



ON THE VOICE

SHARON HANSEN, EDITOR

Beautiful Singing with Developmental Choirs

by

Jessica Napoles, Sandra Babb, Rebecca Reames, Matthew L. Garrett, and Judy Bowers

Jessica Napoles is Associate Professor of Choral Music Education at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, UT <Jessica.Napoles@utah.edu>.

Sandra Babb is Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education at Queens College, CUNY in Flushing, NY <sandra.babb@qc.cuny.edu>.

Rebecca Reames is Associate Professor of Music at the State University of New York at Potsdam's Crane School of Music in Potsdam, NY <reamesr@potsdam.edu>.

Matthew L. Garrett is Director of Choirs and Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH <Glm59@case.edu>.

Judy Bowers is Professor of Choral Music Education at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL <jbowers@fsu.edu>.

Preface

by
Judy Bowers

As choral musicians strive to maintain the rich choral culture found in schools and churches across the country, middle school choral music programs have become more carefully scrutinized. Recently, the first national middle school/junior high choral conference was held in Dallas, Texas (MS/JH National Conference for Choral Music, hosted by ACDA and the Cambiata Institute), underscoring the value placed upon training developing singers in mid-adolescent years. Interest sessions at the national conference reflected an array of related topics involved in middle school music, including matching pitch, building tone, selecting appropriate music for developmental choirs, teaching for transfer and critical analysis, and providing music and materials that support creation of beautiful choral performance. Beyond creating healthy vocal technique, those

who work with young singers must also establish foundational knowledge in related areas that play varying roles in choral development. Choral music instructors for middle school students bear responsibility for the dual goals of developing vocal skills and literacy in music; these equally important goals can lead to musical independence. As students gain knowledge and develop skills, they move from being developmental, or "works in progress," to young performers who sing expressively.

This article aims to provide practical information about multiple aspects of music-making in middle school choirs. Five invited authors address pitch matching, tone building, literature selection, pedagogical materials, and expressive singing.

Pitch Matching: Challenges and Solutions

by
Jessica Napoles

One important relationship that merits investigation is pitch matching and range. It seems axiomatic that students will have an easier time matching pitches inside their range than outside of it. Oftentimes, boys are labeled "non pitch matchers" when in reality they are struggling with phonation and vocal production due to range limitations. This issue is further exacerbated when well-intentioned directors place all the boys on one part in music for mixed voices, a process that may make sense considering numbers and vocal independence. Often-heard explanations include: "I only have three boys, I can't split them up," or "I need the strong singers to help the weak singers who just want to sing the melody." But this arrangement may not facilitate healthy singing. Frequently, having more parts is actually more helpful, because there is a greater likelihood that boys can find sections of the music in their range. Three-part-mixed music and SAB can be vocally tricky, especially if all boys are asked to sing the bottom line, which may be too high for basses (three-part mixed) or too low for tenors (SAB).

One possible solution available to directors is to re-voice treble music, i.e., SSA or SSAA music. Music in these voicings can be divided evenly across the girls' voice parts; then, with careful consideration, conductors should designate which part can be sung by which boys, according to their comfortable ranges. Cambiata boys may still be comfortable singing the alto line at pitch, whereas developing basses may have an easier time singing the line an octave below what is written. First and second soprano lines

sung down an octave may be comfortable for tenors. Some advantages to this method are: (1) the girls are supporting the parts, so there is still "safety in numbers;" and (2) directors have more options to tailor parts for the boys, depending on what information they already have about their ranges, which will provide an opportunity for success and beauty in the boys' singing.

One example of a treble piece that can be revoiced is the Allan Naplan *Al Shlosha D'Varim* (Boosey & Hawkes, 48004534). Essentially this is a partner song with two melodies introduced and then paired, the range of the first melody is E⁴-B⁴, with G⁴-E⁵ being the range of the second melody. The tenors can sing the second melody easily, one octave below. The bass ranges can also be accommodated in the first melody, one octave below. Table 1 lists other selections that can be altered/adapted to accommodate mixed choirs using treble music.

Ethical issues arise when considering re-voicing of music. Questions arise as

to whether the assignment of different parts changes the intention of the composer; and whether the change is better. Although a case can certainly be made for keeping the music in its original form, others might argue that if slight adaptation allows the music to be performed in an accessible way, the ends justify the means. It is important to check with district and state guidelines if a group performs a piece with altered assignment of voice parts at an evaluation. The director must also be willing to listen to make sure the voicing "makes musical sense:" for example, having the basses end on the third of a chord may not be appropriate nor pleasing to the ear. There are also instances when SATB music is perfectly appropriate for middle school/junior high students, where ranges are well accommodated and re-voicing is not necessary. In every case, it is incumbent upon the director both to make decisions that are in the best interest of her students and follow the procedures as outlined by the music education organizations.

Table 1
Adaptable Choral Repertoire

Title:	Composer:	Publishing Information:
<i>Dodi Li</i>	arr. Rao	Boosey 48004441
<i>Gloria</i>	Perry	Bri Lee BL351
<i>Glory Train</i>	Estes	Alfred 18705
<i>Gospel Train</i>	McRae	Colla Voce 21-20218
<i>Michael Row the Boat Ashore</i>	Ginsberg	Santa Barbara SBMP235
<i>Niska Banja</i>	Page	Boosey 48004287
<i>Old Joe Clark</i>	Goetze	Boosey 48003965
<i>Plenty Good Room</i>	Horman	Somerset SP 815
<i>Sikuyo</i>	Crocker	Hal Leonard 08740562
<i>La Violette</i>	Brumfield	Colla Voce 21-20251

Healthy Tone: Vocal Development and Care

by
Sandra Babb

Important aspects of choral teaching in the middle and junior high levels that warrant special attention from developmental choir directors are vocal tone development and the care of the adolescent voice. Although most vocal pedagogues would agree that classical voice training should be reserved for later adolescence, it is crucial to implement sound pedagogical approaches to training the young voice, even in the earlier years. Many teachers simply do not think that middle grade singers are capable of producing a full, supported sound, and therefore do not have that expectation set forth for their students. Some also lack training in vocal pedagogy, because many undergraduate choral programs do not require course work in this vital part of the choral curriculum. When choral conductors are not vocalists, but pianists or organists, they might feel less than qualified to take on the role of voice teacher. "Sit/Stand up straight" or "Drop your jaw," are common phrases heard in choral rehearsals. If choral directors do not go beyond the cursory nod to alignment or vowel shape, the results can often lead to students who sit or stand with tension or who hyper-extend the jaw. This physical approach causes the depression of the larynx, which leads to vocal fatigue and a swallowed sound.

Knowledge of vocal pedagogy gives a choral director the foundational understanding needed to ensure healthy vocal development. The concepts of alignment, respiration, phonation, resonance, and articulation should be thoroughly explained to developmental singers. The correct usage of anatomy and

physiology serve to ground such teaching in science. Imagery and metaphors can also play a key role in setting up tonal pictures. The vocal model of the teacher is vital for providing appropriate examples of what to do as well as what not to do. When developmental singers can hear differences between exemplary and non-exemplary models, they can quickly assimilate and synthesize the desired result without the excessive use of teacher talk.

In many cases, the choral rehearsal serves as the only voice training some students ever receive, and therefore it is vital to devote considerable time to teaching students how to effectively and healthfully use their vocal instruments. This approach is especially important for the initial rehearsals of an ensemble, particularly at the beginning of the academic year or concert season.

The warm-up process is crucial to this end, because it is the basis for developing vocal tone. The use of vocalises can sometimes seem redundant and time consuming. When vocal exercises are implemented without the knowl-

edge or teaching of their purpose, directors and students are missing out on crucial teaching and learning moments. Skills that should be gained in the vocal warm-up process include breath control and support, balanced phonation, range extension, vocal agility, tone placement, and vowel alignment, in addition to ear training through the use of tuning exercises.

Vocal warm-ups should include breath exercises, easy phonation (i.e., humming or lip trills in the mid-range), scalar passages, and placement exercises (i.e., resonance coupling specific consonants and vowels, and usage of all of the front, mid and back vowels to address and correct tone placement). Warm-ups should stem from the literature being performed, which provides the opportunity for students to make transfers between the exercise and the performance.

Vocal health must also be addressed through the teaching of healthy vocal habits. Choral directors often model unhealthy vocalization through vocal overuse, speaking too high, too low, or

Table 2
Resources for Developing Vocal Tone

Ehman, W. & Haaseman, F. *Voice Building for Choirs*. Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Music, 1980.

Gackle, L. *Finding Ophelia's Voice, Opening Ophelia's Heart: Nurturing the Adolescent Female Voice*. Dayton, OH: Heritage Music Press, 2011.

McKinney, J. C. *The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2005.

Vennard, W. *Singing, The Mechanism and The Technic*. New York: Fischer, 1967.

too loudly. Singing parts that are in the extremes of the range, such as a female teacher singing along with tenors or basses, or speaking or singing while sick exacerbates vocal problems. Lack of sleep, poor diet, and poor hydration also contribute to poor vocal health for choral directors who often work in stressful conditions. In order to teach healthy vocal habits to their students, choral directors must first address those habits in themselves. It is important to teach proper use of the speaking voice and maintain overall health. Knowledge of each student's range and tessitura is also critical when vocalizing, selecting repertoire, and planning the demands that will be placed upon singers. When students are given the tools they need to produce healthy sounds, they will do so.

Developmental Repertoire: Structuring Success

by
Rebecca Reames

The 2009 *Chorus Impact Study* prepared by Chorus America reported that only 17 percent of eighth grade students sing in a choir (from the *Nation's Report Card on Music and Visual Arts*). Although

time, money, and attention to certain subjects may be inhibiting choral offerings or programs, is choral attrition due to other reasons as well? Are we selecting music that will successfully engage middle-level students in the choral art?

Middle school choral directors, more than any other group of conductors, must acquire and demonstrate the ability to select literature for their ensembles that is both technically suitable and aesthetically exciting for singers. Zoltan Kodály's music education philosophy has guided and inspired choral directors in this specialized literature search for years:

"We must strive in order that music, good music, be a prime necessity of life."

"Only music of the highest quality is good enough for children."

"Strangely enough, children learn what is good much more easily than what is bad."¹

Following are some practical ideas to pair middle school singers with suitable choral repertoire:

- Single gender educational experiences garner many points of view, but middle school singers, especially eighth grade students, excel in single gender choral ensembles performing 2-, 3-, or 4-part music.
- Program at least one concert selection for boys and one for girls even if separate ensembles are not offered. The positive responses from singers and audience will foster continued participation. Lon Beery's *Fillimiooriay* is a crowd-pleasing example of an accessible and effective middle school boys' selection. Treble choral music abounds in recent years: Doreen

Rao's *Choral Music for Children: An Annotated List* is a great resource for finding foundational quality compositions.² Listening to outstanding treble choirs on-line or in concert is another excellent way to locate exemplary literature that "works".

- Begin each rehearsal singing great songs! Alice Parker and Nick Page, master song leaders, model the joy of community singing that provides authentic aural experiences. Alice Parker's choral improvisation ideas using folksongs and hymn tunes are creative lessons directors can emulate. Moreover, Nick Page's *Sing and Shine On!* highlights the power of group singing with multicultural songs. Young singers love *Thula Klizeo* by Joseph Shabalala, a four-measure unison gem that can be performed in canon. (Teaching strategies for that song may also be found at: < <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/resources/music/chapter5/129364.shtml> >
- Unison singing can be technically challenging for a middle school mixed ensemble, so select ranges carefully. *Over My Head* (MENC's *Keep America Singing...Again*) or the refrain of *Good News, Chariot's Coming* are three note (d r m) melodies that may be effectively improvised as warm-ups or for performance. *Over My Head* might employ several sequential techniques that encourage vocal independence:
 - Sing in unison (without accompaniment) in the key of G (with each repeat, transpose higher).
 - Sing with Curwen hand signs.



**RISERS, FOLIOS, BOARDS &
MORE @ DISCOUNT PRICES!**

FREE MUSIC PRODUCTS CATALOG

1-800-280-4070

www.valiantmusic.com

Become the Complete Choral Conductor



Graduate student Vasiliki Tsouva conducting the Symphonic Choir and Scholarship Orchestra

- Sing responsorially (one voice sustains final phrase tone/ while second voice proceeds next phrase of melody).
- Improvise “harmony by ear” on last phrase.

Good News, Chariot's Coming might be altered substituting singers' names for the word “chariot.” The whole group sings the names of choir members in place of the word chariot or individuals sing their own names as a solo.

Other rote melodies are readily available in elementary textbooks series. Two examples are *Fungi Alafia*, a Western African welcome song, and *Da pacem Domine* by M. Franck (1573-1639). The latter, six-measure tune introduces canon at the fourth, which is readily achievable for middle school mixed ensembles.

- Refer to treble singers simply as trebles. Refrain from labeling singers as “alto” or “soprano” and remember that some boys will still fit in these categories. Remind students that they are singing a part; they are not the part. Switching parts for each composition encourages all singers to sight-read and develop their upper and lower registers. (The conductor just needs to remember which section to cue!) CPDL provides a wealth of treble possibilities. One attainable classical suggestion for two equal voices is: *I Will Magnify Thee, O Lord* by Joseph Corfe (1740-1820), ed. Stuart McIntosh: <http://www2.cpdll.org/wiki/images/9/92/1_will_magnify_thee%2C_O_Lord.pdf>

Achieve Excellence through world-class professional training at one of the most acclaimed music institutions of our time, with top faculty in all major fields and the finest music research library in the United States.

Podium Time: Conduct a choral ensemble every day in conducting class. Conduct recitals with the top choirs in the Jacobs School of Music and a scholarship orchestra.

Conducting and Teaching Opportunities: A cappella chamber choir repertoire; large choral/orchestral works; opera conducting/ opera chorus master; early music; new music; vocal jazz; collegiate show choir; Latin American ensembles; world music; youth and children's choruses; teaching undergraduate conducting classes.

CHORAL CONDUCTING FACULTY

William Jon Gray, *Chair, Pro Arte Singers, Choral Conducting*

Steve Zegree, *Vocal Jazz, Vocal Popular Music*

Dominick DiOrio, *Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, Choral Conducting*

Katherine Strand, *International Vocal Ensemble, Music Education*

Jan Harrington, *Chancellor's Professor Emeritus*

Five Associate Instructor positions open for Doctoral and Master's Choral Conducting students for the 2013–14 academic year.

Full tuition remission and a competitive stipend with health insurance.

2013 AUDITION DATES

Jan. 11 | Feb. 1 | March 1

Application deadline is Dec. 1, 2012.



JACOBS SCHOOL OF MUSIC

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Bloomington

Living Music
music.indiana.edu

We welcome

Steve Zegree and Dominick DiOrio to the Choral Conducting Department at the Jacobs School of Music.



Steve Zegree

Dominick DiOrio

William Jon Gray

ON THE VOICE

- Mixed ensembles in the middle school will be more successful if scores present more voicing options for singers—not less. Although 3-part mixed music is popular with directors (and it is usually a better option than SAB music, which was designed for adult church choirs), the boys' part is often too low or high for the changing boy voice. Another concern about some 3-part literature is that trebles sing primarily in their lower registers, due to close chordal harmonies.

Fortunately, a number of 3-part mixed compositions also introduce the option of a baritone part. Lon Beery, the current Eastern Division ACDA Repertoire & Standards Chair for Middle School Choirs, posts an extended listing of recommended selections featuring a variety of voicings and highlights many appropriate SATB titles: < www.acdaeast.org/RS/ms/MS-Repertoire-Lon-Beery.pdf >

- Middle school singers generally demonstrate well-developed aural skills, but may not be as proficient actually reading music (moving from sound to symbol or rote to note). Any choral octavo (but especially an SATB score) looks complicated to inexperienced sight-readers. Reading pitches and rhythms might be easier if teachers borrowed the historical use of either part-books or the single-line score used by our instrumental colleagues.

With today's technology, a great way to introduce SATB scores (after purchasing the prerequisite number of published scores) would be to create mini-scores displaying only individual voice parts. (The soprano section would read from the soprano line, the altos would read from the alto part, and so on). Not only would singers focus attention on a single line, but also, as Chester Alwes suggested at a recent college choral conference, singers may sing more musically and freely if their eyes and brain have only one vocal line to process.

Even the most appropriate middle school SATB selections may need "tweaking". Consider adapting compositions to fit current abilities through part pivoting, alternating chord tones, transposing keys, omitting measures or sections, or creating solo lines or passages.

Examples of recent publications that could be effectively performed by middle school choirs with slight revisions are: *Jenga Imani Yako* – ed. E. Rogers (SATB, Hal Leonard 08750933. < <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aAv6QPU-ml> > and *Ezekiel Saw the Wheel* – arr. M. Hayes (SATB, 4-hand piano, Lorenz

10/4091L).

- Beautiful vowels are difficult to learn or perform if singers are singing fast, popular-style literature. Program a variety of styles, tempos, and keys, and include one or two selections that highlight beautiful singing and tone quality. *Roses I Send to You* by Stephen Chatman, a slower lyrical, legato SATB tune, enables musical concepts to be taught and had the added benefit that students respond to its beauty.

Let us reclaim the 83 per cent of eighth grade students that are missing from the choral experience. Let's bring students back into vibrant choral programs, and ensure that all middle school students discover that choral music is a prime necessity of life.

Pedagogical Offerings: Accessible Materials

by
Matthew L. Garrett

Choral directors working with developmental choirs can create successful singing, reading, and critical thinking experiences for their students with the help of research-based resources. What we do as choral directors to get them singing from the first day we see students sets the tone for the remainder of the school year. Patrick Freer assembled some helpful advice to get the school year off to a musical start.³ From recruiting, to administrative planning, to selecting activities for the first few weeks of chorus, Freer's two compilations offer effective ideas to help directors develop a positive rapport with middle school students.

Once a positive and supportive learning environment has been estab-

Madrigal Dinner Scripts

By
Paul Brandvik
Author of
The Compleat
Madrigal Dinner
Bookie

THIRTY SCRIPTS, each containing All DIALOGUE (including greeting, toasts, festivities, and humorous Renaissance play) necessary for A SUCCESSFUL MADRIGAL DINNER!

For complete info: VISIT OUR WEB SITE:

www.madrigaldinner.com

knight-shtick press, llc
Box 814, Bemidji, MN 56619-0814
218-586-2270

madrigaldinner@madrigaldinner.com



lished, students need guidance towards the goal of beautiful singing. One essential element to developing healthy tone is the use of creative warm-up routines. A number of authors have contributed to the resource pool of age-appropriate warm-up exercises.⁴ In addition to the wealth of written material, directors working with developmental choirs may find it useful to have access to visual and aural models. Charlotte Adams and Jerry Blackstone are both featured in videos that provide demonstrations of their work with choral ensembles.⁵ Whereas Blackstone worked specifically with collegiate male voices, the concepts utilized in his vocal exercises can be carefully transferred to a developmental choir classroom and adapted for use with changing/changed adolescent male voices. Directors searching for video recordings that focus specifically on adolescent male voices may want to explore Anton Armstrong and André Thomas's *Body, Mind, Spirit, Voice*.⁶ Armstrong and Thomas worked with students from the American Boy Choir and the Newark Boys Chorus in a situation that called on both master teachers to adapt to the challenges of boys' changing and newly changed voices.

Terry Barham has generated one of the most comprehensive research-based guides to working with adolescent male voices.⁷ In addition to summarizing the range-classification models of Cooper, McKenzie, Cooksey, and others, Barham proposed strategies for group and individual voice testing, suggested vocal exercises for developing healthy tone, and assembled a thorough repertoire listing for junior high/middle school singers. Just as important, but infrequently addressed, are issues related to the changing female adolescent voice. Lynne Gackle's work in this area has long been the cornerstone for research-based techniques.⁸ Her recent text and accompanying CD features current physiological knowledge of

the female voice change, techniques for working with female adolescent voices, and suggested repertoire.

As directors become more comfortable with building healthy tone in developmental choirs, attention shifts to sequential musical instruction through repertoire. The authors of *Teaching Music through Performance in Middle School Choir* have included chapters on strategies to develop part independence with students in developmental choirs, ideas for developing middle-level performance assessments, and teacher resource guides for specific age-appropriate choral literature.⁹ This new book

and accompanying CD are valuable additions to the research-based resources designed for directors of developmental choirs. All of these pedagogical tools can help build successful singing experiences for students.

Students can build on their positive singing experiences by developing a solid foundation of effective music reading skills. Sight-singing has received a great deal of attention in the research literature. In a recent review of this literature from the past ten years, Jane Kuehne synthesized three major factors that contribute to student sight-reading success.¹⁰ Initially, choral directors should



WITTE TRAVEL & TOURS | *Performance* TOUR DIVISION

A leader in performance tours for over 35 years



LET YOUR MUSIC BE HEARD

You have musical gifts to share. We have a team of experts to make it happen.

800-GO WITTE
groups@wittetravel.com
wittetours.com

select a system to use when teaching sight-singing and they should use that one system consistently. Researchers have indicated that the choice of one system over another—moveable *do*, fixed *do*, or numbers, for example—does not have a direct impact on the students' ability to sight-sing successfully.¹¹ There is a strong correlation between students' use of one system through their school choir experience and successful sight-singing performance.¹²

Choral directors can choose from an almost dizzying amount of published sight-singing materials. Steven Demorest compiled a representative list of these materials, giving directors valuable information from which to make a more informed purchasing decision.¹³ *One-Minute Sight Singing* is a recent method for structuring sight-singing success that addresses the idea of finding appropriate time within an already short rehearsal period to establishing foundational skills for developmental ensembles.¹⁴ Alan McClung created a sight-singing method incorporating movable tonic solfège syllables and a beat-based counting system with subdivisions.¹⁵ In addition to sequenced lessons that move from pitch matching through natural, harmonic, and melodic minor exercises, McClung also includes several helpful appendices and supplements for students and teachers alike. *Progressive Sight Singing* is another recent addition for developing independent musicianship skills.¹⁶ Carol Krueger developed her sequential model based partly on her own school teaching experiences. Divided into two sections (rhythmic and melodic reading) to be used concurrently, this book includes advanced exercises to develop the audiation and singing of intervallic tonal patterns. Finding a good match among students' abilities, director's goals, and sequential instruction models of sight-singing materials is an important first

step to ensuring a positive association between sight-singing and developing music literacy. Demorest provides guidance in the areas of creating sight-singing lesson ideas, integrating sight-singing into the rehearsal process, and group and individual assessment.¹⁷ The concluding finding from Kuehne's review of literature indicated that assessment is an important aspect in determining if students will make the transfer from classroom use to a tool for lifelong learning.¹⁸

One of the learning goals directors consistently avow is that students should leave the choral classroom with the ability to "musick" independently for life. This goal of lifelong learning can be achieved by developing and fostering critical thinking skills in choral rehearsals.¹⁹ At the developmental level, critical thinking skills can be defined as analyzing, evaluating, creating, and being able to think about one's thought processes, or metacognition.²⁰ In many ways, choral directors are already helping to develop these skills with their students. When a director asks students to describe the form of a piece or if they have heard a melodic idea more than once in a song, the director is asking students to analyze the music. Having a discussion about why a composer might have chosen to set a text in a particular musical style is also an effective strategy to foster critical thinking in a rehearsal setting. Placing students in the role of director by asking them to stand in front of a group and listen for accurate diction, intonation, etc., provides an excellent opportunity for students to listen critically and give evaluative feedback to their peers. Teaching students to effectively use performance assessment tools to evaluate a recording of their own performance can increase student ownership of their ensemble experience and encourage them to think independently about what they hear.

Armstrong and Thomas incorporated

critical thinking skills into their work with adolescent male singers by having students create and demonstrate their own gestural language that would help visually display the concept of melodic contour and direction.²¹ In a performance-based classroom, taking time between concerts to develop basic compositional skills is another strategy for students to apply the fundamental musical knowledge they have towards the process and product of a finished piece of music. In a choral rehearsal setting, students can quickly be taught to compose sight-singing exercises for one another or for members of another ensemble. The key to creating a generation of lifelong "musickers" rests in our ability as choral directors to develop students' ability to think for themselves and transfer knowledge from the classroom to musical activities that last a lifetime.

Expressive Singing: Rules for Transfer

by
Judy Bowers

Investing in developmental groups requires a great commitment to achieving choral artistry while still increasing musical knowledge and skill with novice students. Somewhere, within the rehearsal/performance time span, one can almost guarantee some moments of real frustration and perhaps failure. Frustration understandably results when a teacher/conductor realizes that cramming knowledge and skill gleaned from years of piano and theory study into a few months of training is simply not going to work. Although all would agree that conducting a group of highly skilled singers is very fulfilling, developing singers also has the ability to provide great fulfillment when rehearsal involves a sequenced approach to learning. Bloom's

taxonomy provides a blueprint for this task, and great creativity and critical thinking can result.

To structure success, the teacher must determine what knowledge is needed for the musical tasks, and isolate (i.e., teach) that information. Singers won't know everything about the music, but they will know what the teacher values for this particular piece. Pinpointing tasks is particularly useful regarding behaviors that contribute to expressive singing. When students have mastered basic information, they are ready to become those musicians we want them to be; they are ready to think critically and make musical judgments.

Use of Bloom's taxonomy provides a wonderful means of structuring independence in singing expressively: start with basic knowledge and successively ask students to perform/evaluate more sophisticated tasks with the music. One method that works very well with middle school choirs is the use of rules to structure transfer of knowledge (we do not have to start over with expressive singing on every piece, as the students will know things they learned from the previous piece). Following are some ideas that can be used to help students look at music and have some ideas about what they might do to perform well.²² Granted, these are baby steps on a long journey, but the foundations for musical independence can quickly be established in a positive, nurturing way.

Rules for Transfer

- **The Rule of the Steady Beat.** When singing any note value longer than the steady beat value, singers should crescendo. Establishing a general principle saves rehearsal time and limits frustration by preventing errors with a rule that is applicable for much of the piece. The teacher/conductor must ad-

dress only those instances when a crescendo is not desired or when the rule was implemented incor-

rectly.

- **The Rule of Consonant Releases.**

Learn from the *Masters:* SUMMER 2012 *Between June 24 – August 3*

Join the tradition! Attend Westminster this summer.

Study with our distinguished faculty and leading international conductors at our campus in Princeton, New Jersey.



Joe Miller

Visit www.rider.edu/woce for additional course offerings and registration, or call 609-924-7416.

Programs for Adults

- Conducting Institute
- Conducting Technique Intensive
- Chamber Choir
- Summer Choral Festival
- Choral Pedagogy Institute

Programs for High School Students

- Vocal Institute
- Solo Vocal Artist
- Musical Theatre
- Organ Institute
- ... and many more.

**WESTMINSTER
CHOIR COLLEGE**

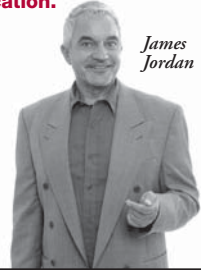


**RIDER
UNIVERSITY**

Westminster Online!

12-Credit Graduate Online Certificate in Critical Pedagogy in Music Education.

<p>Creative Practices in Voice Pedagogy Scott McCoy <i>April 2 - May 25, 2012</i></p> <hr style="border: 0.5px solid white;"/> <p>Creative Practices in Choral Pedagogy James Jordan <i>July 2 - August 24, 2012</i></p>	<p>Creative Practices in Elementary Music Education Phillip Greco <i>October 1 - November 23, 2012</i></p> <hr style="border: 0.5px solid white;"/> <p>Creative Practices in Teaching & Learning with Ideas from Critical Pedagogy Frank Abrahams <i>January 2013</i></p>
--	---



James Jordan

ON THE VOICE

Though this rule can be implemented throughout the rehearsal or applied differently to each song, it serves as a guideline for most of the final consonant releases. The rule might structure using the last full beat, or the last half of the beat, or whatever is appropriate for the song and counting ability of the ensemble. Students assume some responsibility for releases by using the rule, which permits the conductor to address only those

unique releases not suitable for rule application.

- **The Rule of Diphthongs.** Beginning singers who do not yet self-monitor their vowel sounds can quickly apply this rule. Identifying diphthongs and prescribing a method for performance (e.g., sing the first sound throughout most of the value and then quickly add the second sound) serves to educate and prevent most errors. When

the teacher/conductor stops to address incorrect singing, this rule serves to foster student analysis of the problem (listen, identify, analyze, evaluate).

- **The Rule of Punctuation.** This rule contributes greatly to phrase awareness of beginning singers. The rule requires a lift or break for every punctuation mark throughout the piece. The reverse is also true: do not break if no punctuation

CONDUCTING MUSIC. SHAPING LIVES.

DISCOVER new levels of excellence.

EXPLORE the connections between gesture, sound and meaning.

STUDY with a remarkable faculty in a liberal arts atmosphere.

LEARN how to teach.

PREPARE for a future of shaping lives.

FULL TUITION REMISSION

MASTER OF MUSIC AND MASTER OF SACRED MUSIC IN CHORAL CONDUCTING

AUDITION DATES: Monday, January 28, 2013
and Monday, February 25, 2013

ERIC NELSON, DIRECTOR OF CHORAL STUDIES



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Music

Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia 30322 404.727.6445 www.music.emory.edu



EMORY



exists. (This rule is extremely effective for correcting phrasing with beginners.) While there is certainly punctuation in text that is ignored for musical reasons, having this rule makes singers aware that a decision must be made and allows the teacher/conductor to teach only the exceptions to the rule.

- **The Rule of the Slur** (*and other articulations*). Although most students can explain a slur, a surprising number of singers cannot sing one correctly. This rule requires a *tenuto* over the first note under the slur, followed by all other notes in the pattern sung without a *tenuto* marking.

- **The Rule of Word Stress.** Informing students about singing words as we might speak words addresses the issue of word stress. Singing louder or with slight emphasis on important words or syllables is a simple idea, but not something that automatically occurs with all novice singers. Implementing this one rule can immediately improve musical line and the overall artistry of the performance.

Each example serves to demonstrate a general concept, but every composition programmed also may have specific performance needs that could become a rule for only that selection. Other rules a teacher might opt to use include:

- the Rule of Dissonance (*crescendo* and *resolve*);
- the Rule of Dynamic Contrast (for some music, this is the key variable for expressive performance);
- the Rule of Voicing (bring out im-

portant motifs from the choral texture); and

- the Rule of Repetition (dynamic scheme for a text or music sequence).

Young singers may not know every important aspect about the music they are performing, but given information by the teacher, it is very possible for them to make decisions, be held accountable (assessment), and sing beautifully.

NOTES

- ¹ Choksy, L. *The Kodaly Context*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1981, 8.
- ² Rao, D. ed. *Choral Music for Children: An Annotated List*. Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference, 1990.
- ³ Freer, P.K. *Getting Started with Middle School Chorus* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2009; Freer, P. K. *Tips: The First Weeks of Middle School Chorus*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2009.
- ⁴ Albrecht, S. K. *The Choral Warm-up Collection: A Sourcebook of 167 Choral Warm-ups Contributed by 51 Choral Directors*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred, 2003. Dilworth, R. *Choir Builders: Fundamental Vocal Techniques For Classroom and General Use*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2006. Robinson, R., and Althouse, J. *The Complete Choral Warm-Up Book: A Sourcebook For Choral Directors*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred, 1995. Seelig, T. *The Perfect Blend: Over 100 Seriously Fun Vocal Warm-Ups*. Milwaukee, WI: Shawnee, 2005.
- ⁵ Adams, C. *Daily Workout For A Beautiful Voice*. CA: Santa Barbara, 1998. Blackstone, J. *Working with Male Voices*. CA: Santa Barbara, 1998.
- ⁶ Armstrong, A., and Thomas, A.J. *Body, Mind, Spirit, Voice*. Dayton, OH: Lorenz, 2003.
- ⁷ Barham, Terry. *Strategies For Teaching Junior High and Middle School Male Singers: Master Teachers Speak*. CA: Santa Barbara, 2001.
- ⁸ Gackle, L. *Finding Ophelia's Voice, Opening Ophelia's Heart: Nurturing The Adolescent Female Voice*. Dayton, OH: Heritage, 2011.
- ⁹ Abrahams, F., Bowers, J., Head, P.D., Jordan, J., Liebergen, P.M., and Porterfield, S. *Teaching Music Through Performance In Middle School*

Choir. Chicago: GIA, 2011.

- ¹⁰ Kuehne, J. M. Sight-singing: Ten years of published research. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 29, 7–14. doi: 10.1177/8755123310378453, 2010.
- ¹¹ Killian, J.N., and Henry, M.L. "A Comparison of Successful and Unsuccessful Strategies in Individual Sight-Singing Preparation And Performance." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 53, 51–65. doi: 10.1177/002242940505300105, 2005.
- ¹² Demorest, S. M., and May, W. V. "Sight-singing Instruction in the Choral Ensemble: Factors Related to Individual Performance." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 43, 156-167. doi: 10.2307/3345676, 1995.
- ¹³ Demorest, S. M. *Building Choral Excellence: Teaching Sight-Singing in the Choral Rehearsal*. New York: Oxford, 2001.
- ¹⁴ Slabbinck, R., and Shaw-Slabbinck, H. *One-Minute Sight Singing*. San Diego, CA: Kjos, 2010.
- ¹⁵ McClung, A. C. *Movable Tonic: A Sequenced Sight-Singing Method*. Chicago: GIA, 2008.
- ¹⁶ Krueger, C. *Progressive Sight Singing* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford, 2011.
- ¹⁷ Demorest, S. M. *Building Choral Excellence: Teaching Sight-Singing In The Choral Rehearsal*. New York: Oxford, 2001.
- ¹⁸ Kuehne, J. M. Sight-Singing: Ten Years Of Published Research. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 29, 7–14. doi: 10.1177/8755123310378453, 2010.
- ¹⁹ Garrett, M. L. "An Examination of Critical Thinking Skills in the High School Choral Rehearsal." *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 70(12). (UMI No. 3385254), 2009.
- ²⁰ Anderson, L. W., Krathwohl, D. R., Airasian, P.W., Cruikshank, K. A., Mayer, R. E., Pintrich, P. R., et al. (Eds.). *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. NY: Longman, 2001.
- ²¹ Armstrong, A., and Thomas, A. J. *Body, Mind, Spirit, Voice*. Dayton, OH: Lorenz, 2003.
- ²² Bowers, J. "Structuring Success in Beginning Middle School Choral Ensembles," in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Middle School Choir*, ed. Frank Abrahams. Chicago: GIA Press, 2011.

