self-assessment:
Where am I and where do I want to be?

The last item is a review of the previously executed tasks in relation to the created goals. This can be done in different ways depending on how much time you have. If you are under time constraints, a quick self-assessment can be done with a number rating system. In my class, I will occasionally display a class objective we have been working on. I then have the students show how comfortable they are with the objective by showing a number from one to five. This is a fast way for the students to analyze their progress and a way to see who feels like they are excelling and who may need more help. Based on this information, you then have the option of breaking into pairs and using a mentoring strategy. This is where you have the students who understand the concepts well help and mentor those who are less comfortable with the concepts.

Another self-assessment is a written self-reflection. I typically have the class do this in conjunction with the vocal check-in mentioned above. While I am working with

an individual student, the rest of the class is analyzing their progress. I ask them to name positives and negatives in regards to their progress, how they achieved or did not achieve their goals, and specific actions they can take in their next step. Self-reflection can be daunting for some students because of all the internal analysis. Often the students are not specific enough and this is necessary in order for the self-reflection to be effective. Three simple questions offer an easy way for students to consider their progress:

• Where am I?

• Where do I want to be?

• What do I need to do to get there?

If a student is ever stuck on their self-reflection, have them start there and see what they come up with.

Conclusion

These steps are in no way a guarantee for a perfect growth environment, but they are ways I have found success in my teaching. Our students need to believe in the power of effort to produce growth, and they need us as their teachers to believe in them. If we can teach them the importance of effort and cultivate their growth mindset, we can help them achieve the byproduct of a lifetime of success. CT

NOTES

[1] Carol S. Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006).

[2] Natasha Leporé, et al., "Mapping of Brain Differences in Native Signing Congenitally and Prelingually Deaf Subjects." *Hum Brain Mapp* 970-978 (2010).

[3] Doug Thorpe, "Be SMART About Your Goal Setting." February 8, 2023. Accessed June 28, 2023. https:// dougthorpe.com/ be-smart-about-your-goal-setting/.

[4] Annie Brock and Heather Hundley, *The Growth Mindset Coach* (Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press, 2016).

Resisting the Tyranny of the Barline:
Teaching Metric Stress and "Meter" in Renaissance Polyphony

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Renaissance polyphony presents teachers with a wealth of literature for the high school choral classroom. And yet, anecdotal evidence suggests that high school performance of Renaissance polyphony is rare and, when it is performed, limited to a few marquee-level works such as Palestrina's *Sicut Cervus* and Victoria's *O Magnum Mysterium*. This begs an important question: Why isn't polyphony performed more?

Discussion with secondary-level teachers suggests that it is because Renaissance music seems overwhelming and beyond the technical and artistic reach of many high school ensembles. Issues range from singing in a foreign language to the complexity and overall independence of each voice part. Additionally, in the repertory's purest form, there is a fundamental lack of performance indications, which can lead to issues of interpretation, such as dynamics, phrasing, tempo (both initial tempo and alterations of tempo within a work due to changes of time signature), and even pitch (due to issues of *musica ficta*).

More fundamental is that modern interpreters must grapple with music that differs from much of the music performed by school-age ensembles because it is based on different "harmonic" and rhythmic models. Such models not only require effort to understand, but to some ears (especially when not fully understood or handled properly), can leave the music sounding flat and uninteresting. It is important to recognize that our comprehension of these issues has a profound impact on our interpretation of this repertory. A thorough awareness will greatly influence the soundscape of a given piece. Unfortunately, these problems are made even more difficult by the plethora of editions of early music that pervade the market but vary widely in terms of quality. While addressing all these issues is beyond the scope of one article, this essay attempts to begin demystifying the repertory by explaining the complexity of Renaissance rhythmic practice. It also suggests an efficient and effective means of teaching these rhythmic structures that will not only enlighten, but also enliven, our performances of this compelling music.

Framing the Problem(s): A Case Study

Our discussion will center around a single piece: the "Kyrie" from the *Missa Pange Lingua* by Josquin des Prez (ca. 1450–1521). Often credited with uniting the cerebral style of the Low Countries with the more emotionally driven Italian style, des Prez was a legendary figure in his lifetime, and his music continues to enjoy wide circulation today. The *Missa Pange Lingua* was composed c. 1515, making it a

relatively late work. Structurally, the work is a paraphrase mass, as the composer embedded a pre-extant melody, in this case the *Pange Lingua Gloriosi* plainchant (Figure 1), in each of the voices of the newly created polyphonic work.

Figure 2 illustrates the first page of the *Pange Lingua*'s "Kyrie."[1] This edition, prepared by the author, is not dis-

Figure 1. The *Pange Lingua Gloriosi* plainchant

Figure 2. Josquin des Prez, *Missa Pange Lingua,* "Kyrie I," mm. 1-16.
A well-meaning, but problematic edition

similar from many editions of early music on the market today. And yet, this edition is problematic in many ways. Figure 3 illustrates what the work looks like in manuscript. There are many differences between this manuscript and the edition provided in Figure 2, perhaps the most obvious of which is that the manuscript source does not utilize the layout of a modern score where all musical lines are presented simultaneously. Instead, each part is presented independently, so the simple act of utilizing score format is a modern imposition on the music.

Beyond this obvious disparity, there are other, more subtle differences, many of which are due to editorial decisions made to make the work easier to perform. These include changing the meter/rhythmic level of the notation, altering the key to ensure the ranges lie within appropriate ranges for modern SATB choirs, adding barlines to make the score simpler to follow, and altering the rhythmic notation to reflect modern beat structure more clearly. In sum,

all of these changes were made in good faith to make the work easier to perform.

Why, then, are such changes a problem? On the most basic level, it is because we, as performers, are unable to determine from a simple examination of the score what information is original and what features are choices made by the editor. Ideally, the modern performing edition would be constructed to illustrate what is original and what has been changed by the editor. However, this comparison also illustrates a deeper problem: There is a conflict between Renaissance rhythmic structures and modern metric structures, an issue that this author refers to as the "tyranny of the barline."

Modern meter arranges metric pulses into a repeating pattern wherein all the metric pulses are placed within a hierarchy of beats. When performers look at a modern score, we understand that the pulse at the beginning of a measure group is the most prominent, the most emphasized.

Figure 3. Josquin, *Missa Pange Lingua*- Manuscript
From the "Occo Codex," MS IV.922 of the Bibliothèque royale de Belgique in Brussels

Although the exact nature of the pattern is going to differ from meter to meter, the remaining beats in a measure fall in a hierarchy of importance in which each beat is not only relational to the first beat, but to every other beat as well. Thus, when we look at modern four-four time, we understand that beat 1 is the strongest, with beat 3 being somewhat strong as well. Beat 2 is relatively weak, and it is usually the function of beat 4 to lead into the next 1.

Renaissance polyphony, with its absence of barlines, functions differently. It is crucial for modern performers to understand this difference and the ways in which it is made aurally manifest.[2] First and foremost, there are no barlines. The addition of barlines to this repertoire is a modern conceit designed to aid in performance. This means that although there is a clear sense of pulse (called the *tactus*[3]) and a clear relationship between pitches at successive metric levels that is specified by the mensural signature, the music does not fit into a precise, recurring sense of hierarchy of these pulses. Rather, the primary organizing principle is that rhythm is constructed in groups of twos and threes that occur at multiple metric levels.

The main metric level at which these groupings occur is governed by the mensuration signature. However, secondary patterns also occur at other metric levels. Because Renaissance polyphony tends to contrast these rhythmic groupings, not only within a voice part but across voice parts, they often work against the metric stress that is implied by the addition of regular barlines in modern additions. Emphasizing these groupings results in a more angular and dynamic rhythmic presentation. This approach was argued for as far back as John B. Haberlen's excellent 1972 article, "Microrhythms: The Key to Vitalizing Renaissance Music,"[4] and this is the approach that is advocated in this article.

Setting the Table:
Selecting an Edition

How, then, do we arrive at this enlivened rhythmic presentation? The process must, necessarily, start with finding a good edition of the work to be performed. As I have argued, a good edition is one where the performer can easily determine what aspects of the score were decided by the composer and what aspects were decided by the editor. In the realm of rhythm and meter, one helpful tool is selecting a publication that utilizes *mensurstriche*[5] instead of modern barlines (Figure 4). The use of *mensurstriche* represents a viable compromise between the need by modern performers for the visual reference points provided by barlines without the need to shoehorn rhythmic patterns into those barlines. As Chester L. Alwes explains:

> The presence of barlines in modern editions of Renaissance music does indeed help the modern singer by aligning the parts vertically; unfortunately, the need for ties to divide the original note values so as to fit the measure, and the vertical sonority that results from such an alignment of all the

Figure 4. The Use of Mensurstriche in a Renaissance Score

parts, are inimical to the linear nature of sixteenth-century polyphony.[6]

Instead, using *mensurstriche*, the original rhythmic notation (which often utilizes note-values that would cross measure boundaries—see, for example, the altus part in Figure 6 as it moves between "measures" 14 and 15) can be preserved, allowing the performers to identify the true nature of the rhythmic structure more readily. Once these metrics have been divorced from the imposition of modern meter, singers are free to celebrate the implied metric stress of the metric groupings. Our task, then, as conductors and educators, is to recognize these patterns and teach them in a meaningful way. Once a good edition of the score has been selected, I recommend a three-stage series of instruction that involves preparation, basic instruction, and refinement.

A Process for Teaching Metric Groupings

Step 1. Score Marking

The preparatory phrase is the responsibility of the conductor alone. Here, the purpose is to determine the metric groupings in each melodic line. These groupings must then be marked before they are taught to the members of the ensemble. The actual act of determining the metric groupings is largely a subjective art—and this subjectivity is part of the perceived difficulty in performing music of this sort.

There are, however, some key features that one can examine to gain insight into their potential structure. The first of these is text stress. As most vocal musicians are aware, language has a certain ebb and flow determined by the relative stress and unstress of syllables. In speech, these stresses can be recognized not only by the relative loudness of a syllable (dynamic accent), but by the length that the syllabus is sustained (quantitative accent: known in music theory as an agogic accent). Composers generally try to craft melody lines that are reflective of these textual stresses, placing emphasized pitches at moments of textual stress. Below is the text of the "Kryie" as shown in Ron Jeffers's *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire, Volume 1: Sacred Latin Texts.*[7]

> Kýrie eléison,
> Chríste eléison,
> Kýrie eléison.

One of the many helpful features of Jeffers's text is that he utilizes accent marks in order to indicate stressed syllables. Knowing where these stresses occur, and that they will often correlate to stressed pitches (which are often the beginning notes of rhythmic groups), can help us determine where these rhythmic groups begin. It should be noted that this can serve only as a vague guide, as text underlay in the original source material is often imprecise, leaving it to the editor to make more or less informed choices about the correlation between text and melody.

Fortunately, language is not the only guide that conductors have available when determining the location of metric groups. There are musical features that help as well. The first of these musical features is rhythmically accented pitches. In simplest terms, pitches of relatively longer note duration are likely going to indicate metric stress. Additionally, change in melodic direction can serve as an important guidepost. When melodies change direction, the pivot note of that change is going to receive melodic emphasis. Thus, notes after a leap, or just prior to a change in direction, can also serve as the beginning of a new metric group.

Once the groupings have been identified, they need to be marked. Any system clear to both the conductor and ensemble members will suffice, but Chester L. Alwes has advocated a system of marking these groupings that can be extremely useful. This system utilizes brackets to indicate grouping. Since the tacit assumption is that metric groups occur more frequently in groupings of two pulses than of three, Alwes's system assumes groupings of two, unless marked. Markings for these three-pulse groups utilize a bracket that is preceded by a numeral three, as seen below.

$$3\overline{\qquad}\,\rceil$$

These brackets can then be placed so that they encompass all of the notes in each three-pulse grouping. Alwes explains his system in the editor's note to his edition of the "Kyrie" from Palestrina's *Missa Brevis:*

> Numerous brackets appear over the individual vocal lines. These are not triplets; rather, they indicate note groupings… which arise either from the text accent or agogic stress… Notes under the sign $3\overline{\qquad}\,\rceil$ should be performed as if they were a ternary measure with crusic accent on beat one, anacrusic stress on three, and no stress on two.[8]

As mentioned above, even with this set of fairly specific guidelines, applying those guidelines to a specific musical context can be difficult. Ultimately, identifying the metric groups in context is a highly subjective activity, and so differences in interpretation will emerge. Figure 5 illustrates a brief excerpt from the mass, as well as one possible solution for the marking of the metric groups within the excerpt. As the marked meter symbol makes clear, our basic grouping consists of the half-note existing in groups of three, with each of those half notes being divided (as we would expect) into two quarter-notes. Thus, we are expecting a basic metric organization of groups of two quarter notes. This pattern works well for the first three half notes, as well as for the first whole note, but then falls apart immediately.

The placement of the text, the change of direction following the pitch, as well as the emphasis placed on the note through both the height of the pitch and its duration seem to indicate that the half note "c" over the syllable "lei" would receive the next stress. This leaves a grouping of three quarter notes between the whole-note "e" and that "c," which is marked in the potential solution. These groupings of three persist for two more groups that are suggested by both duration and change of melodic direction. The final group of three starts with the only other half-note "c" in the excerpt. The remaining rhythms in the excerpt can be convincingly explained as groups of two.

Step 2. Modified Count-Singing

Once the score has been marked, we can begin devising a strategy for teaching the groupings to the ensemble. One teaching process that I have found effective involves the use of a modified system of count-singing. Made famous by

Robert Shaw, count-singing involves removing the text and replacing it with counting syllables. Generally, those counting syllables involve not only the metric counts on which any given pitch begins, but also the division (or potentially subdivision) of those pulses. Thus, a half-note in 4/4 time beginning on beat one would be sung as "one and two and."

The purpose of count singing is to not only unify rhythm across the ensemble through the internalization of a sense of inner pulse, but also to help reinforce the hierarchy of rhythmic stress inherent in each meter. However, since this process is very much tied to meter, with the counting pattern beginning again on one at the beginning of each new measure, the system must necessarily be modified slightly when teaching the metric groups in Renaissance polyphony.

This modification is rather straightforward. Regardless of the presence or absence of barlines and the relation of any given note to its placement within the meter suggested by that barline, in the modified system the members of the ensemble count only the metric groupings. Thus, any group of two is counted as "one, two" and any group of three is counted as "one, two, three"[9] regardless of where it falls in relation to any editorial imposition of a modern meter. Utilizing this system, our example of the excerpt from Figure 5 would be counted as shown in Figure 6 on the next page.

Once the specifics of this system are understood by the singers, we can start teaching the metric stress of each line. Initially, it is beneficial to have ensemble members sing from a score that not only has the groupings marked, but also has the countings for those groupings marked. Thus, a version of the entire score with counts included as they are presented in Figure 6 is extremely helpful.

The teaching process is complex. It is important to cre-

Figure 5. The *Superius* entry in "Kyrie I"
Both Unmarked and Marked Metric Groupings

ate a sequence of instruction that is additive, but in a way that is not overwhelming and does not skip over steps that are necessary to internalize the intended musical outcome. To this end, it is beneficial to begin by introducing the pitches and rhythms on a neutral syllable. This can be done for each line, one at a time. Once the choir can perform the pitches and rhythms of each line successfully, with a degree of consistency, the ensemble can be acclimated to the count singing.

To provide a sense of reinforcement, it is beneficial to split the class into two groups. Initially, one group sings the already comfortable neutral syllable while the remaining half chants (not sings) the counts. The next step is to switch what each half of ensemble is doing. After this, half of the group can count-sing the line, while half sings on the neutral syllable. Again, this can be repeated, switching what each half of the ensemble is doing. Finally, the entire ensemble should be ready to count-sing the line. Obviously, at each stage in the process it is important to provide constructive feedback and to only move on from a given step when singers can successfully complete the step. This process should then be repeated for each line.

Throughout, it is important to foster the emerging independence of each line, and thus of each section. Once the choir is comfortable on each of the individual parts, they can start putting the parts together in various combinations of two, three, and eventually four or more (depending on the score). Because Renaissance polyphony is not dependent upon the regular patterning of modern meter, each line will manifest its own "metric" patterning that will contrast with the other parts around it. This "metric" independence can be seen clearly in Figure 7 on the next page. Although only two of the four voices are shown, even here the independence of each line is obvious. It does pose challenges for the independence of each section. This feature, however, is one of the most interesting aspects of

Renaissance music, and far from being minimized should be *celebrated,* as it not only highlights the rhythmic aspect of each line, but also brings out the independence of each line through emphasizing the contrast of simultaneous metric groupings.

It is worth noting that as the ensemble grows in their level of proficiency with the skills that are required in this process, not every step in the aforementioned process will be necessary. In addition, although this process works well for teaching the basic metrics of Renaissance note groupings, it is unlikely that any pedagogical process, including this one, is going to be successful upon its initial use. Repeated applications will, inevitably, yield improved results. However, repetition alone will not be sufficient. The reflective practitioner will be constantly looking for new ways to improve and refine student understanding.

One way to reinforce the metrics of the counting is to add movement to the count-singing. Research has shown that adding psychomotor activity of this kind can have lasting benefits.[10] One such activity might involve adding a stepping motion on the first count of each grouping. Another might involve a sweep across the body with the arm, also on the first count of each grouping. In this way, the rhythmic emphasis of one is not only emphasized vocally, but reinforced physically.

Conclusion

Figure 8a and 8b on the next two pages illustrates two versions of the score for the opening "Kyrie" from the *Missa Pange Lingua.* The first version has the groupings marked, and has the counts for those groupings added in place of the text. The second version is a performance edition wherein the text has been added back in. As both of these versions make clear, there is a great deal of rhythmic interest within each voice part. Additionally, the rhythmic

1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 & 1 2 & 3 1 2 & 1 2 3 1 2 & 1 2 1 2 & 1 2

Figure 6. Counting of the *Superius* entry in "Kyrie I"

structures of each line are independent from those of all of the other lines.

When emphasized, the resulting impact of these groupings is not only the creation of rhythmic vitality and phrase-shape within each individual line, but also the creation of a tapestry of ever-shifting rhythmic patterns from which individual patterns emerge and then recede from a listener's attention. This has the effect of moving the listener's attention back and forth across the ensemble. Thus, rather than a homogeneous sounding collection of indistinct lines, the heightened drama created by emphasizing these rhythmic groupings has a profound impact on the aesthetic impact of the piece.

Unfortunately, not only is the presence of shifting metric patterns within a single line alien to many of today's young choral musicians, but the independence of each line's pattern to those of the other lines presents some real problems for those wishing to teach these patterns, and the structures behind them, to their ensembles.

One effective method lies in the application of a count-singing approach that is altered to account for polyphony's lack of use of modern barlines and the recurring metric patterns that they imply. This pedagogical approach can then be reinforced through the addition of kinesthetic activity designed to emphasize the individuality of each grouping. Initially, this may seem like a lot of work that takes time away from the other aspects of preparing for performance. However, as is the case with teaching any aspect of music literacy, the time is well spent, for it will not only yield a sharper, more rhythmically well-defined performance in the present, but in the long term it will impact the way that our students understand and perform a wide range of musics. Ultimately, that creation of transferable skills should be the goal of any music instruction. As this article makes clear, the rhythmic skills that are developed and the independence that is required to articulate them, make polyphony a repertory deeply worthy of inclusion in our choral classrooms. CT

Figure 7. *Superius* and *Altus* in "Kyrie I"

**Figure 8a.** Two versions of "Kyrie I"
Version 1

Figure 8b. Two versions of "Kyrie I"
Version 2

NOTES

[1] As this section is the first "Kyrie" section in a tripartite "Kyrie," "Christe," "Kyrie" structure, it will be referred to as "Kyrie I," hereafter.

[2] An exhaustive examination of the nature of Renaissance rhythmic practice can be found in Ruth I Deford, *Tactus, Mensuration, and Rhythm in Renaissance Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[3] For a discussion of the nature of tactus, refer to Kingsbury, Stephen, "Tempo and Mensural Proportion in the Music of the 16th Century," *Choral Journal* (April 2002): 25-33.

[4] John B. Haberlen, "Microrhythms: The Key to Vitalizing Renaissance Music," *Choral Journal*, vol. 13/3 (November, 1972), pp. 11-14.

[5] Mensurstriche is a system of utilizing barlines drawn between staves rather than through them invented by Heinrich Besseler.

[6] Chester L. Alwes, "Josquin's 'Ave Maria…virgo serena', pt. 2: Rhythm and Accent," *Choral Journal*, vol. 33/4 (November, 1992), 16.

[7] Ron Jeffers, *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire, Volume 1: Sacred Latin Texts* (Corvallis, Oregon: earthsongs, 1988).

[8] Chester L. Alwes, editor. *G. P. da Palestrina: Missa Brevis—Kyrie (SATB)*. Hope Music (Carol Stream, IL), 1994.

[9] The author, in keeping with Shaw's practice, prefers to utilize the word "tee" in place of "three" due to the amount of time required to articulate the "thr" consonant cluster, which is long enough to often negatively impact the rhythmic accuracy the the third pulse.

[10] A great article about this topic is Shehan, P. K. (1987). Movement: The Heart of Music. *Music Educators Journal*, 74(3), 24–30.

Revisiting Your Personal Philosophy of Music Education

BRIAN C. MURRAY
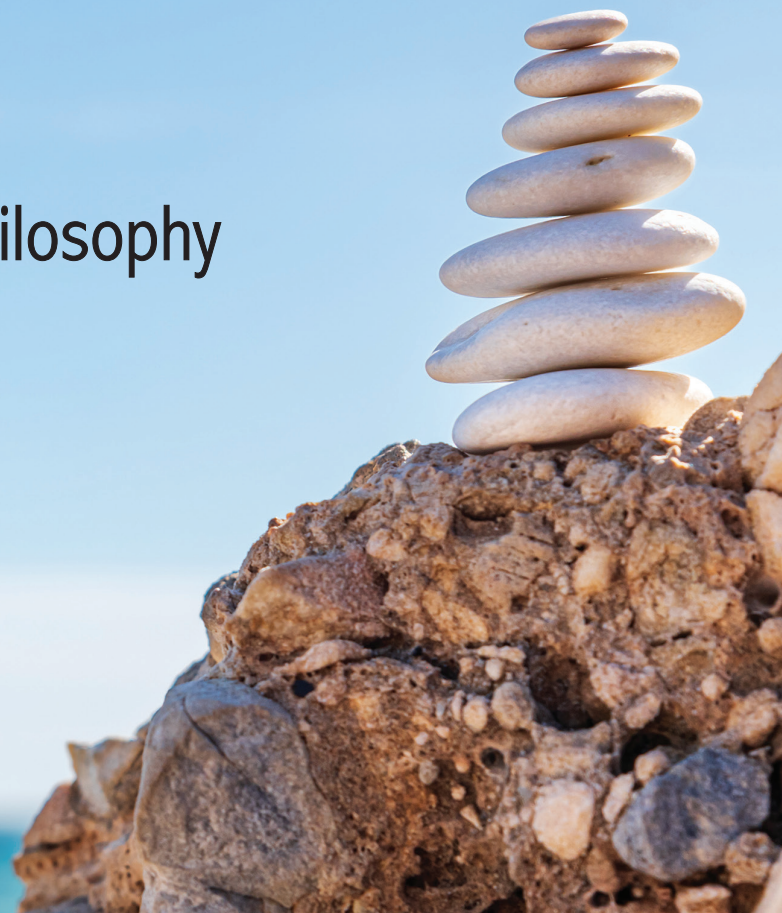
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Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from Choral Journal, *April 2016 (Vol 56, No 9). The author has included an introduction for this 2024 reprint.*

It is surprising to think of 2016 as eight years ago, but that is when the *Choral Journal* originally published this article. All of our lives have changed tremendously since then—as they will again in eight more years. Wonderful additions and tragic losses have marred this span of time; we are different people than we were before. Now, more than ever, it seems, it is more important to have an impetus for our work as music educators.

Most music education students at the university write a philosophy of music education for one (or more) of their courses. This statement (whether they call it a personal philosophy, teaching statement, or something different altogether) is not something to craft when required for a class or for job applications and then forget. It merits revisiting and considering why you make the choices you do. If we hope to instill the trait of life-long learning into our students, we, too, must strive to ameliorate our craft as teachers. We must have a compelling reason for why we do what we do.

I find it beneficial to look back at this philosophy and ruminate on similarities and differences over time. As we change, our philosophy of music education changes. Major life moments—births, deaths, health crises, changes in relationships—influence who we are as individuals. Our philosophy should metamorphose, then, reflecting who we are and what we value. The content of this statement of beliefs serves as our personal credo of music education. The congruent behaviors of said beliefs must align with who we are.

Holding fast to your values, perhaps it is time for you to revisit your personal philosophy of music education. Allow it, not capricious whims nor stagnation, to direct all your decisions as an educator.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "A man is but a product of his thoughts. What he thinks he becomes." This idea encourages everyone to contemplate his or her beliefs—to consider the foundational principles that govern everyday decision making. Every choice has repercussions; therefore,

it is essential that music educators understand and are able to articulate their beliefs about why music is important, why it should be included in the school curriculum, what kind of music should be experienced, who should teach it, and who should learn it. In creating a personal philosophy of music education, educators establish a *raison d'être* for their life's work—a foundation and impetus behind every decision they make.

Why Music?

"The arts exist to make the seemingly ordinary extraordinary."[1] Music is an integral element in the lives of all people. It has a transformative power over everyone it contacts, an unparalleled ability to communicate directly with the soul and transcend reality.

> Music, in its capacity to achieve a sense of deep significance by going beyond the meanings made available by words to meanings only sounds can bring into being, has always been a major source of, or an important accompaniment to, the quest for profound experience.[2]

Music is more than an activity, a pastime, or a hobby; it is integral to the human experience. To be able to express meaning and emotion, to prompt the senses through intricately planned noises, to unite unique individuals momentarily through a shared communal endeavor, is the art of music. Through music we experience the past, communicate with the present, and inform the future about the essence of humanity. "Music…is a demonstration of the human capacity to think—to be intelligent."[3]

Why Music in School?

"The primary aim of education is not to enable students to do well in school, but to help them do well in the lives they lead outside of school."[4] A lifelong pursuit of musical experiences is valuable for everyone. It is integral, then, that music be included in school curriculum. If students do not have the opportunity to study music in schools, where or when will they? Consider the number of families that own pianos and encourage their students to take piano lessons. Valuing private musical instruction is no longer ubiquitous— it has been relegated to the affluent, educated, social elite. Without the free music education offered by public schools,

society relinquishes the opportunity to musically educate all children, and services such as iTunes, Spotify, Pandora, and YouTube take the place of general music teachers, ensemble directors, and private music instructors in the music education of America's students.

When students are exposed to and trained in music in school, they are more likely to participate in music as adults. Schools have the ability to encourage students to actively participate in musical ensembles where they develop music reading, performance, critical thinking, work ethic, teamwork, and social skills. Through this, students have the opportunity to develop a passion for music making that motivates them to actively pursue musical outlets for the rest of their lives.

> The American public school is responsible not only for educating citizens to develop and maintain a democratic society but also for engendering in individuals the desire to continue their education throughout their lives.[5]

What Music?

> All music has a place in the curriculum. Not only does the Western art tradition need to be preserved and disseminated, music educators also need to be aware of other music that people experience and be able to integrate it into classroom music instruction.[6]

The music that educators choose to teach has an indelible impact on the musical development of their students. This music becomes their curriculum, the conduit through which students learn myriad musical elements, critical thinking, and sociocultural awareness. These pieces, then, should have merit so students experience the highest quality repertoire available.

Careful consideration should be given to each piece of music that educators put in front of their students. It is the obligation of all music educators to inform their students about high-quality repertoire—music representative of the most prominent composers from all time periods. It is also crucial to program music that makes students feel successful. The art of repertoire selection falls under the Goldilocks rule: the music conductors select should not be too

hard, making students to feel unsuccessful, neither should it be too easy, shielding them from the necessary challenges that accompany skill development. Other factors music educators should heed include the appropriateness and interest of the text, the range of each voice part—it is not enjoyable to sing something that is uncomfortable—the skill level of the ensemble, the social and cultural composition of the ensemble, and the way a song relates to the other repertoire the ensemble performs.

Additionally, music educators should incorporate high-quality music from various cultures and genres to expose students to differing forms of musical expression and to promote appreciation for and tolerance of differences. Music serves as a pathway for teaching humanity to students in an attempt to expand their social and cultural understanding.

> For many students, school might be the only place they come to know cultures different from their own. The materials you choose offer you the privileged position of shaping children's way of seeing the world.[7]

Who Should Teach?

Teaching music as a profession requires longsuffering commitment, unyielding passion, fierce tenacity, and genuine care and patience. People who desire to pursue music education as a profession must strive to create a classroom culture where creativity, musical artistry, friendship, safety, and learning are fostered continually. They must be lifelong learners themselves—modeling a quest for continual self-improvement for their students. Many are not equipped to fulfill the role of musical expert, professional educator, mentor, counselor, role model, or any of the other tasks music educators take on every day. While the demands and stress of this profession are at times unbending, the intangible rewards associated with positively impacting the lives of students through music endure and sustain.

Music educators have the fortunate challenge of bridging two distinct genres: the world of musical performance and the field of education. To be effective, music educators must be fluent in both methodologies; lacking in either arena greatly limits teachers' ability to positively influence students. A music performer is not necessarily equipped with the correct skill set to be a music educator; likewise, a general educator is not adequately trained in music to lead the musical development of students. The skills and traits that mysteriously combine to make up the fabric of a great music educator seem impossible to manifest in one human being. Fortunately, educators need not exhibit perfection in all areas of pedagogy to be effective. A teacher's weaknesses only hinder student achievement when they go unchecked. Awareness, self-reflection, and motivation to improve are the keys to continued development, success, and efficacy in the profession of music education.

> Educators must maintain in the forefront of their minds a concrete understanding of why they do what they do.

Who Should Learn?

In the Housewright Declaration of 1999, leaders in the field of music education exclaimed that "all persons, regardless of age, cultural heritage, ability, venue, or financial circumstance deserve to participate fully in the best music experiences possible."[8] Additionally, "Musical expression can enlarge the personalities and enrich the social living of all, not just a few, children."[9] All students should have the opportunity to study music in school, and then, ideally, continue to experience music in various contexts throughout the rest of their lives. Fortunately, music educators have the ability to reach and communicate with all people through music, regardless of factors such as ability level, language, mental fortitude, and age. While it may not speak to everyone in the same way, music is unique in its ability to be enjoyed and valued by everyone.

Developing a personal philosophy is paramount to the success of any professional. In the same way that major corporations have mission statements, countries have constitutions, and religions have sacred texts, educators must maintain in the forefront of their minds a concrete understanding of why they do what they do. This philosophical exploration is more than the amalgamation of novel ideas; rather, it is the engendering and the molding of a mind-set from which the teacher can shape the musical experiences of future generations.

This enormous responsibility placed on music educators

is palpable—weighing, pressing, and twisting deeper with every ineligible student, every unpleasant parent-teacher conference, every irrelevant assignment from administrators, and every out-of-tune chord at the end of an otherwise flawless performance. Regardless of this seemingly insurmountable burden, music educators press on, continuing the venerable work before them. Holding fast to their renewed understanding of why they do what they do, music educators directly affect how they engender hope for the future—by fostering humanity in young adults through music. CT

NOTES

[1] B Reimer, "Why Do Humans Value Music?" *Vision 2020: The Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education.* Ed. Clifford K. Madsen (Reston: MENC, 2000).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] E. W Eisner, "Preparing for Today and Tomorrow," *Educational Leadership* 61 (2004): 6-10.

[5] R. W. Tyler, "Why Do We Have Public Schools in America?" *What Schools Are For*, 2nd ed. Ed. J. I. Goodlad (Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1994).

[6] Clifford K. Madsen, *Vision 2020: The Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education* (Reston: MENC, 2000).

[7] C. R. Abril, "Music that Represents Culture: Selecting Music with Integrity," *Music Educators Journal* 93 (2006): 38-45.

[8] Madsen, Vision 2020.

[9] L. B. Pitts, *The Music Curriculum in a Changing World* (New York and Chicago: Silver Burdett Company, 1944).

K-12 Resources: Combined Choir Ideas

by Will Gunn, Juan Carlos Tavarez, and Karla McClain

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https://acdaeast.org/2022/11/23/combined-choir-ideas/

We are often charged with combining older and younger choirs together for a culminating song. This can offer a great opportunity for younger students to see what their future might look like in choir, as well as show the community the power of choral music across the district. We wanted to offer some of our favorite pieces for combined choirs for you to include in your next district concert! Contributors: Will Gunn, High School R&R Chair; Juan Carlos Tavarez, Elementary R&R Chair; Karla Mc-Clain, Middle School R&R Chair.

Combined High School/Middle School

"Vive La Compagnie" arr. Audrey Snyder (TB)
If you do any kind of Tenor/Bass only event, this is a great song for the students to sing together. The ranges work well for middle school voices, and the message of long live friendship is perfect. I have done this piece with soloists singing the call, which gives students opportunities to shine as well.

"Can You Hear?" by Jim Papoulis (SATB)
Kids love Papoulis. It's as simple as that! His lyrics are always meaningful and intentional, and they give opportunities to talk about things that are important to children and how their voices matter. This piece has opportunities for solos. There are other voicings as well if this is something you would want to do with just treble singers.

"The Cuckoo" arr. Robert Hugh (SABB)
This was a huge hit when we had our combined concert with all the sending schools. Great range for the baritone voices and gives a lot of opportunity for claps, cajon, and additional folk instruments.

"Somewhere Only We Know" arr. Ed Lojeski (SAB)
This *Glee* arrangement is really popular and has great ranges for all voices. Add a drum set and you've got a hit!

"Seize the Day" arr. Roger Emerson (SAB)
Very repetitive and quick to put together! It also has several different voicings if the baritone part gets too low.

Combined High School/Middle School/Elementary

"It Takes a Village" by Joan Szymko
This works really well for combining large groups! I have performed this with the younger students singing the "solo" at the opening, and then staying on the melody, and then the older students sing the parts that best fit (MS might do SAT or B, and high school picks up the SATB parts). The message behind the song is beautiful and a great way to closer the concert hearing young and older voices together. I have also done this piece with community members singing with us!

"Turn the World Around" arr. Mark Hayes

When we did this as a district-wide concert finale, we split up the song so the younger kids sang certain parts, and the older kids sang other verses and then we came together at the end. It was a great way to make it more doable to teach and made an antiphonal effect as we performed this in a gymnasium around families.

"This Christmastide (Jessye's Carol) HS and Elementary" arr. Donald Fraser.

This is one of my favorite pieces! We put the younger students on the solo sections and then they sang the soprano line. Hearing those beautiful unchanged voices with the mature sound of high school students is beautiful.

"The Road Home" by Stephen Paulus

One idea with this piece is to put the younger students on the melody and have the high school students fill out the rest of the harmonies. Gorgeous melody throughout!

"Sisi Ni Moja" by Jacob Narvarud (SATB)

I know so many choirs did this when it first came out, but it works so well for combined groups. It is repetitive, and the message of "we are one" is always a great one when doing a combined concert.

"I Am the Voice that Sings" by Michael Bussewitz-Quarm (SATB)

Very accessible and beautiful melody throughout! A great text to dive into about the power of choirs. Many different voicing options to fit what you need!

"Jambo by Teddy Kalanda Harrison" arr. Jacob Narverud (SSA)

Also available in SAB, SATB, TBB. Beautiful and consistent melody throughout the piece. I love the solo option for singers to sing freely to play with phrasing. Piece offers the opportunity to fill in the space with percussion and movement.

Combined Middle/Elementary

"I'm Going Up a Yonder" arr. Martin Sirvatka

This piece is stunning! It basically works as a double choir piece, so you can have the little ones sing the melody on part one, and then split the older singers on part two in 3 parts.

On the last page, I keep the younger students on the melody, and then have the older students sing the descant because it is pretty challenging.

"The Water is Wide/Bring Me Little Water Sylvie" arr. Rollo Dilworth (2 part)

I always love how Rollo Dilworth takes a folk song we all know and gives it a Gospel filter with his rhythmic and harmonic treatment of it. This arrangement is great for teaching phrasing and articulation.

"Tue, Tue" arr. Ruth Morris Gray (2 part)

Vocal ostinatos join one by one in the opening of this rhythmic arrangement of the authentic Ghanaian folk song. Unison lines, block triads, and a reset of the dynamics in the choral bridge are a blast. Repeated sections make for quick learning and easy memorization. I love the simplicity of this piece, yet with the layered ostinatos, it makes space for a sophisticated fun piece.

"Sing to Me" by Adrea Ramsey (SA)

This is just an absolutely gorgeous piece! An uplifting text by Ella Wheeler Wilcox is set to charming music in this wonderful piece with melodic interest in all parts and conservative ranges. Wonderful piece to practice mixed meters, duration, breath support.

"As Long As I Have Music, Words" by Don Besig and Music by Nancy Price (2 Part)

This beautiful lyric ballad, which practically sings itself, tells about the special power music has to lift our hearts and minds.

"I See the Moon, Words and Music" by Douglas Beam (2 Part)

Do you ever look out at the moon and just think about how beautiful it is? So far, yet so far away. This is a beautiful two-part piece partner song. A simple yet sophisticated piece!

"Kuku Eé" by Eva Ugalde (SA)

This is really just a fun, playful piece to introduce to your upper elementary students and beginning middle school to perform. This piece has room for body percussion and movement opportunities. You can explore dynamics, solo sections at the beginning and end, and diction work! Find many interpretations on YouTube. CT

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

THOMAS BLUE

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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 ones 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 elements 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 Zero[4] 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.

Editor's Note: This article continues with more on the score and a personal reflection. Read the full article in the Summer 2020 issue of ChorTeach at acda.org/chorteach.

NOTES

[1] http://www.dictionary.com

[2] www.edglossary.org

[3] Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (Basic Books, 1983, first edition).

[4] http://www.pz.harvard.edu

[5] Howard Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* (Basic Books, 2000): 33-34.

[6] Ibid., 114

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

[8] Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander, *The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life* (Penguin Books, 2002).

[9] Tim Sharp, *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

Call for Submissions

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In this reader-generated Q&A format, readers submit questions related to teaching, conducting, rehearsing with, or singing with K-12 students. Submit a question via the following link (https://forms.gle/oVcamzqp4KwXfo5M9) or by visiting the QR code below.

Ask a Conductor Submission Form

Email **chorteach@acda.org** with questions, comments, feedback, or to submit an article.
We look forward to hearing from you!