

# CHORAL JOURNAL

MAY 2016

“WHAT LANGUAGE  
SHALL I BORROW?”  
: SINGING IN  
TRANSLATION

# THE OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY SINGERS



BEN AYLING, CONDUCTOR

## 2016 NATIONAL TOUR

MAY 9 - JUNE 20, 2016



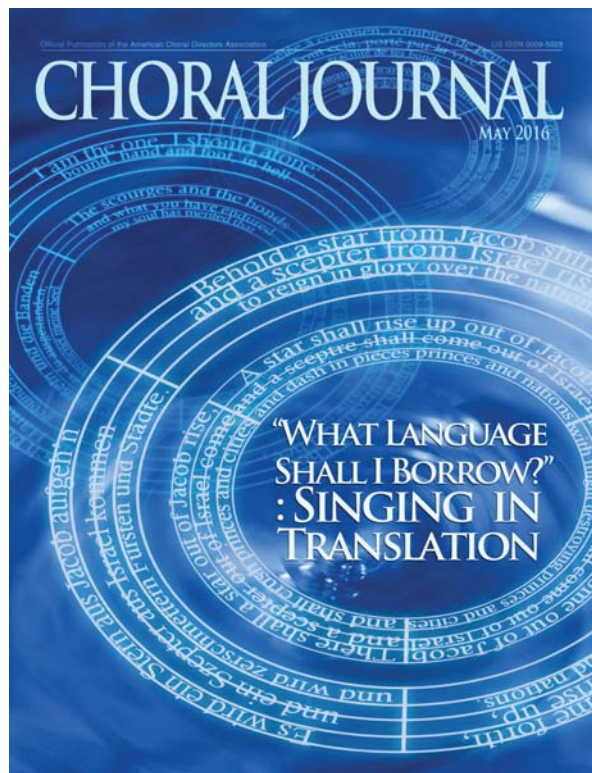
May 9 Cincinnati, Ohio  
May 10 Nashville, Tenn.  
May 11 Alpharetta, Ga.  
May 12 Pell City, Ala.  
May 14 Houston, Texas  
May 15 Windcrest, Texas  
May 16 Austin, Texas  
May 17 Ozona, Texas  
May 18 Roswell, N.M.  
May 19 Tucson, Ariz.  
May 20 Phoenix, Ariz.  
May 21 Sedona, Ariz.  
May 24 Los Angeles, Calif.  
May 26 Lumpoc, Calif.  
May 27 San Francisco, Calif.

May 28 Burney, Calif.  
May 29 Brookings, Ore.  
May 30 Bend, Ore.  
May 31 Salem, Ore.  
June 1 Portland, Ore.  
June 2 Seaside, Ore.  
June 4 Seattle, Wash.  
June 5 Omak, Wash.  
June 6 Wilbur, Wash.  
June 7 Corvallis, Mont.  
June 8 Ennis, Mont.  
June 10 Sheridan, Wyo.  
June 12 Laramie, Wyo.  
June 13 Castle Rock, Colo.  
June 14 Manhattan, Kan.

June 15 Omaha, Neb  
June 16 Cedar Falls, Iowa  
June 17 Gurnee, Ill  
June 18 Sylvania, Ohio  
June 20 Westerville, Ohio -  
OCDA Conference  
June 20 Ada, Ohio -  
Home Concert  
at the Freed  
Center for the  
Performing Arts

**COMPLETE TOUR  
INFORMATION AT:**

[www.onu.edu/choir\\_tour\\_2016](http://www.onu.edu/choir_tour_2016)



**On the Cover** The three rings on the cover of this month's issue represent the three translations per movement. Each ring set has words printed in both the original language and the translation.

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# From the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Tim Sharp

As the American Choral Directors Association continues to undertake a comprehensive study of our overall financial architecture, we face the ever-present issue of ongoing financial sustainability, and this has led us to the need for a dues increase. ACDA's capable and trusted financial advisors have made the strong case for a dues increase, and our executive leadership has responded appropriately by instituting a dues increase effective July 1, 2016. A decision such as this does not come lightly and reflects the vigilant care of those elected to protect the work and strength of our association.

I agree with this decision based upon several convincing arguments. First, our organization has been operating on a longstanding pattern of feast or famine depending on the success of the biennial national conference, and this is a pattern we must break. The National Office works very hard with a variety of professional services to keep our conferences affordable for our membership. When attendance is good, our revenue is enhanced. However, we can never know what attendance and support will result from our conferences. This is no way to live and work.

Second, the technological challenges of operating a twenty-first-century organization of our size exceed our current revenue capabilities. Our dues have remained the same for over six years, and inflation alone suggests the need for an increase in revenue, but the single line item of technology can be a budget breaker. As I often say about technological accretions, it is expected that we add these advancements, but rarely do they eliminate other expenses.

Third, ACDA is growing, and we are growing fastest in the area of student membership and young professionals. This is a wonderful and exciting thing, but student dues do not sustain ACDA. This dues increase will not include student membership dues. Neither are we increasing dues for our retirees. We are depending on our active membership to sustain the health of our professional association.

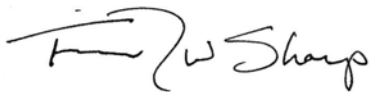
Finally, the benefits to ACDA membership have increased greatly since 2010 levels. My January *Choral Journal* editorial lists thirty-one benefits to ACDA membership, a list that continues to grow and a list that represents a significant increase over the previous decade. These benefits represent a valuable investment in our future but can be expensive items to maintain. Examples of such benefits include:

- Our ACDA website, [acda.org](http://acda.org), the virtual home for ACDA
- Our professional and social networking site, ChoralNet
- Our international choral music database, Musica

- ACDA's National Mentoring Program, which resulted from our most recent strategic planning process
- Our signature Conferences, Symposia, Retreats, and Festivals
- Our expanded list of publications
- An enlarged and professionalized staff

Membership dues paid by ACDA members fuel the work of ACDA at the state, division, and national levels and, through our various programs, also stimulates the work of ACDA with our student chapters and international members. As we look to the future of our organization, I am encouraged by the steps we are taking now to continue to support the choral arts on both local and international levels.

One of those steps is the recent vote to reorganize our standing committees. Another is the examination of our current financial structure and subsequent dues increase, which I believe will allow the American Choral Directors Association to continue to enthusiastically embrace its mission of inspiring excellence through choral music education, performance, advocacy, and composition in the twenty-first century. This mission is one that has incredible value, as does membership in our association.



 TimothySharp

 American Choral Directors Association

## THE 12 PURPOSES OF ACDA

- To foster and promote choral singing, which will provide artistic, cultural, and spiritual experiences for the participants.
- To foster and promote the finest types of choral music to make these experiences possible.
- To foster and encourage rehearsal procedures conducive to attaining the highest possible level of musicianship and artistic performance.
- To foster and promote the organization and development of choral groups of all types in schools and colleges.
- To foster and promote the development of choral music in the church and synagogue.
- To foster and promote the organization and development of choral societies in cities and communities.
- To foster and promote the understanding of choral music as an important medium of contemporary artistic expression.
- To foster and promote significant research in the field of choral music.
- To foster and encourage choral composition of superior quality.
- To cooperate with all organizations dedicated to the development of musical culture in America.
- To foster and promote international exchange programs involving performing groups, conductors, and composers.
- To disseminate professional news and information about choral music.

—ACDA Constitution and Bylaws

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LOG

### WHAT'S ON TIM'S DAYTIMER?



- May 6-8 Samson and Delilah-Saint-Saens  
Tulsa, OK
- May 18-21 Podium/Choral Canada  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
- May 23-25 Financial Architecture Study  
Oklahoma City, OK

### WHAT'S ON TIM'S IPAD?



- Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are*  
by Amy Cuddy
- The Power of Yet*  
by Carol Dweck

### WHAT'S TIM'S LATEST APP?



- TripIt
- Expensify

### WHAT'S TIM LISTENING TO?



- Solomon*, G.F. Handel  
English Baroque Soloists  
John Eliot Gardiner
- Lux*  
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- Elegy*  
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Hear more at <[www.acda.org](http://www.acda.org)>. Log in and click on the First Listen icon

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## From the PRESIDENT



Mary Hopper

In this presidential election year, we are hearing an abundance of rhetoric about representation. Different groups of people—economically, racially, and geographically—are concerned about being represented at the local and national levels of our government. The restructuring of the ACDA Standing Committees has also raised concern about representation.

There were several reasons the ACDA leadership proposed changes to the Repertoire & Resources Committee, but one stems from the fact that many choirs in our contemporary culture don't fit neatly into one narrow category. For example, the area of Children and Youth covers treble girls, treble boys, choirs that are made of mostly high school singers, SATB boy choirs, etc. Many of these choirs did not fit into one of our previous R&S categories. Where are pop unaccompanied groups, barbershop choirs, gospel choirs, and prison choirs represented? In the new structure, we still have twelve R&R areas that have leadership at the national level, but they are grouped under four coordinators, allowing for breadth: Youth, Collegiate, Lifelong, and Repertoire Specific.

Repertoire & Resources is just one of the new seven standing committees working at the national level to represent the different facets of ACDA. The International Activities Committee will oversee all our international initiatives. Research & Publications represents our journals, research, and scholarly activity. The goal of the newly formed Composition Initiatives Committee is to provide resources for new music. The task of working to promote the choral art will be taken on by the Advocacy and Collaboration Committee. The Education and Communication Committee will help us in communicating to our membership, and Diversity Initiatives will promote projects that serve a broad representation of choral singers and conductors.

As our organization grows, we want to serve choral conductors who are reaching a broad spectrum of singers. I was on tour earlier this spring with my college Men's Glee Club, and we had a wonderful time collaborating with the Texas Boys Choir. Just between our two groups we had many areas represented: College/University, Men's Choirs, Children and Youth, High School, SATB, TTBB. Yet we found a great unity in our singing and sharing, which fulfilled the first of the twelve purposes of ACDA: "To foster and promote choral singing, which will provide artistic, cultural, and spiritual experiences for the participants." May ACDA continue to provide these experiences for all our singers under the revised structure.

Mary Hopper

# From the EDITOR



Amanda Bumgarner

In January, ACDA members voted to pass a new structure for our organization. The October *Choral Journal* (see pp. 4-5) outlined the proposal for seven standing committees. Until this point in our history, the *Choral Journal* editorial board has been its own standing committee. In the interests of streamlining our publications and the processes therein, the editorial board is no longer its own standing committee but is a subcommittee under the umbrella of Research and Publications, which includes

research projects, research awards, and all of ACDA's publications.

The intent of moving this publication under the committee of Research and Publications is in no way to decrease the value of the members of the *Choral Journal* editorial board and its column editors. Indeed, these volunteer members are a vital component of our work. Without scholars to review article submissions and edit articles for the monthly columns, you would receive a *Choral Journal* in the mail filled with blank pages, and I would receive an inbox filled with letters to the editor. I am grateful to each and every name you see on the sidebar of this column for all the work that goes on behind the scenes.

Beyond the new committee structure, another result of the restructuring is the implementation of term limits for editorial board members and column editors. Members will be appointed to one four-year term with the ability to be reappointed once, for a maximum of eight years. This will allow more volunteers the opportunity to serve on the *Choral Journal* staff, with new perspectives and voices rotating on through the years. The use of term limits does, however, affect all of the current board members, and although I am excited about the changes to our structure and feel this is a positive step forward for the future of *Choral Journal* and the rest of ACDA's publications, I am sad to see those who have served so well in their positions for so long be affected by its implementation. These people were all on the board when I started in this position as Publications Editor in November 2013 and are kind, hardworking professionals whom I respect greatly.

There are two board members in particular who each have served faithfully for over two decades. Sharon Hanson started the On the Voice article series in 1999 and has done spectacular work seeking out authors to write unique, scholarly articles specifically about the voice. I also look to her for expertise with article reviews on a wide range of topics. Stephen Town has been on the editorial board since 1992 as article reviewer and editor of the Book Reviews column, the longest of anyone currently serving. His expertise is, among other areas, in English music, specifically the British Musical Renaissance, and also Austro-Germanic Music, specifically Haydn and Brahms. Stephen has done an excellent job maintaining the reviews column and even writ-

(continued on next page)

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ing reviews himself. Stephen has chosen to step down from his position as Book Reviews editor as of this issue; Sharon will be continuing the On the Voice series through the 2017 volume year.

The duties of an editorial board member and column editor can often go overlooked. Yes, their names are listed in the sidebar of my monthly column and at the top of their column header, but it is difficult to see all that goes into putting this publication together. I truly value and appreciate each person who volunteers his or her time to further the excellence of this publication. Looking ahead, there are both immediate and upcoming openings available for editorial board members and column editors as a result of the restructuring. Please see the next page for information on how to submit an application for an editorial board member; feel free to email me at [abumgarner@acda.org](mailto:abumgarner@acda.org) with any questions. The choral reviews and book reviews columns are also open, and application information can be found on pages 95 and 96, respectively.


### **In This Issue**

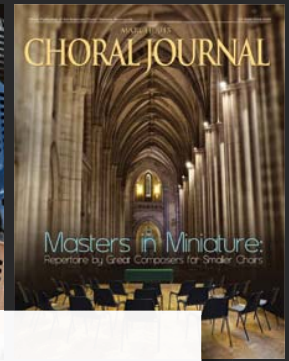
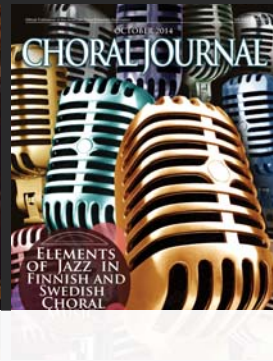
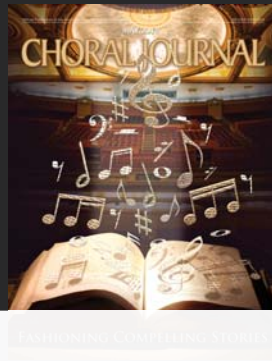
The current issue's cover article, "Singing in Translation," revisits Roger Doyle's 1980 *Choral Journal* article on the same topic, presenting criteria for evaluating English singing versions and offering performance suggestions based on the demands of a translation in order to "make performance in translation satisfying, not merely satisfactory." Next is an article focusing on Felix Mendelssohn's regard for the choral music of George Frideric Handel. Mendelssohn's interest in the music of J.S. Bach is well known, but Mendelssohn was also a lifelong

proponent of Handel's music, and this is particularly evident in Mendelssohn's five choral-orchestral psalm settings. Finally, this issue contains an interview with Javier Busto, a conductor, award-winning composer and family physician. Topics such as schooling, philosophy of medicine, compositional techniques, and publishing are discussed.

Two thousand and sixteen is an anniversary year for Robert Shaw, and page 61 features a reprint of an article I came across in the winter issue of *Cantate*, the official publication of California ACDA (Eliza Rubenstein, editor) written by Ronald Kean and sharing lessons learned from his experiences as Shaw's apprentice. Elsewhere in this issue is an article in the Hallelujah! column (page 75), results from a conducting survey (page 85), a preview of the latest issue of *ChorTeach* (page 97), student chapter updates (page 83), and a fascinating look into the workings of the East Hill Singers (page 69), a male prison chorus that is part of the Arts in Prison program at Lansing Correctional Facility in Kansas.

I am always excited for the current issue to go to print so that I can share the articles and columns with the readers of *Choral Journal*. This month is no exception. It is the hope of this editor and the editorial board members that these articles are useful and inspiring to you both academically and personally as you continue to serve our profession.





## Call for *Choral Journal* Editorial Board Members

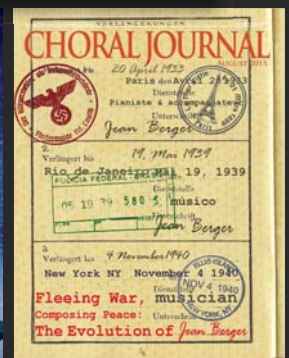
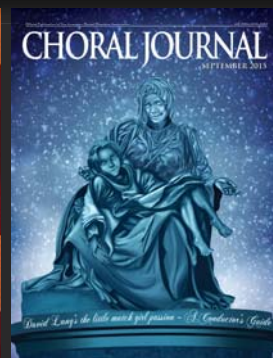
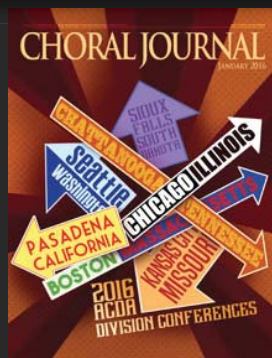
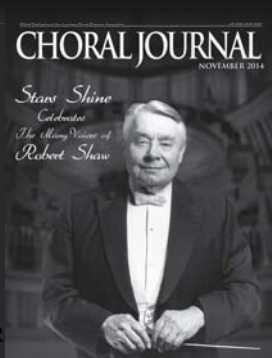
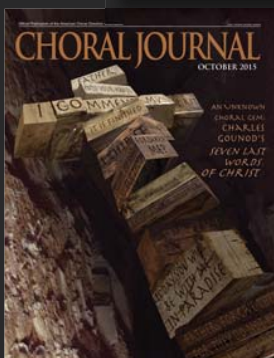
There is an opening on the *Choral Journal* staff for two Editorial Board members. Editorial Board members will be responsible for reviewing article submissions for *Choral Journal* and offering input and suggestions for the workings of *Choral Journal*.

### Criteria

Editorial Board members must have strong research skills and knowledge of a variety of topics related to, but not including, choral conducting and pedagogy, music history and theory, vocal pedagogy, choral music education, world music, conducting performance, choral repertoire, and rehearsal techniques. A member need not have expertise in all of these topics but must have a wide range of knowledge. Editorial Board members will communicate directly with the *Choral Journal* editor and will meet every other year at the ACDA National Conference.

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

A letter of application, including a vision statement and resume, are due by **May 15** to Amanda Bumgarner, ACDA Publications Editor, [abumgarner@acda.org](mailto:abumgarner@acda.org). There will be a review of applicants by the Publications Editor and recommendations made to the Executive Committee for appointment.





“WHAT LANGUAGE SHALL I BORROW?”  
*SINGING IN TRANSLATION*

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**W**e have all likely done it at one time or another: we have conducted or sung works in translation. Our reasons probably varied. Perhaps we saw no point in teaching the original language to that particular choir. Perhaps we made the choice for the sake of a particular audience. Perhaps our decision was based solely on expediency. Regardless, any conscious or unconscious reason we had likely flew in the face of what many of us have heard or been taught: that the performance of vocal music in translation is a form of blasphemy.

The late Roger Doyle made a case for singing in translation in his 1980 *Choral Journal* article, "What? Sing It in English? What Will the Neighbors Think?" In it, he bases his thoughts on the principal question of how to involve, to the fullest extent, the musicians and the listeners in a performance. Doyle lists what he saw as the four usual arguments against singing in translation then proceeds to reason them away. Those arguments are:

- 1) The nuance of the composer's language is integral to the flow of the music.
- 2) Translations are provided in the printed programs.
- 3) The audience can't understand the English either.
- 4) Good English versions are very scarce.<sup>1</sup>

Though not advocating the use of English at all times and for all repertoire, Doyle does consider aversion to English performances as “snobbish.”<sup>2</sup>

The present article will expand on Doyle’s reasoning, present criteria for evaluating English singing versions, and offer performance suggestions based on the demands of a translation. The case studies following include the familiar and oft-performed in translation (Mendelssohn’s “Es wird ein Stern,” from *Christus*), the less performed but oft-translated (J. S. Bach’s *Matthäus-Passion*), and a translation some simply avoid (Hindemith’s “La biche,” from *Six chansons*). This article will present ways to make performance in translation—as with all that we do—satisfying, not merely satisfactory.

## The Arguments

Thoughts that rise in many of our minds flesh out Doyle’s anti-translation arguments:

- 1) Most composers’ music springs from the emotion or affect present in the text. Only through the knowledge and use of the original language can performers or listeners truly understand the composer’s vision for the juxtaposition of text and music. Additionally, the actual sounds of the original words often serve to generate or underscore the composer’s intended musical effect.
- 2) Translations are provided in the printed program. Put a less polite way, “Why should the musicians be the only ones working during a performance?”
- 3) The self-damning argument of poor English diction needs no discussion.
- 4) English versions are usually filled with archaic language such as “Thee” and “Thou,” forced unstressed endings such as “endurèd,” strange word order, impossible vowels to sing, and lines that bear no relationship to the meaning of the original or are just plain generic and meaningless.

Consider, however, the advantages:

- 1) Singing in our native language saves rehearsal time. As base and utilitarian as this may sound, it is true. Additionally, John Rutter believes that doing the opposite of one’s regular practice—allowing ensembles unaccustomed to Latin to experience its beauty, or trying Fauré’s *Requiem* in English—can bring a sense of immediacy for performers.<sup>3</sup>
- 2) As a result, the audience will also be able to immediately respond to the affect of the text. This spares the audience the distraction of reading translations, often in the dark, often without the original language printed alongside, all while trying to actually listen to the performance.
- 3) Historically speaking, the increased availability of inexpensive, printed music in the nineteenth century and, in England and the United States, the translation of works into English, made hundreds of works accessible to performers and listeners—works that otherwise would likely have been forgotten.<sup>4</sup>
- 4) As Roger Doyle states, “We must not prove the genius of [a composer’s] art only by his [or her] skillful text underlay.”<sup>5</sup> Taking J. S. Bach as an example, the communication of the text was of paramount importance, thus, Bach—and Luther before him—chose texts in the language of the listener. Even Helmuth Rilling admits, “In Bach’s mind, the [*St. Matthew Passion*] was intended as a worship experience as well as a teaching device. Language should certainly infringe on those intentions as little as possible even today.”<sup>6</sup>

## The Familiar

The beloved chorus from Mendelssohn’s unfinished oratorio *Christus*, “Es wird ein Stern aus Jacob aufgeh’n,” provides an initial opportunity to examine the choices available to us as conductors and performers. As a favorite in American Christmas concerts, we most often hear the work in English, using one of four different versions included in American and British editions. Those English versions, the original German, and a literal translation appear in Table 1. (For the purposes of this discussion,

only the initial, Scripture paraphrase portion of the text will be examined, not the setting of the chorale WIE SCHÖN LEUCHTET that ends the movement.)

Bunsen paraphrases the biblical text as prose, so the number of syllables per line (9.10.10) and the fact that all the translators match them are less important than if it were poetic text. Details of note in the German include the division of the word “Israel” into three syllables in

Mendelssohn’s setting, the prevalence of bright [e] and [ɛ] vowels, the color of the last line deriving from the consonants, and the melodic highpoints of the three lines (“Stern,” “und,” and “-schmet-,” respectively) (Figure 1).

Both Foote and Bartholomew match the syllabification of “Israel.” The other two translators, however, are forced to divide the word into only two syllables because of its different location in the line. Compared to Foote

Table 1. Mendelssohn, *Christus*, “Es wird ein Stern,” original text, literal translation, and published English versions

<p><u>Christian Karl Josias von Bunsen (1791–1860)</u> (based on Numbers 24:17)</p> <p>Es wird ein Stern aus Jacob aufgeh’n und ein Szepter aus Israel kommen und wird zerschmetterten Fürsten und Städte.</p>	<p><u>Author’s Literal Translation</u></p> <p>There shall a star out of Jacob rise, and a scepter out of Israel come and shall crush princes and cities.</p>
<p><u>William Bartholomew</u><sup>7</sup></p> <p>There shall a star from Jacob come forth, and a scepter from Israel rise up, and dash in pieces princes and nations.</p>	<p><u>J. C. D. Parker</u><sup>8</sup></p> <p>There shall a star come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, with might destroying princes and cities.</p>
<p><u>Henry Wilder Foote</u><sup>9</sup></p> <p>Behold a star from Jacob shining, and a scepter from Israel rising, to reign in glory over the nations.</p>	<p><u>Don H. Razey</u><sup>10</sup></p> <p>A star shall rise up out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall come out of Israel, and dash in pieces princes and nations.</p>

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Bunsen: Es wird ein Stern aus Ja - cob auf - geh'n und ein Szep - ter aus Is - ra - el kom - men,  
 Bartholomew: There shall a star from Ja - cob come forth, and a scep - ter from Is - ra - el rise up,  
 Parker: There shall a star come out of Ja - cob, and a scep - tre shall rise out of Is - rael,  
 Foote: Be - hold a star from Ja - cob shin - ing, and a scep - ter from Is - ra - el ris - ing,  
 Razey: A star shall rise up out of Ja - cob, and a scep - tre shall come out of Is - rael,

Figure 1. Felix Mendelssohn, *Christus*, “Es wird ein Stern,” mm. 2–6.

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 Foote: Edition and organ arrangement by Archibald T. Davison,  
 © 1936, 1963 by E. C. Schirmer Music Company,  
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 Razey: © Carl Fischer, LLC. Used with permission.

and Parker, Bartholomew and Razey bring more forward, closed vowels into their texts, echoing a similar prevalence in the original. In terms of word order and its effect on melodic highpoints, three of the translators are able to match the original with highpoints on “star,” “and,” and their varying translations of “zerschmettert” (Figure 2). Razey, however, moves not only the names Jacob and Israel but also the significant word “star.”

The greatest difference among the four English versions occurs in the last line. Foote avoids the violence of the original text altogether by suggesting the “Star” will “reign in glory.” Bartholomew and Razey find the most success in utilizing percussive, aspirate consonants here, mirroring Bunsen’s German. With such instructive details gathered by comparing English versions of a piece we may know well, we can proceed to the criteria used for evaluation.

## The Criteria

For English speakers, any work in the creation of an English singing version, or any performer’s work in evaluating the quality of an existing version, must begin with a firm grasp of the literal translation. For choral literature in general, the four-volume set of *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire* published by earthsongs serves as an invaluable resource.<sup>11</sup> Where J. S. Bach’s music specifically is concerned, several excellent sources for literal translations exist. Among those are invaluable books by Alfred Dürr,<sup>12</sup> Melvin Unger,<sup>13</sup> Richard Stokes,<sup>14</sup> Michael Marissen,<sup>15</sup> and two websites—one by Z. Philip Ambrose<sup>16</sup> and one simply called the Bach Cantatas Website.<sup>17</sup>

With a literal translation in hand, one can begin to either create or judge the quality of a singing version. Translators of opera, art song, and oratorio have written and spoken frequently about the guidelines they give themselves in their work. Distilling these guidelines into categories and adding this author’s supplementary category creates a set of four areas of concern. Any of these guidelines could, of course, be bent or ignored by a translator or performer if another rule is deemed a higher priority.

- 1) Listeners tend to readily notice poetic concerns, an element translators perhaps find the most difficult to address. The number of syllables and the order of stressed and unstressed syllables should parallel the original. The placement of key words should match the original, avoiding inversion of phrases. Although translators tend to be divided on the necessity of rhyme, most agree that it is essential at the ends of sections and in situations where the musical structure is informed by the rhyme scheme.<sup>18</sup> Rhyme is sometimes less important in dramatic texts than in humorous texts.<sup>19</sup> General rhymes or phonetic similarity and rhyming only the even lines of a four-line stanza also tend to be accepted compromises.<sup>20</sup>
- 2) Specific word choices affect more than literal meaning. The use of “Thee” and “Thou,” though archaic, will likely be heard as natural and appropriate when referring to Deity.<sup>21</sup> Where the original language makes use of onomatopoeic words—essentially, words that imitate the sound they describe—or ideophones—words that evoke an impression with sound—an effort should be made to achieve the same in translation. And especially when different text sources are combined (as biblical text, original poetic, or chorale texts are in Bach’s choral and vocal works), attention should be paid to any word correlations between bodies of text in the original.
- 3) The area of vocal concerns primarily covers the notion of diction and the challenges it presents in any language in

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Bunsen:	und	wird	zer -	schmet -	tern	Für -	sten	und	Städ -	te.
Bartholomew:	and	dahs	in	piec -	es	prin -	ces	and	na -	tions.
Parker:	with	might	de -	stroy -	ing	prin -	ces	and	cit -	ies.
Foote:	to	reign	in	glo -	ry	o -	ver	the	na -	tions.
Razey:	and	dahs	in	piec -	es	prin -	ces	and	na -	tions.

Figure 2. Felix Mendelssohn, *Christus*, “Es wird ein Stern,” mm. 32–35.

Bartholomew: © Neil A. Kjos Music Company. Used with permission, 2015.  
 Foote: Edition and organ arrangement by Archibald T. Davison,  
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 Razey: © Carl Fischer, LLC. Used with permission.

any voice. English versions should fit vowels appropriately to the extremes of range in the various voice types—with a general preference for open vowels [a, æ, ɔ] in the upper range of female voices, and a preference for closed vowels [i, e, o, u] in the upper range of male voices.<sup>22</sup> Consonants should be chosen to match the musical style—whether *legato* and connected; or *marcato* and heavily accented; or staccato and detached. Additionally, these diction- and vocal-related concerns should also take into account the level of training of the singers—acknowledging that, in general, the average soloist has more training than the average chorister.<sup>23</sup>

- 4) I have added to the list of translators' guidelines an area that is specific to sacred texts—that of theological concerns. Too often when sacred texts are translated, efforts to avoid sectarianism result in a text that is only quasi-religious or vaguely inspirational. Consider the English version “O Lord God,” created by N. Lindsay Norden for Paul Chesnokov's music. Clearly inspired by passages of psalms, the text conspicuously avoids any hint of Trinitarian doctrine, thus refraining from the promotion of a particular religion.<sup>24</sup> As a result, only Norden's final line is even remotely related to the original Church Slavonic of Chesnokov's “O Tebe raduyetsia,” op. 15, no. 11, where references to the Son of God and to the Blessed Virgin Mary abound. A literal translation of that Church Slavonic text appears below.

All of creation rejoices in You, O Full of Grace—  
the assembly of angels and the race of men.  
O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise,  
glory of virgins,  
from whom God was incarnate and became a  
child—  
our God before the ages.  
He made Your body into a throne,  
and Your womb he made more spacious than the  
heavens.  
All of creation rejoices in You, O Full of Grace.  
Glory to You!<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, the poetic and chorale texts Bach

selected demonstrate elements of both Lutheran Orthodoxy and Lutheran Pietism. In the simplest terms, distinguishing these influences requires attention to the poets' choice of first person pronouns—“I” (generally used by hymnwriters with pietistic leanings) versus “we” (preferred by orthodox poets). Finally, any translation of poetic texts used by Bach should adhere strictly to the tenets of Lutheran theology, especially the doctrine of justification by faith—that is, salvation that comes only by the gift of faith and not through human works.

## The Oft-Translated

Several Americans and Britons have made substantial contributions to the availability of English singing versions of choral and vocal repertoire. Among the most significant is American Henry Drinker who, in addition to his many volumes of English versions of nineteenth-century German *Lieder* and choral works, published a four-volume collection of English versions of all Bach's choral and vocal compositions.<sup>26</sup> Charles Sanford Terry published a similar work in England.<sup>27</sup> The translations of these two prolific writers appear in the editions of American, British, and German publishing houses.

Adding the versions of Drinker and Terry to the original work, borrowings and revisions of Britons Helen Johnston,<sup>28</sup> John Oxenford,<sup>29</sup> John Troutbeck,<sup>30</sup> Claude Aveling,<sup>31</sup> Charles Villiers Stanford,<sup>32</sup> Edward Elgar<sup>33</sup> and Ivor Atkins,<sup>34</sup> and Neil Jenkins,<sup>35</sup> and Americans John Sul-

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# “WHAT LANGUAGE SHALL I BORROW?”

livan Dwight,<sup>36</sup> Louis Koemmenich,<sup>37</sup> and Robert Shaw<sup>38</sup> results in a total of thirteen different—though at times related—English singing versions of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, the next case study (Table 2).

Into Matthew’s Passion narrative, Bach interpolates chorale stanzas—stanzas he selected both for their familiarity to his congregation and for their very direct commentary on the narrative. The present example appears during the Last Supper, after Jesus announces that one of the disciples will betray him. The (eleven) disciples respond, “Herr, bin ich’s?” [Lord, am I the one?]. Significantly, the first line of a chorale stanza by Paul Gerhardt immediately answers this question with “Ich bin’s” [I am the one]. Therefore, word choice concerns and the order of lines ought take precedence.

The first words of this chorale are an immediate reversal of the words of the preceding *turba* chorus—“Herr, bin ich’s?,” “Ich bin’s”—an admission of guilt on the part of the “congregation.” Most of the English versions translate the *turba* words “Herr, bin ich’s” as “Lord, is it I?” Shaw avoids the additional syllable by inventing the German-sounding contraction “Lord, is’t I?” (Figure 3). Drinker

solves the issue with “Lord, not I.”

One must note whether or not Bach’s reason for choosing this particular chorale stanza—its textual connection with Luther’s translation of the disciples’ word—is maintained. Table 3 shows that the versions of Johnston and Aveling completely omit the crucial mirroring of text. Troutbeck’s version contains the phrase “’Tis I,” but it does not appear until the last line, thus eliminating the immediate impact it could have. All other versions intentionally match the text correlation of the original German.

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German:	Herr	bin	ich's
Shaw:	Lord,	is't	I
Drinker:	Lord,	not	I
Others:	Lord,	is	it I

**Figure 3.** J. S. Bach, *Mathäus-Passion*, BWV 244, No. 9, mm. 33, (*Neue Bach-Ausgabe*). No. 15, m. 19, (*Bach Gesellschaft Ausgabe*). Alto

Drinker<sup>39</sup>

Table 2. “Family Tree” of *St. Matthew Passion* English versions

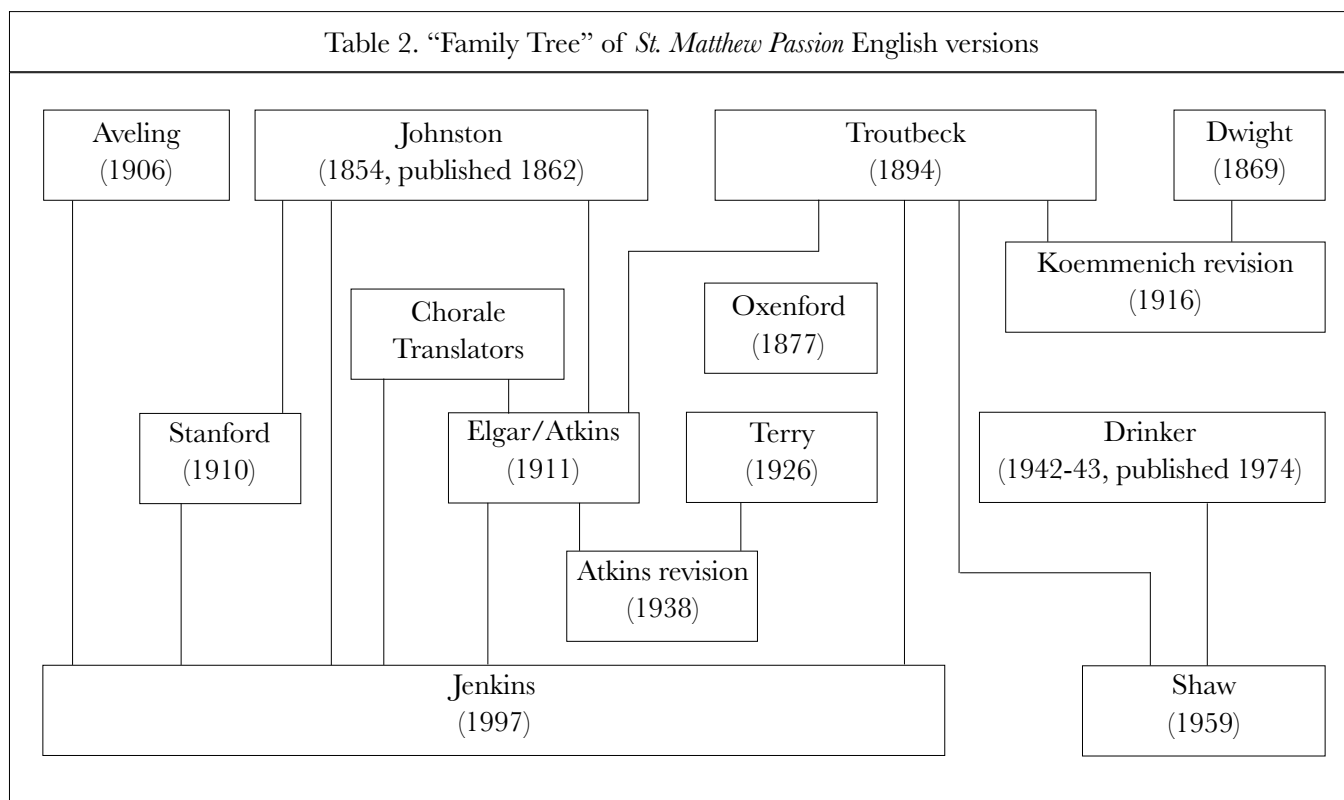


Table 3.

J. S. Bach, *Matthäus-Passion*, no. 10 (NBA) / 16 (BG), original text, literal translation and English versions

<p><u>Gerhardt</u> (“O Welt, sich hier dein Leben,” st. 10)          Ich bin’s, ich sollte büßen,          an Händen und an Füßen          gebunden in der Höll.          Die Geißeln und die Banden          und was du ausgestanden,          das hat verdient meine Seel.</p>	<p><u>Marissen (literal)</u><sup>40</sup>          I am the one, I should atone:          bound, hand and foot,          in hell.          The scourges and the bonds          and what you have endured—          my soul has merited that.</p>
<p><u>Johnston, Stanford</u>          My sin it was which bound Thee,<sup>41</sup>          with anguish did surround Thee,          and nail’d Thee to the tree;          I must in hell have groaned          and my sad fate bemoaned,          but Jesus, Thou hast died for me!</p>	<p><u>Dwight</u>          ‘Tis I! my sins betray Thee!          Ah! foully I repay Thee,          who died to make me whole!          Of all the wrong Thou borest,          the stripes, the crown Thou worest,          the guilt lies heavy on my soul.</p>
<p><u>Oxford</u>          ‘Tis I, I am the traitor,          no sin than mine is greater.          Shouldst cast me in to hell,          with heavy fetters bind me,          of all Thy griefs remind me,          the worst my soul deserveth well.</p>	<p><u>Troutbeck, Koemmenich</u>          The sorrows Thou art bearing,          with none their burden sharing,          on me they ought to fall.          The torture Thou art feeling,          thy patient love revealing,          ‘tis I that should endure it all.</p>
<p><u>Aveling</u>          All mine the sin that bound Thee,          and mine the thorns that crowned Thee,          enslaving Thee to hell;          the score that mocked and shamed Thee,          the scourge and stripes that maimed Thee,          My sinful heart hath earned too well!</p>	<p><u>Elgar/Atkins</u>          ‘Tis I, whose sin now binds Thee,<sup>42</sup>          with anguish deep surrounds Thee,          and nails Thee to the tree;          the torture Thou art feeling,          thy patient love revealing,          ‘tis I should bear it, I alone.</p>
<p><u>Terry</u>          ‘Tis I should show contrition,          deserving of perdition,          and worthy deepest hell!          The tortures that await Thee,          the thongs that soon shall pain Thee,          myself should bear, I know full well.</p>	<p><u>Drinker</u><sup>43</sup>          ‘Tis I who should, repenting,          in torture unrelenting,          endure the pains of hell.          The shackles and the scourges          thou bore from sin to purge us,          were by us all deserved full well.</p>
<p><u>Shaw</u>          ‘Tis I, my sin repenting,          my hands and feet consenting,          should take the bonds of hell.          The scourge and thongs which bound Thee,          and all the wrongs around Thee,          are merit of my sinful soul.</p>	<p><u>Jenkins</u>          ‘Tis I, whose sin hath bound Thee,          with anguish did surround Thee,          and nailed Thee to the tree.          The torture Thou art feeling,          thy patient love revealing,          Thou hast endured it all for me.</p>

In terms of poetic concerns, all the translators maintain the original hymn meter of 7.7.6.7.7.8. Troutbeck and Koemmenich, Oxenford, Dwight, and—in a weaker fashion—Drinker and Terry match the original rhyme scheme of AABCCB. Johnston, Stanford, and Jenkins greatly simplify the rhyme scheme to AAABBA, as does Aveling to AABAAB. Atkins and Elgar only slightly alter the scheme with their AAABBC; Shaw’s AABCCD also shows only minor deviation.

The importance of word choice continues beyond the initial words “Ich bin’s,” because those two words inform the tone of the remainder of the text. Gerhardt places the majority of the emphasis on oneself in the first person, “ich” [I] and “meine” [my]. The text contains only one reference to Christ in the second person with “du” [you/Thou]. This emphasis gets lost in most of the English versions, many of which choose to end rhyming lines with “Thee” twice if not four times. Oxenford and Drinker

do manage to capture the original’s self-focused nature. However, the personal, pietistic use of the singular “I” disappears from Drinker’s text; the subsequent move to the plural “us” eliminates the pointed identification intended.

Gerhardt’s original text contains no references to “the tree” (the cross); neither does it directly refer to Christ’s death. The English versions of Johnston and Stanford, Elgar and Atkins, Jenkins, and Dwight all make such allusions, leaping ahead in the Passion narrative from the Last Supper to the crucifixion. Although such references pose no theological problems, references to being bound in hell, being beaten and scourged—found in Aveling, Terry, Oxenford, Troutbeck and Koemmenich, Drinker, and Shaw—are more direct translations of the German.

## The Avoided

Anyone who has studied or performed any of Hindemith’s *Six Chansons* knows that the published performing editions include underlay of an English singing version by Elaine de Sinçay (ca. 1899–1952). As a frequent translator for B. Schott’s Söhne and its American affiliates, her English versions appear in publications of Russian and Spanish art songs, songs by Virgil Thomson, excerpts from Prokofiev and Rachmaninov operas and cantatas, and smaller choral works in Spanish and Portuguese.

De Sinçay was the daughter of the head of the University of Paris School of Medicine and had been educated in Russia prior to the Revolution. She came to the United States in her late teens and worked as a French teacher and translator, but she also spoke German, Polish, and Italian, in addition to the languages noted above. Her friendship with Paul and Gertrud Hindemith began during her marriage to Hugh C. M. Ross (1898–1990), conductor of New York’s Schola Cantorum. The composer heard de Sinçay’s translations of others’ works and asked her to create English versions of some of his art songs and the *Six chansons*.<sup>44</sup>

Three points must contribute to this discussion:

- 1) De Sinçay’s English is included in the Hindemith *Sämtliche Werke* edition.
- 2) According to the critical notes in the *Sämtliche Werke*, Georges Haenni, the conductor of the choir for



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whom the *Chansons* were composed, had to correct some details of Hindemith's text underlay and setting in order to accommodate the necessity to sound the French final 'e,' among other elements.<sup>45</sup>

3) Chester Alwes, in his 1995 *Choral Journal* article on the *Chansons*, relates that Hindemith preferred them in English.<sup>46</sup>

So at the very least, ensembles have "permission, if not endorsement"<sup>47</sup> to perform the *Chansons* in English, as no less a Hindemith proponent than Robert Shaw did in 1945.<sup>48</sup>

Rainer Maria Rilke's (1875–1926) original French poem appears in Table 4 alongside de Sinçay's English singing version. Italics in the French indicate word repetitions in Hindemith's setting that do not appear in the original poem. Additionally in the seventh line, the final "e" of "n'arrive" is only pronounced the first time; the repeat of the word omits the final "e" through elision with the next word, "à."

The underlined syllables in the English version indicate rhyme and meter concessions de Sinçay makes. The

poetic meter of Hindemith's setting of the French, when including repeated words and the sung, final "e," yields 9.12.9.9.9.7.10.6.7. The English text—when splitting the word "secular" between lines one and two—yields a nearly identical meter 8.12.9.9.9.7.10.6.7.

Dividing the word "secular," however, creates problems when comparing the two rhyme schemes. The scheme of the original French text shows ABBACDCCD. De Sinçay matches this to a degree. First, one must accept a near-rhyme between "secular" and "fear." Additionally the word "bounding," which allows its line to fit the meter, must be heard as split up for the "bound-" syllable to rhyme with "astound" and "profound."

Taking the form of Hindemith's setting into consideration alters the perception of rhyme in the poem. The composer set the final syllable of "interieur" with a quarter note, but it is not the end of a phrase. The musical phrase does not end until "abonde," so that will be heard as the first word to be rhymed. Hindemith's settings of "ronde" and "combien de peur"—the ends of lines three and four—parallel each other musically but on scalar, descending eighth notes that carry no sense of closure.

Table 4. Rilke, "La biche," as set by Hindemith, with Elaine de Sinçay's English version

O la biche; quel bel intérieur  
d'anciennes forêts dans tes yeux abonde;  
combien de confiance ronde  
mêlée à combien, *combien* de peur.  
Tout cela, porté par la vive  
gracilité de tes bonds.  
Mais jamais rien n'arrive, *rien n'arriv(e)*  
à cette impossessive  
ignorance de ton front.

O thou doe, what vistas of se-  
-cular forest appear in thine eyes reflected!  
What confidence serene affected  
by transient shades, by shades of fear.  
And it all is borne on thy bounding  
course, for so gracile art thou.  
Nor comes aught to astound, aught to astound  
the impassive profound  
unawareness of thy brow.

Hindemith LA BICHE from 6 CHANSONS

Text by Rainer Maria Rilke

English translation by Elaine de Sinçay

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# “WHAT LANGUAGE SHALL I BORROW?”

Even the rest following “peur,” though indicating the end of a phrase, does not allow for obvious aural correlation of “peur” with “interieur.” Not until a *fermata* on the word “bonds” do we hear another sure phrase ending. This is matched by the final *fermata* on “front.” The correlation would imply that Hindemith’s notion of the significant rhymes falls on “abonde,” “bonds,” “front”—lines 2, 6, and 9. Examination of the early version of “La biche” (prior to Haenni’s editorial corrections) shows that the composer truly did have this perception; he attempted to set “abonde” as a single syllable (Figure 4). In de Sincay’s English (for Hindemith’s final version), those lines end with “reflected,” “thou,” and “brow,” remaining more true to the rhyme scheme of Rilke’s French.

This author now admits to never having performed this piece in English—not because it should not be, but because of misgivings about the English version. Several points are troublesome:

- 1) “Doe” is indeed an exact translation of “biche” and utilizes a vowel that allows sopranos, especially, a fair amount of vocal ease. Hindemith, though, surely knew the relative difficulty of the vowel [i] in the middle-to-upper parts of female voices, but he still set the word “biche” at what is generally a challenging pitch (Figure 5). Bearing that in mind, along with Hindemith’s initial imagining of “biche” as a single syllable, the use of the word “deer” instead of “doe” becomes a legitimate choice.
- 2) According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word “secular” derives from the Latin word “saecularis” or “saeculum” meaning “generation” or “age,” as in “et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.” Instead of this meaning—the *OED*’s branch two definition—most listeners will likely hear the word as the opposite of “religious,” the branch one definition in the *OED*.<sup>49</sup> The challenge becomes finding an appropriate replacement word that will be heard as a translation of “anciennes” [ancient].

**Figure 4.** Paul Hindemith, *Six Chansons*, “La biche,” m. 4.  
Early and Final Versions

Paul Hindemith: “La Biche” from *Six Chansons*. Text by Rainer Maria Rilke, English translation by Elaine de Sincay  
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3) Although Rilke uses the formal, second person pronouns “tes” and “ton,” formal pronouns such as “thine” in contemporary English are generally limited to references to deity. In English, the informal pronoun “your” avoids religious or archaic overtones.

4) The intent of the seventh line in French—“Mais jamais rien n’arrive”—is a lack of activity, and the appropriately fluid consonants of the French ought be emulated in English.

**Figure 5.** Paul Hindemith, *Six Chansons*, “La biche,” m. 1.  
Early and Final Versions

Paul Hindemith: “La Biche” from *Six Chansons*.  
Text by Rainer Maria Rilke, English translation by Elaine de Sincay  
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## “What Language Shall I Borrow...?”

Three options present themselves to conductors and performers at this point, each one demonstrated by the repertoire examples prior.

- 1) One may compile an English version, borrowing portions of existing translations, as Neil Jenkins did in preparing his English version of

Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. A suggested solution for Mendelssohn's "Es wird ein Stern" appears below.

Behold a star from Jacob shining, (Foote)  
and a scepter from Israel rising, (Foote)  
[to] dash in pieces princes and nations.  
(Bartholomew and Razey, alt.)

This compilation takes the most natural sounding response to the challenge of unstressed endings of German words with Foote's "shining" and "rising." It borrows—with the necessary grammatical alteration—the forceful, final line shared by the versions by Bartholomew and Razey. Though this final line does not literally translate the original "Städte" as "cities," it does match the [ɛ] vowel in "Städte" with "nations."

2) One may simply choose from several English versions. Robert Shaw's English version of the chorale "Ich bin's, ich sollte büßen" shows the most similarity to a literal translation (Figure 6). He maintains a line-for-line correlation and begins with the crucial words "'Tis I." Shaw also matches other key words

in the text such as "Höll" [hell], "Händen" and "Füßen" [hands and feet], and "meine Seel" [my (sinful) soul].

3) One may adapt an existing version or create one's own. One can turn to predecessor translators for inspiration when reworking or creating one's own version. Four translations created for poetic—rather than singing—purposes and a literal translation of Rilke's "La biche" appear in Table 5 and will serve as resources.

Utilizing these poetic and literal translations, one can address the troubling points mentioned on the previous pages.

- a. As poetic translations, the English writers are bound to the feminine and literal "doe," rather than the general "deer" that would mirror the French vowel [i] in "biche."
- b. All these writers translate "anciennes" literally as "ancient."



**Gerhardt / Shaw**

Ich bin's, ich soll-te bü - ßen,  
'Tis I, my sin re-pent-ing,  
An Hän - den und an Fü - ßen  
My hands and feet con-sent-ing,  
Ge - bun - den in der Höll.  
Should take the bonds of Hell.  
Die Gei - ßeln und die Ban - den  
The scourge and thongs which bound Thee,  
Und was du aus - ge - stan - den,  
And all the wrongs a - round Thee,  
Das hat ver-die-net mei-ne Seel.  
Are me - rit of my sin-ful soul.

**Marissen (literal)**

I am the one, I should atone:  
bound, hand and foot, in hell.  
.....  
The scourges and the bonds  
And what you have endured—  
My soul has merited that.

**Figure 6.** J. S. Bach, *Mathäus-Passion*, BWV 244, No. 9/16, Chorale Tune Only.  
Gerhardt's original text, Shaw's English version, and Marissen's literal translation

# “WHAT LANGUAGE SHALL I BORROW?”

Table 5. Rilke, “La biche,” original text, literal and poetic translations

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Rainer Maria Rilke</u></p> <p>O la biche; quel bel intérieur d'anciennes forêts dans tes yeux abonde; combien de confiance ronde mêlée à combien de peur. Tout cela, porté par la vive gracilité de tes bonds. Mais jamais rien n'arrive à cette impositive ignorance de ton front.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Gordon Paine (literal)<sup>50</sup></u></p> <p>O doe! How the beautiful interior of ancient forests abounds within your eyes; so much raw confidence fused with so much fear. All that, borne by the vibrant, lean grace of your leaps. Yet none of this ever appears in the unprepossessing blankness of your face.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>A. Poulin, Jr.<sup>51</sup></u></p> <p>Ah, the doe: what lovely hearts Of ancient woods abound inside your eyes; So much total confidence Fused with so much fear. All that, borne by the vibrance Of your graceful bounds. But in your brow's Unpossessive ignorance Nothing ever happens.</p> <p>Rainer Maria Rilke, “The Doe” from <i>The Complete French Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke</i>, translated by A. Poulin. Translation copyright © 1979, 1982, 1984, 1986 by A. Poulin, Jr. Reprinted with the permission of The Permissions Company, Inc. on behalf of Graywolf Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, www.graywolfpress.org.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Grant E. Hicks<sup>52</sup></u></p> <p>O doe, what lovely ancient forest depths abound in your eyes; how much open trust mixed with how much fear. All this, borne by the brisk gracility of your bounds. But nothing ever disturbs that unpossessive unawareness of your brow.</p> <p>© Grant E. Hicks. Used by permission.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Christopher Goldsack<sup>53</sup></u></p> <p>O doe: such a handsome interior of ancient forests abounds in your eyes; so much round confidence mingled with so much fear. All that, bourne by the vivid gracility of your leaps. But nothing ever happens to that unpossessive innocence of your brow.</p> <p>© melodietreasury. Used by permission.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Mary Pardoe<sup>54</sup></u></p> <p>O doe, what fair ancient forest depths appear in your eyes reflected! What confidence serene Mixed with how much fear. All this, borne by the brisk Gracility of your bounds! But nothing ever disturbs the unpossessive unawareness of your brow.</p>

- c. The informal English “your” appears, rather than the formal “thy” or “thine.”
- d. “Bounds,” rather than de Sinçay’s “bounding,” is preferred by these translators. Goldsack and Paine use “leaps,” which is a less attractive vowel and further removed from sound of the French “bonds” that appears at the same point.
- e. The word “disturbs,” used by Pardoe and Hicks, captures the sentiment of the French line but is just as percussive and non-legato as de Sinçay’s offering of the same line. Additionally, any negative connotations of the French word “ignorance” ought to be avoided in favor of creating a sense of innocence and unknowing.

Addressing these issues, and borrowing vocabulary choices from the above translations, this author suggests revisions to de Sinçay’s English version:

O, the deer: what vistas appear  
Of the deep, ancient woods in your visage  
rounded!  
Such confidence serene confounded  
And mingled with shades, with shades of  
fear.  
And it all is borne on the vivid  
Course of your elegant bound.  
Nothing ever will grieve, ever will grieve  
The impassive, naïve  
Unawareness of your brow.

This revision attempts to balance faithfulness to the French rhyme scheme with the formal emphasis of Hindemith’s setting. The resulting scheme could literally be classified as ABBACDEEF. With the imagination and the flexibility of Hindemith’s ear (in his initial instinct to rhyme “abonde” as a single syllable with “bonds”), one can hear similarity among “rounded,” “confounded,” “bound,” and



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# “WHAT LANGUAGE SHALL I BORROW?”

“brow.” Additionally, the [ɪv] sound in “vivid” and the [ɪv] in “naïve” may also be heard as related. Taking these adjustments into account yields a rhyme scheme of ABBACBCCB—a simpler scheme than those of Rilke or de Sinçay but one that highlights the implied rhymes of Hindemith’s setting.

## Performance Suggestions

Once an English version has been compiled, chosen, adapted, or created, two principal areas must be addressed in rehearsal and performance. Phrasing comprises the first of those areas. Strophic works in any language, including traditional hymns and chorales, serve as prime examples. In such works, sentence structure, punctuation, the order of parts of speech, etc., may change from one strophe to the next. This will (or should) alter the musical phrasing, even though the melody remains the same.

When performing the chorales in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* in English, conductors and performers must exercise the same liberty with and creativity of phrasing. Any phrasing differences between a theoretical performance in German and a performance in English should not be considered egregious but, rather, necessary. As can be seen above, Shaw crafted his English version of “Ich bin’s, ich sollte büßen” so well as to match even the general sentence structure—and, therefore, probable phrasing—of the original German.

The second area to address in practice is that of the differing vocal demands of any English version compared to the original language. The goals of emulating the sound or articulation of original consonants, and of matching vowels either to the original language or to the vocal range, have been addressed previously. The suggestion for a compiled English version of Mendelssohn’s “Es wird ein Stern” highlights this goal, especially in the

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final line of text.

When neither of those goals can be met by the text, more responsibility falls to the performer. One clear example of this responsibility is a word choristers encounter frequently enough—"crucify," "kreuzigen" in German. The diphthong of the first German syllable [ɔʏ] consists initially of a more open vowel than the [u] in "crucify," but the [ʏ] creates a more brilliant, forward-focused sound. This brighter German vowel renders such fierce, angular settings of the word (as appear in Bach's Passion settings) aurally thrilling and vocally more accessible. When performing in English, singers must bring sufficient focus and projection to the vocal tone of [u] to replicate as much as possible the harshness and severity inherent in the brighter, German diphthong [ɔʏ] and in the meaning of the word itself.

In larger works, the subject of the text may inform one's choice of language. Perhaps with a familiar narrative—the birth, life, or death and resurrection of Christ—an English-speaking audience may be readily engaged even in the original language. Works with a less familiar narrative—Faust, King David, Joan of Arc—may deserve to be performed in translation. When text sources are combined, a macaronic performance might serve, such as Bach's *Magnificat* in Latin with the Christmas interpolations in English.

## Conclusions

Nearly forty years after Roger Doyle, John Michael Cooper continued the defense of informed performance in translation (in his case, specifically where Mendelssohn's works are concerned). "Latter-day performers and scholars alike generally take it for granted that the translated versions were commercially necessary evils, unauthorized degradations of the poetry and the text/music relationships as the composer conceived them."<sup>55</sup>

Beyond these concrete musical grounds, some performers simply discount the idea of performance in translation with a mind-set of, "Who does the translator think he or she is?" This thought entirely misses the fact that—even of the few individuals mentioned in this article—many translators are significant composers, conductors, and performers in their own right. (In some cases, translators of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* were crafting words for their own ensembles.) Some translators had close, personal

friendships with a composer, as de Sinçay and Hindemith; some had long-standing, collaborative relationships with a composer, as Bartholomew and Mendelssohn.

Though admitting that Mendelssohn's work with translators was atypical, Cooper concludes, "We should neither automatically privilege the authority of the [original]-language versions of [Mendelssohn's] works nor unthinkingly dismiss or downplay settings in other languages."<sup>56</sup> If one continues to see performance in translation as sinful and inexcusable, absolution lies in doing the work to find or adapt or create a text that will make it an experience that needs no excuse.



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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Roger O. Doyle, “What? Sing It in English? What Will the Neighbors Think?,” *Choral Journal* 21, no. 2 (October 1980): 5.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.
- <sup>3</sup> John Rutter, preface to *Requiem*, Op. 48, by Gabriel Fauré, ed. John Rutter (Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw, 1984), 4.
- <sup>4</sup> Judith Blezzard, “Artistry, Expediency or Irrelevance? English Choral Translators and Their Work,” in *Words and Music*, ed. John Williamson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 103.
- <sup>5</sup> Doyle, “What? Sing It In English”: 6.
- <sup>6</sup> Helmuth Rilling, *Johann Sebastian Bach St. Matthew Passion: Introduction and Instructions for Study*, trans. Kenneth Nafziger (Frankfurt: C. F. Peters, 1976), 9.
- <sup>7</sup> William Bartholomew (1783–1867) received commissions from Mendelssohn to create English singing versions of *Hear My Prayer* and *Elijah*, the latter having its premiere in English. The publishing of *Christus* and Bartholomew’s English all occurred after the composer’s death. His text appears in publications from Neil A. Kjos Music Co., Concordia Publishing House, Roger Dean Publishing (an imprint of The Lorenz Corporation), GIA Publications, Addington Press (distributed by Hinshaw Music, Inc.), and Novello & Co.
- <sup>8</sup> J. C. D. Parker (1828–1916) is not credited in any current publication. In his 1861 publication *Sacred Choruses*—the first appearance of the piece in the United States—he claims this text as his translation work. Parker taught at New England Conservatory of Music from 1871 to 1897 and served as organist at Boston’s Trinity Church from 1864 to 1891. His text appears in publications from G. Schirmer, Inc., Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., Hal Leonard, Edwin F. Kalmus, and Boosey & Hawkes.
- <sup>9</sup> Henry Wilder Foote (1875–1964) was a Unitarian minister and member of the Harvard Divinity School faculty. His friend and Harvard colleague Archibald T. Davidson arranged the organ part in the edition that carries Foote’s translation, published by E. C. Schirmer Music Co.
- <sup>10</sup> The translator is not credited in Don H. Razey’s (1924–1979) out-of-print edition, published by Carl Fischer Music. Inquiring at Carl Fischer led me to contact his widow and executor of his estate, Regina Klimp. At the time of this writing, no response has been received.
- For simplicity, Razey will be treated as the presumed translator in this discussion. He served for many years as Education Director at J. W. Pepper and chaired the 1964 National ACDA Convention in Philadelphia.
- <sup>11</sup> Ron Jeffers et al., *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire*, 4 vols. (Corvallis, OR: earthsongs, 1988–).
- <sup>12</sup> Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach: With Their Librettos in German-English Parallel Text*, trans. Richard D. P. Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- <sup>13</sup> Melvin P. Unger, *Handbook to Bach’s Sacred Cantata Texts: An Interlinear Translation with Reference Guide to Biblical Quotations and Allusions* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1996).
- <sup>14</sup> Richard Stokes and Martin Neary, *J. S. Bach: The Complete Cantatas* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2000).
- <sup>15</sup> Michael Marissen, *Bach’s Oratorios: The Parallel German-English Texts with Annotations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- <sup>16</sup> Z. Philip Ambrose, “J. S. Bach: Texts of the Complete Vocal Works with English Translation and Commentary,” The University of Vermont, <http://www.uvm.edu/~classics/faculty/bach/> (accessed June 13, 2015).
- <sup>17</sup> “Bach Cantatas Website,” Aryeh Oron, <http://bach-cantatas.com/index.htm> (accessed June 13, 2015).
- <sup>18</sup> Arthur Jacobs, quoted in Rodney Milnes, ed., “The Translator at Work—Part 2,” *Opera* 25, no. 12 (December 1974): 1060.
- <sup>19</sup> Nell and John Moody, quoted in Milnes, “Part 2”: 1058.
- <sup>20</sup> Henry S. Drinker, “On Translating Vocal Texts,” *Musical Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (April 1950): 233.
- <sup>21</sup> Arthur Mendel, “Thoughts on the Translation of Vocal Texts” in *A Birthday Offering to [Carl Engel]*, ed. Gustave Reese (New York: G. Schirmer, 1943), 170.
- <sup>22</sup> Humphrey Proctor-Gregg, quoted in Rodney Milnes, ed., “The Translator at Work—Part 1,” *Opera* 25, no. 11 (November 1974): 952.
- <sup>23</sup> Drinker, “On Translating,” 229.
- <sup>24</sup> A performance of “O Lord God,” demonstrating N. Lindsay Norden’s text may be found at <https://youtu.be/31NLtK5sWpU>.
- <sup>25</sup> Paul Chesnokov, “O Tebe raduyetsia” (San Diego: Musica Russica, Inc., 1995).
- <sup>26</sup> Henry Sandwith Drinker, *Texts of the Choral Works of Johann Sebastian Bach in English Translation*, 4 vols. (New York: Association of American Colleges, 1942). Between 1941 and 1954, Drinker (1880–1965) translated 212

Bach cantatas, both Passions, the Easter and Christmas oratorios, all of Brahms' vocal works, and all the songs of Medtner, Mussorgsky, Schubert, Schumann, and Wolf. In the estimation of Neil Jenkins (see below), however, Drinker's work "looks more like a guide to the meaning of the German than a true alternative option." Neil Jenkins, "St Matthew Passion: A New English Version," *The Organ* 74, no. 292 (1995: 67).

- <sup>27</sup> Charles Sanford Terry, *Bach: The Passions*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1926; repr., New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1972). Terry's English version did appear in an unusual published musical edition. Edited by W. Gillies Whittaker, and with a Welsh (!) singing version provided by E. T. Davies and Gwilym Williams, *A Short Passion (from St. Matthew's Gospel)* was published in 1931 by Oxford University Press. This edition featured copious musical cuts and lowered keys for the sake of accessibility.
- <sup>28</sup> Johann Sebastian Bach, *Grosse Passions-Musik (according to the Gospel of St. Matthew)* ed. William Sterndale Bennett, trans. Helen F. H. Johnston (London: Lamborn, Cock, Hutchings & Co., 1862?). Bennett founded the Bach Society in 1849, with his Queen's College student Johnston (1832–1874) as a founding member. Using vocal parts from Mendelssohn's "revival" to prepare the score, Johnston printed scores on a press she set up in her own home. Their first performance of the abridged work took place in April 1854.
- <sup>29</sup> J. S. Bach, *The Passion of Our Lord (according to S. Matthew)* ed. Josiah Pittman, trans. John Oxenford (London: Boosey & Co., 1877). In addition to his translation work, Oxenford (1812–1877) authored many opera libretti and plays, including his 1835 *A Day Well Spent* that—via Thornton Wilder's expansion—eventually served as the inspiration for Jerry Herman's *Hello, Dolly!*.
- <sup>30</sup> J. S. Bach, *The Passion of Our Lord according to S. Matthew*, ed. Horace Wadham Nicholl, trans. John Troutbeck (London: Novello, 1894; repr. New York: G. Schirmer, n.d.). Church musician and translator John Troutbeck (1832–1899) not only produced English versions of both Bach Passions and the Christmas oratorio but also produced English libretti for operas of Gluck, Mozart, Wagner, and Weber, in addition to numerous smaller vocal works.
- <sup>31</sup> J. S. Bach, *The Passion according to Saint Matthew*, ed. Salomon Jadassohn, trans. Claude Aveling (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1906). For a time, Aveling (1869–1943) served as secretary to the director of the Royal College of Music in Belvedere, Kent, but he is primarily remembered for his translation work. Those publications include operas of Gluck, Berlioz, Wagner, Delibes, Massenet, and Wolf-Ferrari; Neapolitan songs; and several Bach cantatas. According to his translator's note in the score, his is the first English edition to take the chapters of Matthew's Gospel without alteration, "so far as the present translator is aware."
- <sup>32</sup> J. S. Bach, *The Passion according to St. Matthew*, ed. and trans. Charles Villiers Stanford (London: Stainer & Bell, 1910). This publication from composer, conductor, and teacher Stanford (1852–1924) appeared at virtually the same time as that of Elgar and Atkins (see below). According to composer Hubert Hastings Parry, Stanford interpreted this as "deliberately done to damage his edition. [Stanford] said it was 'the most infamous breach of professional etiquette he had ever known...but they shut your mouth by putting you [Parry] into the preface!!!" Jeremy Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 389.
- <sup>33</sup> J. S. Bach, *The Passion of Our Lord according to S. Matthew*, ed. and trans. Edward Elgar and Ivor Atkins (London: Novello, 1911). Composer-conductor Edward Elgar (1857–1934), together with Ivor Atkins, produced an English version that strictly retains the words of the Authorized Version of the biblical text, and draws on the best of predecessors Johnston and Troutbeck for non-biblical texts. They, as well as Jenkins (see below), also borrowed from prolific hymn translators James Waddell Alexander (1804–1859), Henry Williams Baker (1821–1877), Frances Elizabeth Cox (1812–1897), and Catherine Winkworth (1827–1878).
- <sup>34</sup> J. S. Bach, *The Passion of Our Lord according to Saint Matthew*, ed. and trans. Edward Elgar and Ivor Atkins, rev. Ivor Atkins (London: Novello, 1938). With the permission of Elgar's estate, English composer, conductor, and organist Ivor Atkins (1869–1953) undertook revisions to the pair's earlier translation. Principally, this included the use of pre-King-James English New Testaments—such as those of Wycliffe (1380), Tyndale (1534), and Cranmer (1539)—to revise biblical texts. Atkins also consulted with composer-conductor Ralph Vaughan Williams and tenor Stuart Wilson on non-biblical texts.
- <sup>35</sup> J. S. Bach, *St. Matthew Passion*, ed. Neil Jenkins (London:

Novello, 1997). Renowned British tenor and Bach Evangelist, Jenkins (b. 1945) was brought up on the English versions of Stanford and Elgar and Atkins. His stated goals were to retain the Authorized Version of the biblical text as much as possible and to overhaul the non-biblical text based on previous translators and his own experience.

- <sup>36</sup> J. S. Bach, *Passion Music: according to the Gospel of St. Matthew*, ed. Julius Stern and Robert Franz, trans. John Sullivan Dwight (Boston: O. Ditson, 1869). As founder and editor of *Dwight's Journal of Music* (1852–1881), John Sullivan Dwight (1813–1893) established himself as the first major American-born music critic. Of his method of translation, he said, “I wish in all cases to preserve the form as well as the spirit; for in lyric poetry the form is part of the substance. To retain the very idea of the author, with the exact rhythm and rhyme, and the fervor and grace of expression, is the ideal to which we ought certainly aim....” George Willis Cooke, *John Sullivan Dwight: A Biography* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1898; repr. New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 21–22.
- <sup>37</sup> J. S. Bach, *Passion Music: according to the Gospel of St. Matthew*, ed. Julius Stern and Robert Franz, trans. John Sullivan Dwight, rev. Louis Koemmenich (Boston: O. Ditson, 1916). In his preface to this revision, choral conductor Louis Koemmenich (1866–1922) cites Troutbeck as the source of alterations to Dwight’s text. Koemmenich writes, “[A] supremely satisfying translation of any text is a practical impossibility, and this is all the more true when the words have to be fitted in to such a musical framework as Bach supplies. For with Bach not only the body but the soul of a word is converted in to tone.”
- <sup>38</sup> J. S. Bach, *The Passion of Our Lord according to St. Matthew*, trans. Robert Shaw (New York: G. Schirmer, 1959). James R. Oestereich reviewed a performance of Shaw’s (1916–1999) translation for the April 6, 1996, issue of the *New York Times* and wrote, “Mr. Shaw’s translation generally worked well enough, retaining an archaic biblical quality that suited the work’s formality.”
- <sup>39</sup> J. S. Bach, *Matthäus-Passion*, BWV 244, ed. Alfred Dürr, trans. Henry S. Drinker, piano reduction (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1974), 46. Used by permission.
- <sup>40</sup> Marissen, *Bach's Oratorios*, 35.
- <sup>41</sup> Here, Stanford changed the first line to “Tis I, whose sin hath bound Thee.”
- <sup>42</sup> This line comes from Atkins’s 1938 revision. Their original read, “My sin it is which binds Thee.”
- <sup>43</sup> J. S. Bach, *Matthäus-Passion*, trans. Henry S. Drinker, 47. Used by permission.
- <sup>44</sup> Hugh Ross, interview by Cairtriona Bolster, November 15, 1976, interview no. 30/66a, transcript, Hindemith Project, Yale Oral History of American Music, New Haven, CT.
- <sup>45</sup> Alfred Rubeli, ed., *Paul Hindemith sämtliche Werke, Bd. 7/5 Chorwerke a cappella*, kritische Berichte (Mainz: B. Schott’s Söhne, 1989), 220.
- <sup>46</sup> Chester L. Alwes, “Paul Hindemith’s *Six chansons*: Genesis and Analysis,” *Choral Journal* 36, no. 2 (September 1995): 37.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>48</sup> *Bach, Brahms and Hindemith*, RCA Victor Chorale ’45–’47, dir. Robert Shaw, Pearl CD 180, 1992.
- <sup>49</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “secular, adj. and n.,” <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/174620?redirectedFrom=secular> (accessed June 13, 2015).
- <sup>50</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, “La biche,” in *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire, Vol. 3: French and Italian Texts*, trans. and annot. Gordon Paine (Corvallis, OR: earthsongs, 2007), 39. © earthsongs, 2007. Used by permission.
- <sup>51</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, “La biche,” in *The Complete French Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke*, trans. A. Poulin, Jr. (Saint Paul: Graywolf Press, 2002), 205.
- <sup>52</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, “La biche,” trans. Grant E. Hicks, *The Spectrum Singers: Illuminations of Now and Beyond—Texts and Translations* (February 5, 2003) [http://www.spectrumsingers.org/archives/2000-01/may01\\_words.html](http://www.spectrumsingers.org/archives/2000-01/may01_words.html) (accessed June 20, 2015).
- <sup>53</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, “La biche,” trans. Christopher Goldsack, *Mélodie Treasury*, [http://www.melodietreasury.com/translations/song121\\_Vergers.html](http://www.melodietreasury.com/translations/song121_Vergers.html) (accessed June 20, 2015).
- <sup>54</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, “La biche,” trans. Mary Pardoe, liner notes to *Ludus verbalis*, Vol. 2, Ensemble vocal Aedes, dir. Mathieu Romano, Eloquentia CD 1237, 2012, [http://www.eclassical.com/shop/171115/art96/4791996-95a99d-3760107400376\\_01.pdf](http://www.eclassical.com/shop/171115/art96/4791996-95a99d-3760107400376_01.pdf) (accessed June 20, 2015).
- <sup>55</sup> John Michael Cooper, “‘For You See I Am the Eternal Object’: On Performing Mendelssohn’s Music in Translation,” in *Mendelssohn in Performance*, ed. Siegwart Reichwald (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 207.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., 237–238.

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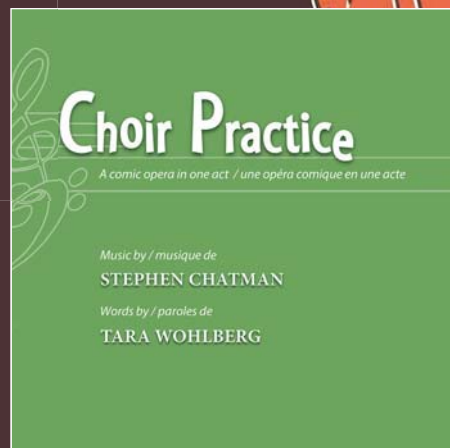
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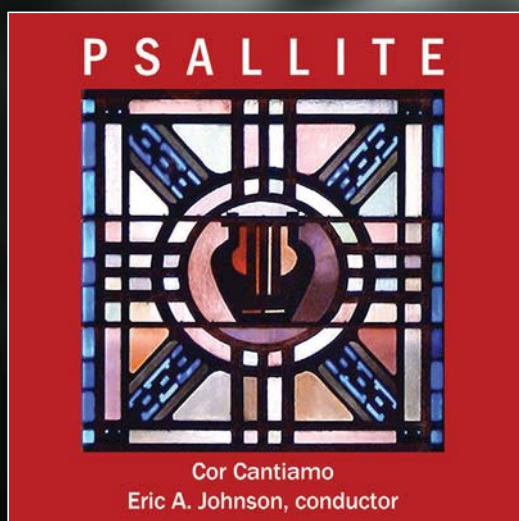
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# *Glimpses of Handel*

## *in the Choral-Orchestral Psalms of Mendelssohn*

Zachary D. Durlam

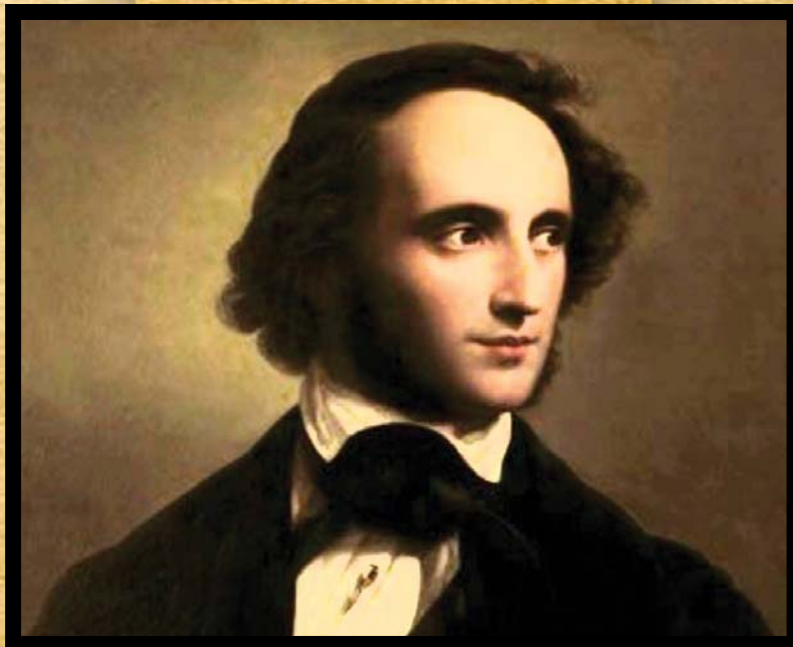
Felix Mendelssohn was drawn to music of the Baroque era. His early training under Carl Friedrich Zelter included study and performance of works by Bach and Handel, and Mendelssohn continued to perform, study, and conduct compositions by these two composers throughout his life. While Mendelssohn's regard for J. S. Bach is well known (particularly through his 1829 revival of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*), his interaction with the choral music of Handel deserves more scholarly attention.

Mendelssohn was a lifelong proponent of Handel, and his contemporaries attest to his vast knowledge of Handel's music. By age twenty-two, Mendelssohn could perform a number of Handel oratorio choruses from memory, and two years later, fellow musician Carl Breidenstein remarked that "[Mendelssohn] has complete knowledge of Handel's works and has captured their spirit."<sup>1</sup>

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*George Frideric Handel*



*Felix Mendelssohn*



# Glimpses of Handel in the Choral-

Mendelssohn's self-perceived familiarity with Handel's compositions is perhaps best summed up in the following anecdote about English composer William Sterndale Bennett:

On first going to Leipzig, being under the impression (which was probably, in general, a correct one) that Handel was less familiar to the Germans than to the English, [William Sterndale Bennett] asked Mendelssohn whether he knew a great deal of [Handel's] music, and Mendelssohn snapped at him with the reply, 'Every note.'<sup>2</sup>

The influence of Handel is particularly evident in Mendelssohn's five choral-orchestral psalm settings, often called "psalm cantatas" due to their structure. While Bach would seem a logical model for cantatas, Mendelssohn's first composition in the genre was, in fact, inspired by Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, and his subsequent choral-orchestral psalms offer glimpses of the Handel psalm cantatas and oratorios that inspired and influenced their creation.

## Mendelssohn's *Psalm 115* and Handel's *Dixit Dominus*

During an 1829 visit to London, Mendelssohn was allowed to examine Handel manuscripts in the King's Library. Among these scores, he discovered and copied *Dixit Dominus*, a choral-orchestral cantata-like setting of Psalm 110 that Mendelssohn considered "one of the most energetic & sublime of the great composer."<sup>3</sup> After leaving England, Mendelssohn traveled to Italy, where he began work on his own choral-orchestral psalm cantata. The result, *Psalm 115, Non Nobis Domine*, op. 31, is a four-movement work for chorus, orchestra, and soloists in Latin, though Mendelssohn replaced the Latin with his own German translation prior to publication in 1835.

*Dixit Dominus* inspired Mendelssohn's *Psalm 115* in a variety of ways. Though Mendelssohn had previously composed chorale cantatas in German, he followed Handel's lead and initially chose a Latin Vulgate text for this work.<sup>4</sup> *Psalm 115* is in G minor, the same key as *Dixit Dominus*, and both compositions begin with an orchestral *ritornello* that returns later in the first movement. In both works, the initial *ritornello* is followed by a unison statement of the opening thematic idea.<sup>5</sup> The first movement of *Dixit Dominus* features a cantus firmus-like melody that

52  
S1  
S2  
do - nec po - nam i - ni - mi - cos tu - os,  
59  
S1  
S2  
sca - bel - lum pe - dum tu - o - rum.

Figure 1. George Frideric Handel, *Dixit Dominus*, mm. 52–64.  
Sopranos 1 and 2

63  
B  
Im Him-mel woh-net un - ser Gott, er schaf-fet Al - les, was er will.

Figure 2. Felix Mendelssohn, *Psalm 115*, Movement 1, mm. 63–69.  
Bass

# Orchestral Psalms of Mendelssohn



appears for the first time at m. 52 (Figure 1). Mendelssohn copies this technique in the first movement of *Psalm 115*. At m. 41, he introduces a new thematic idea. This quickly abandoned idea then returns as a cantus firmus-like melody in the bass at m. 63 amid free counterpoint in the other voices (Figure 2).

Mendelssohn's "cantus firmus" was likely modeled after the chanting of psalms he encountered during his trip to Italy. "Thus the whole forty-two verses of the psalm are sung in precisely the same manner," Mendelssohn remarked in a letter to his former teacher, Carl Friedrich Zelter, "one half of the verse ending in G, A, G, the other in G, E, G. They sing it with the accent of a number of men quarrelling violently, and it sounds as if they were shouting the same thing furiously at each other."<sup>6</sup> In this same letter, Mendelssohn dictates a typical psalm tone, one that resembles his own "cantus firmus" (Figure 3).

## Mendelssohn's *Psalm 42* and Handel's *As Pants the Hart* and *Messiah*

While on his honeymoon in Switzerland in 1837, Mendelssohn began composing his second choral-orchestral psalm setting, *Psalm 42*, op. 42. Originally in four movements, the work was expanded to seven prior to publication. During his lifetime, *Psalm 42* became Mendelssohn's most popular sacred work outside of his oratorios. Robert Schumann, after the original four-movement premier, proclaimed, "In this 42d psalm, he has attained his highest elevation as church composer; yes, the highest elevation that modern church-music has reached at all."<sup>7</sup> The work also became one of Mendelssohn's own favorites, and upon submitting the revised version to his publisher, he dramatically proclaimed, "If you are not pleased with the psalm in its new dress with



Figure 3. Felix Mendelssohn, 16 June 1831 psalm tone dictation

the old lining, I shall shoot myself."<sup>8</sup>

The final version of *Psalm 42* is constructed symmetrically with SATB choruses for the first, fourth, and seventh movements and a soprano soloist featured in the second, third, fifth, and sixth movements. This soloist often carries the more agitated verses (e.g., "Meine Tränen sind meine Speise Tag und Nacht, weil man täglich zu mir sagt: Wo ist nun dein Gott?" / "My tears are my meat day and night, while they continually say to me: Where is now your God?"), while the choir offers the more comforting words of the psalm. Women's chorus joins the soloist's distress in the third movement, and a men's quartet reassures the soprano in the sixth movement. Mendelssohn also includes recitatives for the soloist, one at the beginning of movement three, and the other as the fifth movement.

In 1835, Mendelssohn acquired the thirty-two volume Samuel Arnold edition of Handel's works. This collection included twelve Chandos anthems of Handel (one was later proven spurious), choral-orchestral, multimovement works in English that set texts from the psalms—Handel's own choral-orchestral psalm cantatas. In addition to this collection, Mendelssohn also listed a separate collection of three "Psalmen" of Handel in his personal inventory—scores of the Chandos anthems *As Pants the Hart*, *O Come Let Us Sing*, and *O Praise the Lord*.<sup>9</sup> Mendelssohn conducted *O Praise the Lord* in 1836, less than a year before beginning work on *Psalm 42*, and like Handel's anthem, *Psalm 42* begins with an extended instrumental introduction followed by the entrance of the chorus.<sup>10</sup>

Handel's *As Pants the Hart* is also a setting of Psalm 42, and there are structural similarities between the two settings.<sup>11</sup> Both have seven movements, though text is divided differently. Both have large opening and closing choruses and a third choral movement in the center. Both works feature fugal writing on similar lines of text—*As Pants the Hart* on the text "In the voice of praise and thanksgiving," and *Psalm 42* on "Preis sei dem Herrn, dem Gott Israels, von nun an bis in Ewigkeit!" ("Praise to the Lord, the God of Israel, now and forevermore!"). Mendelssohn's fugal exposition even mirrors Handel's. Though Handel wrote for only three voices (soprano, tenor, and bass), his exposition features four entrances of the subject beginning on the third highest pitch followed by the second



# Glimpses of Handel in the Choral-

highest, highest, and finally the lowest. Mendelssohn’s exposition follows this same pattern with entrances by the tenor, alto, soprano, and finally the bass.

Both psalms call for a soprano soloist, and both composers give the soloist the mournful text “tears are my daily food, while thus they say, ‘Where is now thy God?’” Both composers also grant the oboe an important role in conjunction with the soprano soloist. During the solo soprano movement of Handel’s anthem, the oboe plays independently (elsewhere it doubles the violins), and when the soprano soloist returns in movement six, an independent oboe line accompanies her. Likewise, Mendelssohn’s introduction of the soprano soloist in movement 2 of *Psalm 42* features an obbligato oboe.

Though Mendelssohn does not quote Handel in

*Psalm 42*, the second choral theme of movement 1 closely resembles the initial theme of “Tears Are My Daily Food” from *As Pants the Hart* (Figure 4).

One of the major differences between *Psalm 42* and Mendelssohn’s other psalm settings is the use of recitative,

Felix Mendelssohn, *Psalm 42*, Movement 1, mm. 36-38, Soprano.  
36

so schreit mei - ne See - le, Gott, zu dir,

George Frideric Handel, *As Pants the Hart*, Movement 3, mm. 32-35, Soprano Solo.  
32

tears are my dai - ly, dai - ly food,

Figure 4.

**Non troppo lento**

Sop. Solo  
Mei - ne Trä - nen sind mei - ne Spei - se Tag und Nacht, il man täg - lich zu mir sa - get,

1  
Vlns.  
2  
Vla.  
Vlc. Cb.  
sf

D7/F# Gm

4 **Lento** **Recitativo**

Sop. Solo  
täg - lich zu mir sa - get wo ist nun dein Gott? Wenn ich des in - ne wer - de,

1  
Vlns.  
2  
Vla.  
Vlc. Cb.  
sf p

G7/F E Am/C

Figure 5. Felix Mendelssohn, *Psalm 42*, Movement 3, mm. 1–6.

# Orchestral Psalms of Mendelssohn



possibly influenced by Mendelssohn's intimate familiarity with Handel's oratorios—*Messiah* in particular. Mendelssohn performed *Messiah* as a young singer, studied the work as a scholar (he created an organ part and planned to prepare an edition for Breitkopf and Härtel), and led performances as a conductor (Mendelssohn first conducted the work in 1834 and again in 1835 with three additional performances in the ensuing decade).<sup>12</sup>

The recitative “Meine Tränen” opens the third movement of Psalm 42 and bears some similarity to “Thy rebuke” from *Messiah*. The melody of m. 6 in “Meine Tränen” mirrors mm. 8-10 of “Thy rebuke,” and the harmonic progression mm. 2-5 of “Meine Tränen” lowered a whole step is nearly identical to mm. 2-5 of “Thy

rebuke” (Figures 5 and 6).

Mendelssohn adds the text “Preis sei dem Herrn, dem Gott israels, von nun an bis in Ewigkeit!” (“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel now and for all time!”) to the conclusion of *Psalm 42*, where it functions as a pseudo-doxology. Several scholars have interpreted this textual addition as a modification of the Catholic lesser doxology.<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, Handel's *Dixit Dominus* concludes with the lesser doxology, as does his Chandos anthem *O Be Joyful*, which Mendelssohn reported hearing in 1821.<sup>14</sup> The beginning of this doxological text also marks only the second entrance of trumpets and timpani in the entire work. Mendelssohn uses these instruments sparingly and for moments of great climax, reflecting his personal

**Largo**

Harmonic analysis for measures 1-5:

- Measure 1:  $6\sharp$   $\flat$  E $\flat$ /G dominant (C7) function
- Measure 2:  $\flat$  Fm
- Measure 3:  $4+$   $2$  F7/E $\flat$
- Measure 4:  $7$  D7
- Measure 5:  $\flat$

Lyrics for measures 1-10:

Thy re - buke hath bro - ken His heart; He is full of heav - i - ness He is full of heav - i - ness;

6  
Thy re - buke hath bro - ken His heart. He look - ed for some to have pit - y on Him. but there was no

Harmonic analysis for measures 6-10:

- Measure 6:  $7$   $\sharp$
- Measure 7:  $6$   $4$
- Measure 8:  $\sharp$   $6$
- Measure 9:  $5$
- Measure 10:  $6$

Figure 6. George Frideric Handel, *Messiah*, “Thy rebuke,” mm. 1–10.



# Glimpses of Handel in the Choral-

musical philosophy and admiration of Handel as articulated following a performance of a work by Sigismund Neukomm that he particularly disliked:

Then, again, that constant use of the brass! As a matter of sheer calculation it should be sparingly employed, let alone the question of Art! That's where I admire Handel's glorious style; when he brings up his kettledrums and trumpets towards the end, and thumps and batters about to his heart's content, as if he meant to knock you down—no mortal man can remain unmoved. I really believe it is far better to imitate such work, than to overstrain the nerves of your audience, who, after all, will at last get accustomed to Cayenne pepper.<sup>15</sup>

## *Psalm 95, O Come Let Us Sing, and Israel in Egypt*

The superb reception of *Psalm 42* led Mendelssohn to attempt another composition in the genre. In 1838, he began work on what would eventually become *Psalm 95*, op. 46. The work for chorus, soloists, and orchestra sets Psalm 95 in its entirety and was originally seven movements. Following its 1839 premiere, an unsatisfied Mendelssohn extensively revised the psalm and reduced it to five movements before finally proclaiming it ready for publication two years later.<sup>16</sup>

Handel's Chandos anthem *O Come Let Us Sing* also sets verses from Psalm 95, and there are parallels between the two works. Handel sets verses 6-7a of Psalm 95 for tenor soloist, and Mendelssohn makes the same choice. The two tenor melodies even begin in a similar fashion (Figure 7).

Handel employs a change of modality when moving from verse 2 to 3 in the second movement of *O Come Let Us Sing*, switching from A<sup>b</sup> major to A<sup>b</sup> minor and alters the texture from imitative to pure homophony for verse

Felix Mendelssohn, *Psalm 95*, Movement 1, mm. 16-18, Tenor Solo.



George Frideric Handel, *O Come Let Us Sing*, Movement 3, mm. 9-15, Tenor Solo.

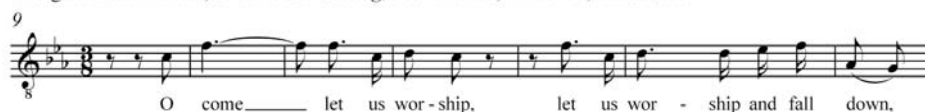
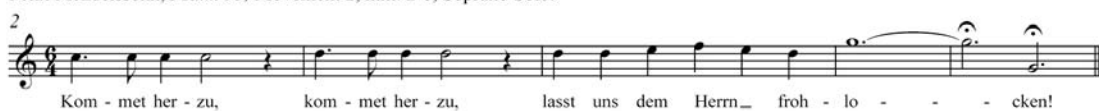


Figure 7.

Felix Mendelssohn, *Psalm 95*, Movement 2, mm. 2-6, Soprano Solo.



George Frideric Handel, *Israel in Egypt*, "Sing ye to the Lord," mm. 1-8, Soprano Solo.

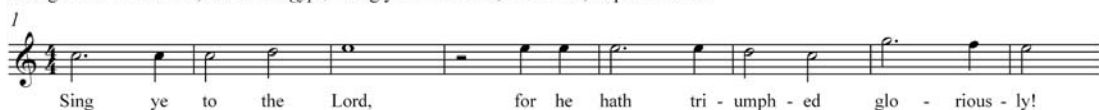


Figure 8.

# Orchestral Psalms of Mendelssohn



3. Mendelssohn also shifts modality in the second movement of *Psalm 95* from C major in verses 1-2 to C minor in verse 3 and alters the texture from freely imitative to strict canon.

Mendelssohn's familiarity with *Israel in Egypt* also left its mark on Psalm 95. Mendelssohn performed *Israel in Egypt* more than any other Handel composition, and it was the only Handel work for which he published an edition.<sup>17</sup> He conducted the piece three times from 1833 to 1836, and he selected the final recitative and chorus for a special staged presentation of short scenes from the oratorio in 1833.<sup>18</sup> This final chorus of *Israel in Egypt* and the first chorus of *Psalm 95* display several similarities. Both are in C major, and both open with a brief soprano solo followed by the entrance of the chorus. The soprano soloist in *Israel in Egypt* sings entirely unaccompanied. Full orchestra, including brass and timpani, join for the choral entrance. Mendelssohn's soprano solo is accompanied only by *pianissimo* strings, and the soprano's final note (with fermata) is unaccompanied. Timpani and brass briefly join the winds to announce the entrance of the chorus, and *fortissimo* timpani and trumpets provide a characteristically Handelian sound later in the movement. The texts of the opening solos are similar ("Sing ye to the Lord for he hath triumphed gloriously" and "Kommet herzu, lasst uns dem Herrn frohlocken" / "Come, let us [sing] joyfully to the Lord"), and the soprano melodies, both in C major, closely resemble each other (Figure 8).

## Mendelssohn's *Psalm 114* and Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, *O Praise the Lord*, *Zadok the Priest*, and *Joshua*

A year after beginning *Psalm 95*, Mendelssohn started work on a fourth choral-orchestral psalm, *Psalm 114*, op. 51. He conducted the premiere on New Year's Day, 1840, revised the work later that year, and published it in 1841. Unlike Mendelssohn's previous choral-orchestral psalms, *Psalm 114* is not divided into movements but rather is constructed as one continuous work in five sections delineated by changes in key, meter, and tempo. The entire work also differs from the previous psalms by requiring eight-part chorus throughout. The third section is entirely unaccompanied, and the remaining sections call for chorus

and orchestra. The lack of soloists also makes this psalm unique among Mendelssohn's settings.

The text of *Psalm 114* invokes the story of *Israel in Egypt*. The first four verses state:

Da Israel aus Ägypten zog,  
Das Haus Jakobs  
aus dem fremden Lande,  
Da ward Juda sein Heiligthum,  
Israel seine Herrschaft.  
Das Meer sah und floh,  
Der Jordan wandte sich zurück.  
Die Berge hüpfen wie die Lämmer,  
Die Hügel wie die jungen Schafe.

When Israel came out of Egypt,  
The House of Jacob  
from a foreign land,  
Judah became its sanctuary,  
Israel its domain.  
The sea saw and fled,  
The Jordan stopped flowing,  
The mountains skipped like rams,  
The hills like lambs.

Mendelssohn was obviously aware of this textual similarity and programmed *Psalm 114* and *Israel in Egypt* together in an 1844 Palm Sunday concert.<sup>19</sup>

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# Glimpses of Handel in the Choral-

Felix Mendelssohn, *Psalm 114*, mm. 266-276, Soprano I.

266

Da Is - ra - el aus Ae - gyp - ten zog, das Haus Ja - kobs aus dem frem - den Lan - de,

George Frideric Handel, *Israel in Egypt*, "Sing ye to the Lord," mm. 45-48, Bass II.

45

I will sing \_\_\_\_\_ un - to the Lord,

Figure 9.

167 *pp* Was war dir, du Meer, dass du flo - hest? Und du Jor - dan, dass du dich zu - rück  
 Was war dir, du Meer, dass du flo - hest? Und du Jor - dan, dass du dich zu - rück

175 *pp cresc.* wand - test? Ihr Ber - ge dass ihr hüpf - tet wie die Läm - mer? Ihr Hu - gel wie die jun - gen Scha -  
*pp cresc.* wand - test? Ihr Ber - ge dass ihr hüpf - tet wie die Läm - mer? Ihr Hu - gel wie die jun - gen Scha -

183 *pp* fe? Was war dir, du Meer? Was war dir du Meer, dass du flo - hest, dass du flo - test?  
*pp sempre* fe? Was war dir, du Meer? Was war dir du Meer, dass du flo - hest, dass du flo - test?

Figure 10. Felix Mendelssohn, *Psalm 114*, mm. 167-191.

# Orchestral Psalms of Mendelssohn



Similarities of choral voicing, large-scale structure, and a scarcity of solo writing also suggest a connection between *Psalm 114* and *Israel in Egypt*. *Israel in Egypt* employs SSAATTBB chorus, and though Mendelssohn reserves this voicing exclusively for unaccompanied sections in all other psalms, he writes *Psalm 114* entirely for SSAATTBB chorus. *Psalm 114* requires no soloists, likely reflecting the dearth of solo writing in *Israel in Egypt*, where twenty-five of the thirty-six movements are choral (movements 6-18 comprise an astonishing thirteen consecutive choruses).<sup>20</sup> Handel reprises text and music from the opening movement of “Moses’ Song” (the final part of *Israel in Egypt*) in the final chorus. Mendelssohn employs the same procedure, reusing the text and music from the first section at the opening of the final section. The recapitulated themes of both works even resemble one another—beginning on G, ascending to a sustained C, and eventually returning

to G (Figure 9).

The third section of *Psalm 114* features text similar to “He rebuked the Red Sea” from *Israel in Egypt*: “He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up,” versus “Was war dir, du Meer, daß du flohest?” / “Sea, what makes you flee?” Both feature homorhythmic choral writing, instruments are either absent or *colla parte*, and both act as harmonic bridges—*Psalm 114* moving from E<sup>b</sup> through a tonally unstable section to ultimately set up the dominant of C major, and “He rebuked the Red Sea” progressing from C major through E<sup>b</sup> major to G minor (Figures 10 and 11).

Mendelssohn appends a doxology-like text to the end of the *Psalm 114* just as he did to *Psalm 42*. In this instance, the text is “Halleluja! Halleluja! Singet dem Herrn in Ewigkeit” / “Alleluia! Alleluia! Sing to the Lord forever,” a text similar to the concluding “Sing his praise! Alleluja,”

The image displays a musical score for George Frideric Handel's "Israel in Egypt," specifically the section "He rebuked the Red Sea." The score is arranged in two systems, labeled I and II. Each system includes a vocal line (Soprano and Alto) and a bass line (Tenor and Bass). The vocal lines are homorhythmic, with the lyrics: "He re-buk-ed the Red Sea, and it was dri-ed up. He re-buk-ed the Red Sea, and it was dri-ed up." The accompaniment includes Oboes (Obs.), Bassoons (Bsns.), Violins (Vlins.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), Contrabass (Cb.), Cembalo (Cemb.), and Organ (Org.). The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or E-flat minor).

Figure 11. George Frideric Handel, *Israel in Egypt*, “He rebuked the Red Sea,” mm. 1–8.



# Glimpses of Handel in the Choral-

of the Chandos anthem *O Praise the Lord*. The final section of *Psalm 114* even begins melodically and rhythmically like the final movement of *O Praise the Lord* (Figure 12).

*Psalm 114* also demonstrates influence of Handel's *Zadok the Priest*, which Mendelssohn conducted seven times between 1836 and 1842.<sup>21</sup> The single-movement construction of Handel's coronation anthem with its sections clearly delineated by changes in key and meter, the complete lack of soloists (rare for Handel), and the SSAATTBB voicing are all reflected in Mendelssohn's composition. *Zadok the Priest* also closes with "Alleluja," much like the text appended to *Psalm 114*.

Mendelssohn conducted a partial performance of Handel's *Joshua* in 1838. The second section of *Psalm 114* sets the text "Das Meer sah und floh, Der Jordan wandte sich zurück" / "The sea saw and fled, The Jordan stopped flowing," which is similar to "In wat'ry heaps affrighted

Jordan stood, and backward to the fountain roll'd his flood" from *Joshua's* "To long posterity we here record." The undulating sixteenth notes in the bassoon and viola parts of *Psalm 114* echo the melismas depicting the receding waters in *Joshua* (Figure 13).<sup>22</sup>

## Mendelssohn's *Psalm 98* and Handel's "Hallelujah" Chorus, *Dettingen Te Deum*, and *Solomon*

Mendelssohn composed his final choral-orchestral psalm setting, *Psalm 98*, op. 91, for performance in the Berlin cathedral on New Year's Day, 1844. The work, like *Psalm 114*, is one continuous movement comprising sections delineated by key, meter, tempo, and instrumentation. It begins with two sections for unaccompanied eight-part chorus and solo quartet. The third section text "Lobet den Herrn mit Harfen, Mit Harfen und mit Psalmen, Mit Trompeten und posaunen" / "Praise the Lord with harps, with harps and with psalms, with trumpets and trombones," prompted Mendelssohn to reduce the choir to four voices but introduce two trumpets, three trombones, and harp, along with organ, cello, and bass. Near the end of this section, pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns, along with timpani, violins, and violas, join the ensemble and continue through the final section.

In the Berlin cathedral, the psalm was supposed to be followed by the *Gloria Patri*. Obviously Handel was not

Mendelssohn, *Psalm 114*, mm. 266-268, Soprano 1.



Handel, *O Praise the Lord*, Mvmnt. 8, mm. 1-2, Alto.



Figure 12.

Felix Mendelssohn, *Psalm 114*, mm. 88-94, Bassoon and Viola.



George Frideric Handel, *Joshua*, "Too long posterity," mm. 13-15, Alto.



Figure 13.

# Orchestral Psalms of Mendelssohn



far from Mendelssohn's mind when he composed *Psalm 98*, however, as he chose to replace the Gloria Patri with Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." He composed *Psalm 98* in D major to allow for this conclusion and orchestrated a bombastic final section complete with trumpets and timpani to facilitate the transition. Unfortunately, the full orchestrations and festive character of the music upset the clergy, who preferred music in the style of Palestrina, discouraged the use of wind instruments, and deemed the harp to be a profane musical instrument unfit for liturgical use.<sup>23</sup> Mendelssohn later wrote of "orders" and "counter orders" concerning his psalm compositions for the Berlin cathedral, and his sister Fanny declared that "to hear Felix talk of his dealings with the cathedral clergy" was "as good as a play."<sup>24</sup> *Psalm 98* was ultimately published in 1851 following Mendelssohn's death.

*Psalm 98* bears a number of similarities to Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*. Mendelssohn's familiarity with Dettingen Te Deum began with an 1828 edition of the work he created for Zelter's Singakademie (where Mendelssohn was a singer) and continued with three performances of the work, the last in 1840.<sup>25</sup> The *Te Deum* opens, like *Psalm 98*, in D major and moves to B minor in the third movement, just as *Psalm 98* shifts to B minor for its second section. The fifth movement of the *Te Deum* begins in G major like the third section of *Psalm 98*, and at its conclusion, tonal instability is introduced and continues through the brief sixth movement until the dominant of D is attained. The third section of *Psalm 98* undergoes similar tonal instability and also arrives on the dominant of D near its conclusion. The seventh movement of the *Te Deum* and the final section of *Psalm 98* both return to D major.

Melodic similarities also suggest a connection between these two works. The opening themes of both G major sections begin with a rise from G to C before settling on B (Figure 14).

The men in this passage of the *Dettingen Te Deum* are answered by the women with the second half of the theme, and Mendels-

sohn copies this antiphonal approach by having choir 2 answer choir 1. Mendelssohn's theme may also be related to "for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" from the "Hallelujah Chorus" (the work intended to serve as the psalm's "Gloria Patri"), as it follows the same contour until the final pitch.

The D-major seventh movement of the *Te Deum* begins with a bass soloist, and his opening statement is strikingly similar to the opening statement of the bass soloist in *Psalm 98*, a theme repeated by all of the men at the beginning of the final section (Figure 15).

The opening choral movement of Handel's *Solomon* may also have influenced *Psalm 98*. While in Rome in 1830, Mendelssohn received a score of *Solomon*, which he subsequently adapted for an 1832 performance by the Singakademie (though they ultimately used a different version) and later for a performance in 1835.<sup>26</sup> Both the opening section of *Psalm 98* and "Your harps and cymbals" from *Solomon* utilize two antiphonal SATB choirs, and both begin with an unaccompanied male statement of the theme. Handel's text, "Your harps and

Felix Mendelssohn, *Psalm 98*, mm. 93-100, Chorus.



George Frideric Handel, *Te Deum*, Movement 5, mm. 6-9, Bass.



Figure 14.

Felix Mendelssohn, *Psalm 98*, mm. 1-4, Bass Solo.



George Frideric Handel, *Te Deum*, Movement 7, mm. 9-11, Bass Solo.



Figure 15.



# Glimpses of Handel in the Choral-

cymbals sound to great Jehovah's praise, unto the Lord of Hosts your willing voices raise," is similar to Psalm 98: 4-5: "Jauchzet dem Herrn alle Welt. Singet, rühmet und lobet. Lobet den Herrn mit Harfen, mit harfen und mit Psalmen" / "Praise the Lord all the earth. Sing, shout, and praise. Praise the Lord with harps, with harps and with psalms."

sohn's legendary memory and his familiarity with these compositions, it is not surprising to find that Handel's oratorios, psalm settings, and other choral-orchestral masterworks inspired Mendelssohn's own choral-orchestral psalms. Similarities of structure, text, key, melody, and texture provide glimpses of Handel's influence throughout Mendelssohn's psalms—evidence of Mendelssohn's lifelong respect and admiration for Handel's music.

## Conclusion

As a performer, scholar, and conductor, Mendelssohn knew many Handel compositions intimately. His twenty-six performances and acquisition of scores of *Israel in Egypt*, *Messiah*, *Joshua*, *Dettingen Te Deum*, *Solomon*, *Zadok the Priest*, *Dixit Dominus*, and the Chandos anthems *As Pants the Hart*, *O Come Let Us Sing*, and *O Praise the Lord* bespeak a particular fondness for these works.<sup>27</sup> Given Mendels-

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Jules Benedict speaking of Mendelssohn's memorization of Handel choruses, Jules Benedict, *Sketch of the Life and Works of the Late Felix Mendelssohn* (London: Murray, 1850), 18; in Ralf Wehner, "Mendelssohn and the Performance of Handel's Vocal Works," trans. Siegwart Reichwald;



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- in *Mendelssohn in Performance*, ed. Siegwart Reichwald (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 167; 25 March 1833 letter from Carl Breidenstein to Otto von Woringen in Wehner, “Mendelssohn,” 148.
- <sup>2</sup> Reported by James Robert Sterndale Bennett, the grandson of William Sterndale Bennett, James Robert Sterndale Bennett, *The Life of William Sterndale Bennett* (Cambridge: University Press, 1907), 179, [http://www.archive.org/stream/lifeofwilliamste00bennuoft/lifeofwilliamste00bennuoft\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/lifeofwilliamste00bennuoft/lifeofwilliamste00bennuoft_djvu.txt).
- <sup>3</sup> Mendelssohn’s visit to the Royal Music Library is documented in Colin Timothy Eatock, *Mendelssohn and Victorian England* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 36. Quote from a letter of 7 November 1829. The letter is in English, one of several languages Mendelssohn mastered during his lifetime. Cited in Susanna Großmann-Vendrey, *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy und die Musik der Vergangenheit* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1969), 39.
- <sup>4</sup> Vulgate refers to the official Roman Catholic Latin translation of the Bible; commonalities in Vulgate text and key between *Psalm 115* and *Dixit Dominus* were noted in R. Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 242.
- <sup>5</sup> In *Dixit Dominus*, the altos present the initial statement alone. In *Psalm 115*, this task falls to the men. This similarity was discussed in Wolfgang Dinglinger, *Studien zu den Psalmen mit Orchester von Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy* (Cologne: Studio, 1993), 35.
- <sup>6</sup> Letter to Zelter, 16 June 1831, in Gisella Selden-Goth, ed. and trans., *Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: Letters* (New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1945), 135.
- <sup>7</sup> Fanny Ritter, ed. and trans., *Music and Musicians. Essays and Criticisms by Robert Schumann* (London: William Reeves, 1877), 381.
- <sup>8</sup> Letter of March 1839, Ferdinand Hiller, *Mendelssohn: Letters and Recollections*, trans. M. E. von Glehn (New York: Vienna House, 1972), 136.
- <sup>9</sup> Peter Ward Jones, *Catalogue of the Mendelssohn Papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Vol. III* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1989), 285.
- <sup>10</sup> A complete list of Handel’s vocal works conducted by Mendelssohn is provided in Wehner, “Mendelssohn,” 149-150.
- <sup>11</sup> Handel created five different versions of *As Pants the Hart* (see Donald Burrows, “Handel’s ‘As Pants the Hart,’” *The Musical Times* 126 [February 1985], 113). The version considered in this essay is the “Chandos” version (HWV 251b), which was also the version published by Arnold; a connection between *As Pants the Hart* and *Psalm 42* was suggested in both Dinglinger, *Studien*, 72-74, and Harris John Loewen, “The Psalms for Chorus and Orchestra of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Analysis and Considerations for Performance,” D.M.A. thesis (University of Iowa, 1994), 191-205, though the specific similarities discussed in this article were not addressed.
- <sup>12</sup> For documentation of Mendelssohn’s performances of organ part for, and planned edition of *Messiah*, see Wehner, “Mendelssohn,” 148-151, 156. For discussion of Mendelssohn’s creation of organ parts for Handel oratorios, see Wm. A. Little, *Mendelssohn and the Organ* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 149-165.
- <sup>13</sup> See Peter Mercer-Taylor, *The Life of Mendelssohn* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 156; Werner, *Mendelssohn: A New Image*, 347; and David Brodbeck, “Some Notes on an Anthem by Mendelssohn,” in *Mendelssohn and His World*, edited by R. Larry Todd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 57.
- <sup>14</sup> Letter to Abraham Mendelssohn Bartholdy, 6 November 1821, Rudolf Elvers, editor, *Felix Mendelssohn: A Life in Letters*, translated by Craig Tomlinson (New York: Fromm International Publishing Corporation, 1986), 7.
- <sup>15</sup> 1834 Letter to Ignaz Moscheles, Charlotte Moscheles, *Life of Moscheles, with Selections from His Diaries and Correspondence*, trans. A. D. Coleridge, 2 vols. (London, 1873), 118-20, in Clive Brown, *A Portrait of Mendelssohn* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 319.
- <sup>16</sup> Karl Klingemann, Jr., ed., *Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy’s Briefwechsel mit Legationsrat Karl Klingemann in London* (Essen: G.D. Baedeker, 1909), 265, in Siegwart Reichwald, “Lost in Translation: The Case of Mendelssohn’s *Psalm 95*,” *Choral Journal* 49, no. 9 (March 2009), 34. For a detailed discussion of Mendelssohn’s *Psalm 95* revisions, see Reichwald, “Lost in Translation.”
- <sup>17</sup> Wehner, “Mendelssohn,” 149-150, 155; Little, *Mendelssohn*, 155-156, 160-161.
- <sup>18</sup> Hellmuth Christian Wolff, “Mendelssohn and Handel,” *The Musical Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (April 1959), 178.



# Glimpses of Handel in Mendelssohn

<sup>19</sup> Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life*, 469.

<sup>20</sup> What is often referred to as the first part of Israel in Egypt was actually Handel's second part, as the *Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline* was adapted and used as the first part. Scores and performances from the nineteenth century through the modern day, however, have generally consisted only of parts two ("The Exodus") and three ("Moses' Song").

<sup>21</sup> Wehner, "Mendelssohn," 149-50.

<sup>22</sup> This connection is suggested in Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life*, 381.

<sup>23</sup> The harp had likely attained low social status through its use as a beggar's harp—see Georg Feder, "On Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's Sacred Music," translated by Monika Hennemann, in *The Mendelssohn Companion*, edited by Douglass Seaton (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood

Press, 2001), 269.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Fanny to Rebecka, 26 December 1843, Sebastian Hensel, *The Mendelssohn Family (1729-1847) from Letters and Journals*, translated by Carl Klingemann, Jr., 2 vols (London, 1882), volume 2, 243, in Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life*, 466.

<sup>25</sup> Wolff, "Mendelssohn," 176; Wehner, "Mendelssohn," 149-151.

<sup>26</sup> Donald Mintz, "Mendelssohn as Performer and Teacher," in *The Mendelssohn Companion*, edited by Douglass Seaton (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), 104.

<sup>27</sup> Wehner, "Mendelssohn," 147-159; Ward Jones, *Catalogue*, 285.

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# Javier Busto

## Bi-Vocational Journeyman, Medical Doctor, and Self-Taught Musician

John Ratledge

**B**orn on November 13, 1949, in Hondarribia, Spain, Busto was a family physician until his recent retirement. He is an award-winning composer; maintains an active career as a conductor in Europe, Asia, and Australia; and is the founder of Aqua Landa, a choral group of sixteen women. Busto has composed a total of 419 compositions—233 for mixed voices and 186 for equal voices (mostly women's choir). According to Busto, he has written over 500 compositions in total if he includes short songs for children, folk songs, and various other incidental compositions. His compositions are published in Germany, Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Spain.<sup>1</sup> Busto has been married to Maria Luisa Vega for thirty-eight years, and together they have two children. The couple created Bustovega, their family-owned publishing company, in 1999. He has lived in Hondarribia his entire life except the years he received his medical training.

I first met Javier Busto in 1999 while touring with the Shorter College Chorale in Spain and France. Busto served as clinician when we performed in Zaragoza,

Spain. On that occasion, he conducted three of his compositions, *Ave Maria*, *Ave Maris Stella*, and *Ave Verum Corpus*, at a concert at *Iglesia Santiago el Mayor* on May 15, 1999. Unfortunately, fewer and fewer of Busto's works have been programmed in recent years, and there are many choral directors who may not be familiar with his work. The present article provides a synopsis of an extended interview with Javier Busto that took place on Monday, May 29, 2012, at the Castillo de Carlos V in Hondarribia, Spain, a peaceful and historic location where Busto often played with his many childhood friends as a young boy.

Maria Guerrero (a native Spaniard with a PhD in Romantic Languages and Literature from the University of Florida) served as translator for the three-hour interview. Although Busto speaks Spanish, French, and Basque (and some English at that time) and the interviewer possesses reading proficiency in French, neither was comfortable conducting a three-hour interview in any of these languages. The interview questions and Busto's responses have been edited and reorganized to appear in this article with the assistance of Marvin Latimer.<sup>2</sup>

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### Childhood and Schooling

**Ratledge:** What would you like to tell us about your childhood and schooling?

**Busto:** I was born on the main street, just down from here, near the mayor's house, very close to the town hall. I lived with my father, my mother, three sisters, and one brother. I attended the University of Valladolid, located a short distance north of Madrid. At that time (during Franco's dictatorship) there were no universities in the Basque Country, so our options were either Zaragoza or Valladolid. I studied for six years in the university and two years in the hospital. I met my wife in the university choir. She sang alto and I sang tenor. She was a chemistry major.

**Ratledge:** And there was chemistry?

**Busto:** Yes, yes (chuckling).

**Ratledge:** Did you have music in your home?

**Busto:** Yes. In my home there was always music. My father was a musician. My uncles were musicians on both sides of the family. All of them lived here in this small neighborhood. Because this is such a small town, we really didn't have much to do other than singing and playing music. Everything in my musical life revolved around what happened here in Hondarribia. When I was eighteen years old, I created the first rock band here called the Troublemakers. It was really what I wanted from my musical life. The important thing to say is that I have never studied music: neither solfeggio, nor harmony, nor counterpoint, absolutely nothing!

### Philosophy of Medicine

**Ratledge:** What is your area of specialization in medicine?

**Busto:** I am a family doctor.

**Ratledge:** Do you think a relationship between the medi-



*Javier Busto at Castillo de Carlos V in Hondarribia, Spain.*

cal and music professions exists?

**Busto:** I personally would not restrict this relationship to medicine and music. I believe that it should be expanded to medicine and the arts in general. There are many examples of prominent figures that work in both the sciences and the arts. For example, there were students in my class who were exceptional writers, thinkers, and painters. Some chose to go into the arts rather than medicine. I think that the relationship between music and the arts is, for me, so clear, because medicine creates much tension inside of the individual. One must look for something to calm the spirit or something that makes the mind relax.

**Ratledge:** Has dealing daily with both suffering and healing affected you as a musician?

**Busto:** What you ask of me is actually the other way around. When I began studying medicine, I thought of it more as simply a vocation; music was more important to me. But as I have come to know more about people and about their sufferings, I have realized that I am called to this profession. We live in such a complicated time. When one relates to people every day and experiences their challenges—people who say that they have no money to buy medicine or people with a very low quality of life—I must weigh how I possibly could prefer music to medicine. I have very good relationships with choirs, but it is not as close as when I treat my patients.

**Ratledge:** Would you characterize your relationship with

# Medical Doctor, and Self-Taught Musician

your patients as a healer or as a facilitator?

**Busto:** At the beginning of my career, I relied on medication because it was what I was taught to do. But as time has gone by, I have realized that I don't have to rely so much on medication. I have begun to talk more to my patients in an attempt to help them understand that much of what happens to them is in their minds. I suppose you could say I have been working more and more on healing the mind.

**Ratledge:** That's interesting because it appears your philosophy has changed as you have aged, not only as a doctor, but also as a human being.

**Busto:** As time goes by, one learns how to deal with illnesses by trying to understand the person to help them

heal themselves by healing their minds. Because after all, in many cases, when one makes a good diagnosis, one sees that there is no infirmity at all. Of course, there are also people who are very sick, some with cancer or other very real infirmities.

**Ratledge:** I assume that you have lost patients. Has dealing with death informed how you might set a work?

**Busto:** I think I'm a little special in this sense because I have had a relationship with death since I was very young. My grandfather, my father's father, died in 1956 when I was seven years old. I remember it vividly. My father was a deeply religious man. He always encouraged me to have a close relationship with the dead. When my grandfather died, my father made me go up to the coffin to see him. My father said, "Look at your grandpa. See him. Feel how

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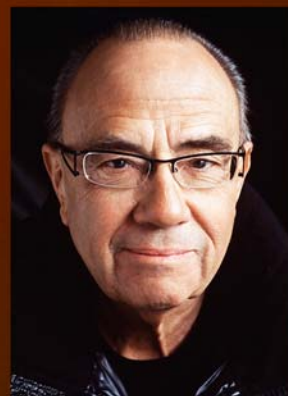
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# Javier Busta Bi-Vocational Journeyman,

cold he is. Touch him!” My father taught me that death is a beautiful, transitory moment, one that is not unpleasant and doesn’t require anguish. It is just a moment in life. Nothing else. I don’t react coldly to death. I believe that death is only one moment. We must carry on in spite of death but without the great drama. Death should not create anguish.

## Musical Influences and Composition Techniques

**Ratledge:** Do you have a favorite composer?

**Busto:** For me, initially, the most important composers were the Beatles: John Lennon and Paul McCartney. One weekend I was in Madrid, conducting a workshop with 110 singers, piano, drums, and double bass. We performed Beatles songs. It was one of the most fantastic moments in my life.

**Ratledge:** When did you begin to compose music?

**Busto:** It depends on what you mean. If it is about composing written scores, I started writing scores in the late 1970s. But in earlier times, I wrote many songs, mostly ones that nobody wanted to sing. In those days, they were protesting texts, love songs, and other kinds of music. They were not on paper.

**Ratledge:** You said earlier that your music instruction was limited. How did you know how to write songs?

**Busto:** By copying!

**Ratledge:** What are distinctive characteristics of your compositional style?

**Busto:** I’d say it’s a mix of Vitoria, Palestrina, Bach, Monteverdi, Schütz, Fauré, and Stravinsky. I believe it is important for you to understand that I’m a self-taught person. I didn’t have an academic background. I always say that all music has already been written for many, many, many years. The only thing one must do is change the order of the pitches. There is no other secret. I write at ran-

dom, and I am influenced by all of the music that I have heard, studied, and performed. So when one achieves change in a particular way and people accept it, they say, “Ah! This one I like!” Why? Because there is a way to write it down. But in my case, it is absolutely random. The music I began to write was a mix of Rock, Bossa Nova, and Samba and was everything I heard. It was what the groups of that time were doing. Those were the primary influences when I began to write choral music.

**Ratledge:** How did you learn to read music and notate your scores?

**Busto:** When I started directing the Basque Students Choir, my preparation required a great deal of effort. For example, in the beginning I practiced our pieces with the guitar because I didn’t have a piano, nor did I know how to play the piano. It was very slow work, but it led me to deepen my knowledge of the scores. I learned a process of finding the secrets about how to make my own music. For example, through this work I achieved understanding of the individual voices—the style or quality of the voice, how high and how low, the tessitura of the voices—and their relationship to each other. Because of this, I learned the voice very well. What I don’t know very well is the way to write for instruments. I tried many different ways to find the style that I prefer. When I first began to compose, I listened to a great deal of choral music. By listening to voices, I learned when a voice does not fit at a certain moment or is not appropriate for a certain song. Because of my lack of ability to analyze the scores, when I’m listening to music I realize when something is not good. What, I can’t always say. But I know when something is not right.

**Ratledge:** As you were speaking, I remembered a story you told me in 1999 about the process of composing *Agnus Dei*.

**Busto:** This is an interesting story. It was a little bit of a rebellion on my part. In 1985, I presented my *Ave Maria* at the Tolosa Composition. It was discarded because the jury thought it was too Romantic. According to them, my *Ave Maria* was a vulgarity. The jury was only composers, not conductors, and was very modern in its approach. I must say to you with modesty that *Ave Maria*, the same

# Medical Doctor, and Self-Taught Musician

one that was discarded at the competition, is one of the most famous pieces in the entire history of choral music in Spain. It is the one that has sold the most copies, over 120,000. For me, *Ave Maria*, is very important, but when I saw that they hated that score, I said to myself, “I’m going to write another style of music that would come out of my head, something that they wouldn’t call bad. So I decided to create a completely different style in the *Agnus Dei*. The actual score became “Busto’s electrocardiogram,” because it was so visually different from my previous music. I began to compose scores in what I called “electrocardiograms of taste” because they were all graphics with lines that went up and down. It was a style of writing that I invented, and they gave me the prize. The next year I won another prize. The other year I didn’t present, and in the next year I came back, presented a piece, and won the prize. After that, I decided not to present my works anymore in a composition competition. So, what I believe is important to the judges at composition competitions is that you make the jury think that you are presenting something ground-breaking or something that will make someone think. It is not so important that you are writing something beautiful.

**Ratledge:** Do you begin a composition by finding a text first?

**Busto:** Yes, always. When I’ve tried to do the opposite, when I have started with the music and then go the text, it has been very difficult for me. Very, very, very difficult.

**Ratledge:** I compiled a list of your combined works in preparation for this interview and discovered that much of your music is sacred. Are you particularly motivated to write religious music?

**Busto:** I believe the ratio to be about 50/50. You are probably more familiar with the sacred music because that is what is easiest to sell and export. The compositions that are not religious music are mostly written in Basque, and are extremely difficult.

**Ratledge:** Do you compose at the piano or with the use of computer software?



*Maria Guerrero with Busto during the interview.*

**Busto:** I use Finale only for transcribing and editing scores, not for composing. It is fundamentally for publishing. Finale fits very well for me because I write on the piano, and then I can put it into Finale and listen to it. Since I have no ability to play the piano and hear what I’m playing, this is very helpful. I have to go very slowly, and Finale gives me the opportunity to listen to what I’ve written.

**Ratledge:** Do you compose on a schedule?

**Busto:** No, because my primary profession has been medicine, and I have enormous good fortune and a good standard of living from being a medical doctor. I write only when I really feel like it, because I don’t have an obligation to write. I spent two years not writing anything. I just didn’t feel like it.

**Ratledge:** You said that you try to focus on your patients as humans rather than simply following medical protocols. Do you approach composition as a craft, as primarily a structural exercise, or do you attempt to empathize with the text as you compose?

**Busto:** I believe it’s a very personal thing, writing a score or treating patients, because it involves the same kind of considerations. A person and a text are both influenced by their specific context. A person has a certain set of circumstances that affects his or her life. I empathize as much with the text as with my patients. I have a close relationship with the text.

# Javier Busta Bi-Vocational Journeyman,

**Ratledge:** In some of your music you have written non-textual effects. For example, in *Ave Maris Stella* you incorporate an interesting buzz effect.

**Busto:** There was a reason for the buzz in the music. I don't use effects simply for pleasure. At the time I composed *Ave Maris Stella*, there was a ship here that was called *Mar Stella*. The name of the ship literally means *Star of the Sea*. It was one of the important boats that we have here, and I identify with the boats and the fishermen who work them. The buzz sound reflected the engines of the boats, nothing else. I am also influenced by other traditions from this area. For example, the fishermen in this area, as they go out to sea, whether they are religious or not, when passing the Guadalupe statue, they make the sign of the cross and pray a Hail Mary. I try to reflect all of those traditions in my music.

## Interpretation and Choral Performance Style Preference

**Ratledge:** When did you begin conducting choirs?

**Busto:** I shared an apartment at Valladolid, and my roommates were studying to be priests in seminary. Because of the typical tradition of the seminary, they sang. They encouraged me to start singing and get involved with choirs. As one friend of mine said, "In this country, the best way to transmit the theology of the church is through singing. Forget about Saint Peter and that kind of stuff. Just sing well!" When I began to sing in the Basque Student Choir, it was only because these roommates had begged me. At first, I didn't want to sing in the choir. My passion was for playing the guitar at that time. But finally, after their continued insistence, I joined the choir. Because there was nobody to conduct, I conducted. People told me



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# Medical Doctor, and Self-Taught Musician

that I could conduct because I had good ears and played the guitar. So, I did it more than anything to help out.

**Ratledge:** What can you tell us about conducting and interpreting your own music?

**Busto:** When I interpret Busto, I am the one who is interpreting Busto, but I am not Busto. When I interpret my own music, I do it as someone else, not as the composer. That gives me distance enough to be able to identify and correct problems.

**Ratledge:** So in a way when you are in front of the choir you are still composing?

**Busto:** Yes. I also get feedback from my choir.

**Ratledge:** When you write a piece of music, do you ever think about the potential emotional impact that it will have on the listener and on the singer?

**Busto:** Yes. I always write with that objective in mind, to move singers, conductors, and the audience as well. I always try to emote, for I believe it's the most important thing. I don't particularly like mathematical compositions that are too structured, those that are not going to move me or say anything to me. I work to compose things that possess emotion. I know that I get it sometimes, and at other times, I don't. But my goal is to move people—to move myself, to move the singers, to move the conductor who is going to interpret the piece, and to move the audience. I believe this is my life. As I said, I don't get this all of the time.

**Ratledge:** Do you have any misgivings about giving a composition to a conductor and letting them interpret the music in their own way?

**Busto:** No, I love it. It's a pleasure for me.

**Ratledge:** Has there ever been a time when you did not like the interpretation of your pieces?

**Busto:** At the beginning of my career, I spoke very directly to anyone who asked my opinion. The results



*Maria Guerrero, Javier Busto, and John Ratledge*

were usually bad. I made a lot of enemies because of my sincerity. Now, I try to be more careful when I say what I think. It is very important if I have an opinion, and I give it to someone, that I know they can accept it and correct themselves.

**Ratledge:** I've listened to recordings of your choirs, and you don't use vibrato at all with your choir. Why is that?

**Busto:** I don't like vibrato. I like the tone clean, white, and with no vibrato in the voices. That's because I always think about the idea of a young choir's sound. I worked for some years for a folksong festival here in Hondarribia, and they had a women's choir as part of the festival. Many of the performers were older singers, and one of the things I forbade them to do from the very first was to use that unbearable vibrato.

**Ratledge:** I observed when you were conducting the *Ave Maria* with my choir in 1999 in Zaragoza, you asked my singers several times not to be so dramatic, just to sing. With that, you asked for no vibrato. This was difficult because they were trained singers with large, mature voices.

**Busto:** I have known several choirs in the past that sang with vibrato that I liked, but not many. I recall, for instance, the Dale Warland Singers. It is a wonderful choir in which vibrato is a magical thing. It is there, but it's not there. It is a fair use of vibrato.

### Thoughts about Religion

**Ratledge:** How have your personal beliefs about religion influenced you as a person and as a musician?<sup>3</sup>

**Busto:** When I was eleven or twelve years old, I went to Lecaroz, a boarding school in Valle del Batzán, for two years. I sang soprano in the church choir near the school. I had a very negative experience as a choirboy. I vividly remember that one Sunday, I was supposed to sing a solo. I told the priest that I couldn't sing because I had a really bad cough and had been sick. But he insisted, and I sang badly. He became extremely angry with me and slapped my face and insulted me. Then for one entire month, while the others were practicing around the piano, he put me in a corner at the back of the room and made me stare at the wall. The priest told me that I wasn't supposed to ever sing in a choir again for my entire life. I swore that I would never sing again. Finished [gestures a cut throat]! And I can remember the song. [Sings] "Stay with me Jesus. The night is coming, and the shadows are rising, my God..." Here, at the high pitch [makes a sign showing the voice breaking], my voice broke.

**Ratledge:** Did that experience affect your music, your spirituality, or your connection with the church?

**Busto:** When I began to compose music, I asked myself, "How should I give the pain back to the priests after what they had done to me?" They slapped me, gave me punishments, but offered little in the way of a religious foundation. If one perceives everything to be negative, one's attitude about life is going to be negative. One judges that everything is bad. At that time, my personal question was about retribution. How should I behave with them? Should I be negative or show them that I valued their teachings in spite of their behavior? Should I keep help-



*Javier Busto and John Ratledge during the interview.*

ing with the masses and learn every Mass, every Credo, everything we sang in Latin, understanding that all those things are cultural and not necessarily related to a system of beliefs? I decided that it is my culture, and I don't intend to devalue it. So, I kept this deep sense of belief in prayer. These things were not destroyed inside of me. I have learned to appreciate all the knowledge that was given to me from them, all the religious music, religious culture, Latin, and everything else. Therefore, I decided to write a kind of music that reflects all the knowledge that I received from those people. That is why my music is so religious, so sentimental, so much having to do with prayer.

**Ratledge:** Do you believe that one's faith or lack of faith influences the writing of a sacred choral composition in any way?

**Busto:** All of my religious music has to do with my background. The Basque Country's folklore tradition is potent. It is even stronger in choral music. One can find a mixture of folklore and religion in all of my music. My religious music is influenced more by the folklore of the region than it is by the religious content of the text. That doesn't mean that I don't respect religious music. When I decide to write religious music, I do so with tremendous respect. Even though I don't have beliefs, I have respect. There is something very important that happens to me when I compose religious music.

# Medical Doctor, and Self-Taught Musician

## Publishing and Commissions

**Ratledge:** When did you start Bustovega, your publishing company?

**Busto:** It was maybe 1999 or 2000. It was because I became upset with the way the publishing company was handling the publication of my music. That is when I decided to create my own publishing house. We publish only my music. We don't have a distributor. There doesn't seem to be anyone in the United States who is that interested in distributing my music. If there was one company that contacted me and said that they were interested in distributing my music, that would be fine. But I am not going to make the effort to look for a distributor.

**Ratledge:** Do you accept commissions?

**Busto:** Yes. I recently received a commission from a choir in the United States. It is an interaction between the conductor and me. I propose the conditions. I say, "What type of work do you want? What kind of text do you want? A text in English, Latin, or Spanish?" I go through this process, question by question, and at the end I have my plan.

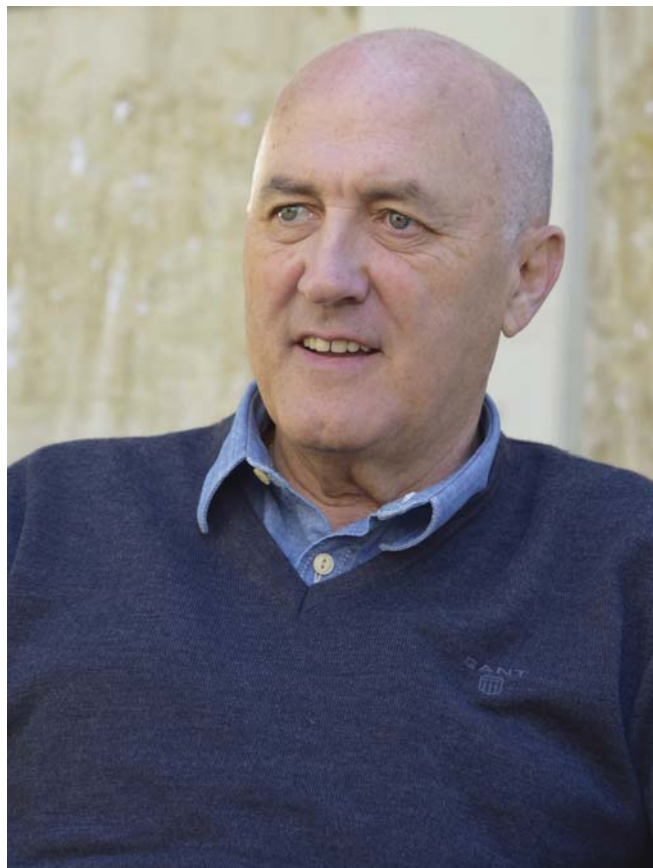
**Ratledge:** Does it ever occur that someone commissions you to set a text and you don't like it at all?

**Busto:** Yes, yes, several times. When they do, I say no, absolutely. If the text does not interest me, I won't write it. Most of the time, I search for texts with interesting phonetics. For me, the meaning of the text is important, but most important are the phonetics of the poem.... how the text sounds.

## Advice for Young Composers

**Ratledge:** Do you have any advice for young composers?

**Busto:** I have advice to give, but I cannot provide technical advice because I lack the resources to give specific musical instruction; however, I can give advice for people to support and uplift them or encourage them to pursue



*Javier Busto in 2015*

their goals in life for those who would be able to go far in the world of music. For example, young Basque composers who are well known in Spain ask me for advice concerning the music they are composing. Young composers send me their music and ask my opinion. What I really try to do is to uplift them in order for them to express their emotions, because all of them went to the Conservatory. I have found that everybody who went to the Conservatory must separate themselves from what they learned there and be carried away by their emotions. Because, if they have not a little bit of consciousness and are not, at the end, a little bit freer, they will write the same way as their professors. They will not find their own style.

## Conclusion

Though Busto has not actively sought recognition

# Javier Busto Bi-Vocational Journeyman,

through composition competitions in recent years, his early submissions won prizes in notable competitions in Bilbao, Igulada, and Tolosa. For a period of time beginning in the mid-nineties, several of his works—*Ave Maria*, *Ave Maris Stella*, *Ave Verum Corpus*, and *Agnus Dei*—were programmed by leading choral organizations in the United States with some regularity. For example, *Ave Maria* was one of the featured works on *Spotless Rose, Hymns to the Virgin Mary*, a 2008 Grammy Award-winning album by the Phoenix Chorale, conducted by Charles Bruffy. Still, though Busto continues to be productive, one rarely hears his music performed in the United States or sees his works listed on conference reading sessions.

Busto's choral ensembles have distinguished themselves at such choral competitions as the Ejea de los Caballeros and Tolosa Competitions in the Basque Country, Avilés and Florilège vocal de Tours in France, Gorizia in Italy, Spittal an der Dräu in Austria, and Mainhausen and Marktoberdorf in Germany. He maintains an active career as guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator throughout Europe, Asia, Australia, and Canada. However, by his own admission, his presence in the United States as a conductor and clinician has been limited.

This brief snapshot into Busto's career suggests, perhaps, that more research is needed that could stimulate awareness of the work of such international choral musicians as Javier Busto.<sup>4</sup> Within the present context, for example, future investigations that would further document the Basque Country choral tradition that has become so integral to Busto's musical vocabulary appear to be warranted.

Finally, this report would be incomplete without a brief characterization of Busto as a person. During my conversations with him, his level of energy seemed palpable, warm, and stimulating. Although not a tall man, he presented himself with self-confidence, assurance, and an imposing authenticity. He demonstrated an inquisitive, attentive spirit and an almost childlike sense of humor that belied the intellect that has allowed him to experience such success as a physician and such breadth as an artist.

Madeleine L'Engle wrote in *Walking on Water, Reflections On Faith and Art*, "Provided an individual is an artist of integrity, he is a genuine servant of the glory which

he does not recognize, and unknown to himself, there is 'something divine' about his work."<sup>5</sup> In my experience, much of Busto's music can aptly be characterized as something divine. Hopefully the insights gained through this interview and perhaps future discoveries it might encourage will serve to foster a better understanding of Javier Busto as a composer, physician, and human being.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Germany (Ferrimontana and Carus Verlag), Sweden (Gehrmans Musikförlag), the United States (Alliance, Santa Barbara, and Walton Music Publishers), the United Kingdom (Oxford University Press), and in Spain (Bustovega).
- <sup>2</sup> The complete transcripts, both in their original and translated form, have been donated, along with a copy of the video, to the American Choral Directors Association International Archives for Choral Music and are available upon request.
- <sup>3</sup> The discussion of religion was lengthy and went into considerable detail, not only concerning theological ramifications of a nonbeliever writing music utilizing sacred texts, but discussions of medical considerations concerning biblical narrative (virgin births, death/resurrection, etc.), to interpretation of that which is acknowledged and respected but not necessarily felt or believed in making exceptional art. The conversation about religion was a continuation of our previous discussion that occurred in Zaragoza, Spain, in 1999.
- <sup>4</sup> See David D. Wells, "An Introduction to the Life and Music of Javier Busto and a Conductor's Analysis of Missa Pro Defunctus" (Doctoral Dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1997). Also see Elena González Correcher, *La Mirada Azul* (El Ejido, Spain: Círculo Rojo, 2014), a recent authorized biography of Javier Busto.
- <sup>5</sup> Madeleine L'Engle, *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art* (Wheaton, IL: Crosswicks, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1980), 30.

When asked to name ten of his favorite compositions, Busto listed the following works (all SATB, divisi unless noted):

***Ave Maris Stella, soprano solo, SATB*** - “The music opens like a river to the sea—gradually. ‘Hail Star of the Sea.’ The opening recital of the soprano should sound as if from afar, and the choir answers, expressing the loneliness of the sailors as they set out to sea.”

***Ave Maria*** - “*Ave Maria* is very important in my development as a composer. This work must be sung like a prayer...serenely. Many choirs sing *forte* on the text, *Sancta Maria*, and this is not my idea. This part of the composition should show a strong internal form of interpretation but not dramatism.”

***O magnum mysterium*** - “*O magnum mysterium* tells about the mystery of Christ’s birth. The first bars are pianissimo parlato to try to express the surprise of the people from Bethlehem when they discovered He was the Son of a virgin mother. That is why each person must sing piano and with his or her own tempo as if they were talking in the street.”

***Sagastipean*** - “I created different atmospheres in this piece. The introduction reflects a man lying on his back looking at the sky, and he calmly falls asleep. He begins to dream, and the dream becomes a dance. The second verse suddenly feels like the medlar’s stones are five, the same as the five sorrows of his heart. He quickly realizes that he shouldn’t feel this way, and he begins to sing a joyful song. The last section contains a lovely melody that lures him into a deep sleep, and at this moment, the words of the song are nonsense lyrics.”

***Zai itxoiten, SSAA*** - “*Gauaren Zergatiaren Bila* is one of my compositions that is written in the Basque language. It is a set of four songs, one of which is *Zai itxoiten*. The text is from Edurne Martínez Juanaberria. She was fourteen years old when she won a poetry award. I was touched by her words and the fact that a teenager could write this desperate poetry.”

***Christus factus est, TTBB*** - “This text was used to reflect a basic Christian concept of Christ’s death: ‘It was made for us, suffering by giving his own life.’ The music, from the melodic point of view, could be defined as descriptive, in parallel relationship to the words. I tried to imitate the Easter processions held in Spain, with second tenors, baritones, and bass imitating the beating of drums. First tenors imitate bugles.”

***Agnus Dei from Missa brevis pro pace*** - “In 1986 there was such a scream of fury and impotence in the face of the death while everyone mostly desired lasting peace. The general feeling of the score represents the permanent fight between good and evil, the divine and the human: the women represent an eternal idea of ‘heaven’ and the men are in a permanent fight against all that sounds spiritual, fraternal, and about love.”

***Esta tierra*** - “This work was written for my brother-in-law’s choir in the city of Valladolid, where I lived for several years. The poem describes the landscape of Castile, the Spanish region where Valladolid is located. The landscape of the city is varied but is mostly plain. This is exactly what describes my music in this song.”

***Salve Regina, SSAA*** - “The melody is written alternating the meter from 3/8 to 5/8 and was done so to get away from the classical idea of a ‘very balanced’ and controlled prayer of a virgin in 4/4. The work has two important moments: the phrase *miseriordes oculos* in the final chord of m.49 reflects the mercy of the Virgin. The second moment is the ending repetition of the word *Maria*, which reflects the simplicity of the Virgin.”

***Ave verum corpus*** - “I wrote this work in memory of my mother, Maritxu Sagrado. The main melody is in the soprano voice, representing the strength of my mother in a slightly high tessitura that can be solved with effort. This is a reference to my concept of her: a seemingly hard and difficult woman but one who possessed a great heart.”



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# International Conductors Exchange Program

## ICEP of the Americas

### Call for Applications

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ICEP Application Deadline: July 1, 2016

To apply online, go to <[www.acda.org](http://www.acda.org)> or visit the ICEP Choralnet Community at <<http://choralnet.org/home/280632>>

#### **ICEP OBJECTIVES**

- To create connections between potential leaders of the US choral community with counterparts across the globe.
- To forge stronger relationships between the American Choral Directors Association and choral associations around the world.
- To raise the visibility and leadership role of the American Choral Directors Association in the global choral community.

#### **SELECTION CRITERIA FOR EMERGING CONDUCTORS**

The ACDA International Conductors Exchange Program Review Committee is charged with the selection of emerging leaders of the choral profession who 1) have not previously had international conducting experience and 2) reflect a high level of excellence and a wide diversity of interests. The ICEP Review Committee has developed the following list of criteria.

**1)** Is a current member of ACDA; **2)** Is an active choral conductor in a professional (remunerative) position; **3)** Has completed at least a master's degree; **4)** Has served in a volunteer or an elected position at the State, Regional, or National level of ACDA; **5)** Their choirs have demonstrated a level of choral excellence at least approaching the standard of choirs customarily heard at a State or Division ACDA conference; **6)** Exhibits some level of human understanding, tact, and cross-cultural sensitivity; **7)** Minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 20 years as full time in the profession; **8)** The candidates should reflect a wide diversity of interests and accomplishments (church, high school, community, elementary, et. al.). The ICEP Review Committee will consider a diversity of conductors (e.g., not all from one setting, such as higher education). **9)** Supporting Documents: Statement of Purpose, Curriculum Vitae, Two Letters of Recommendation, and a YouTube video submission.

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**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

1. Statement of Purpose: Must include a detailed forecast of how this experience in North/Central/South America may impact their future work and how you plan to continue to foster the relationship.
2. Curriculum Vitae
3. Two Letters of Recommendation

**RESIDENCY COUNTRY PREFERENCE** Indicate top three (3) choices: 1 = 1st choice, 2 = 2nd choice, etc.

\_\_\_Argentina \_\_\_Bahamas \_\_\_Brazil \_\_\_Canada \_\_\_Costa Rica \_\_\_Mexico \_\_\_Puerto Rico

(Continued on next page)



## VIDEO SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

YouTube Video Submission (Video must be uploaded to YouTube by 11:59 pm, July 1, 2016)

VIDEO LENGTH Recording of Rehearsal of 12-minute minimum to 15-minute maximum

## REPERTOIRE

1. Two selections from different periods.
2. Selections should represent two different languages.
3. Selections should be in contrasting tempo and style.

## REHEARSAL

1. The applicant should rehearse the choir in such a way as to focus on gestural communication, rehearsal technique, and the development of the musical product (in much the same manner as a guest conductor in a festival setting).
2. The ICEP Review Committee will place primary value on gestural language and rehearsal technique.
3. The ICEP Review Committee will also place value on mastery of interpretation, appropriate use of language (metaphor, simile, analogy, etc.), and the use of imagination.

## CAMERA ANGLE

1. The camera angle will show a full frontal view of the applicant and all conducting movements.
2. The choral sound and comments of the applicant must be clearly audible on the video recording.
3. The applicant will begin each selection by announcing the title and composer of the work to be presented.

## FORMAT & DURATION

1. The video recorded selections will be presented consecutively without stopping between selections.
2. The video recording will not be edited in any manner.
3. The video recording will show the applicant conducting and rehearsing for a minimum of twelve minutes and a maximum of fifteen minutes.
4. The time should be divided equally between the two selections.



URL of the uploaded audition video: \_\_\_\_\_  
(It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the accuracy of this information.)

VIDEO SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Date of taping \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Choir \_\_\_\_\_

Composition 1

Composer \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

Composition 2

Composer \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

With my signature below, I certify that I have read, understand fully, and accept the regulations for participation in the ACDA International Conductors' Exchange Program and that all statements made on this form are factual.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ICEP Application Form must be completed by Friday, July 1, 2016.

Hard copies of the Application Form, Two Letters of Reference, Statement of Purpose, and CV must be postmarked by Friday, July 1, 2016. Please send to:

T. J. Harper, Director, ACDA International Conductors' Exchange Program,  
Department of Music, Providence College, 1 Cunningham Sq., Providence, RI, 02918

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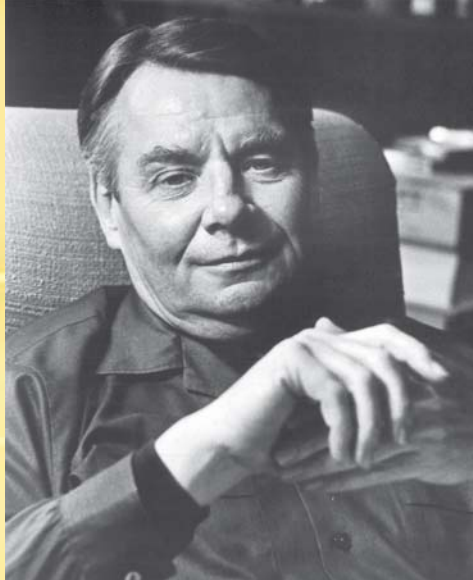
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# THE YEAR OF ROBERT SHAW: LESSONS FROM A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME APPRENTICESHIP

BY RONALD KEAN

*Editor's note: The following article originally appeared in Cantate, the official publication of California ACDA, edited by Eliza Rubenstein. It is reprinted here by permission. Photographs of Robert Shaw are property of the ACDA National Office Archives.*

My life completely changed the first time I sang for Robert Shaw—and not just my musical life. He was conducting the first of three summer workshops at the University of Southern California in 1977, and I was about to embark on my second year of teaching as the choir director at Valencia High School in Placentia, California. These summer workshops at USC combined the talents of student singers and conductors from USC and southern California, conductors from all over the United States, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, all performing at the Hollywood Bowl. The first week we learned and performed Berlioz's *Requiem*, and the second week we learned and performed Verdi's *Requiem*. The great Howard Swan—who I later learned was Shaw's high school history teacher—sat in on the first rehearsal and bowed in homage to Shaw when he was introduced. Before that summer, I had no idea that Robert Shaw's level



*Ron Kean in the early 1980s*

of musicianship or his knowledge of the score, the voice, theology, and literature were possible. I had discovered a model for lifelong learning.

The second summer we learned and performed music by J. S. Bach: the *Magnificat* and the *St. Matthew Passion*. Bach and Shaw were the perfect marriage of rhythm, soul, and spirituality, and the all-day rehearsals seemed to pass by in a matter of minutes. Each day at lunchtime, the singers walked off campus to the nearby food court and restaurants, but one day I found that I couldn't

eat and couldn't talk to anyone following the morning rehearsal; it had transported me into another world. I sat alone outside of Booth Hall on the steps with my head in my hands for five or ten minutes, trying to process what I experienced.

"Are you all right?" said a voice next to me.

It was Robert Shaw. Evidently he couldn't eat either, and we started a conversation that lasted on and off for more than twenty years.

During the dress rehearsal of the *St. Matthew Passion*, I noticed a discrepancy in ornamentation between the violins and the sopranos and brought it to Shaw's attention. He asked me to take his score to the copyist to make the change, and a day later, he suggested that I borrow his choral and orchestral scores of the piece for a month so that I could

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study how he edited and studied his scores. I was stunned, and I mentioned on my way out of his dressing room that I didn't know his address. "I am sure you'll find a way to return them to me," he replied. "If not, you'd better try another profession!"

I didn't just study his scores; I copied every last detail into my choral score and spent money I couldn't afford on a Bärenreiter full score so I could transcribe his edits into my copy. (I once heard a radio interviewer say to him, "Every time you conduct a choir the product is miraculous. How do you do this?" Shaw responded, "I just make the singers do what the composer indicated in the score. The composition is the miracle!") I recalled the stories of Bach copying the scores of others to better understand the inner workings of their music. Robert Shaw, with one act of trust and generosity, validated my love of learning and created a lasting bond between us.

The third summer at USC, we learned and performed Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and by now I knew for sure that I was in the presence of greatness and that somehow I had to expand my studies with Robert Shaw. I took out a loan and flew to Atlanta, not knowing if he would meet with me but certain that I didn't want to look back and see a missed opportunity. I planned a trip that would coincide with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus performance of Brahms's *Requiem* and arranged to meet Shaw's secretary, Nola Frink. She was protective of his time but finally agreed to ask him if he would meet with me. He agreed and invited me to sing in the chorus for the Friday night performance in place of a missing tenor.

The performance was powerful, but time was tight; I had an early-morning flight on Saturday, so we set up a time to meet at 6:30 a.m. I showed him what I had learned from three summers of study with him and explained what I wanted to learn from him. Much to my surprise and delight, he invited me on the spot to become the copyist of the Atlanta Symphony Chorus and to sing in the chorus. The meeting went longer than expected, so he drove me at breakneck speed to the airport, arriving in the nick of time. Once aboard my flight, I finally took in what had just happened. As the plane soared through the clouds, I was right there in the clouds with it. I resigned my teaching position at Villa Park High School at the end of that school

## What I Learned from Robert Shaw

Robert Shaw's rehearsal techniques have been documented by many other conductors and by Carnegie Hall videos. Words are not sufficient to describe the experience of working with him, but I offer the following notes from my firsthand experience in rehearsal, performance, workshops, and as his copyist and a member of the symphonic choir that received a weekly "Dear People" letters.

### On Blend

- Don't ever sing more loudly than you can sing beautifully.
- Try for a little less singing and a little more listening.
- After four seconds of singing, gravity and lack of blood flow will cause the pitch to sag and the tone to be thin. Constantly refresh the air supply by staggering your breathing.

### On Phrasing

- Energize weak beats in each meter to maintain tempo and to generate forward motion. This is especially true in triple meter.
- Short notes should lead to their next longest "brethren." Therefore, slightly separate a dotted note from the next shorter note so that the shorter note has an exact place in time. Then energize the shorter note with same energy as the dotted note.
- Invite the tone...sing through each note...blossom the sound.
- Each phrase should have a sense of urgency, a sense of mission.
- Repeated notes may need a slight crescendo to keep the line moving and to keep the pitch from sagging.

# A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME APPRENTICESHIP

- Energize the lower note of a melodic leap and arrive elegantly at the higher note.
- Make the phrase sound inevitable by understanding its shape and color.
- Delight in the physiological sound of the text and explore text as color.

## On Rhythm

- Begin the learning process by “count-singing.” This technique accomplishes extraordinary things for intonation because it requires the singers to initiate the pitch of each note multiple times. It does even more for rhythms: it makes it impossible for a singer to sing through a rest; and it lines up every measure vertically in terms of the smallest unit. When the appropriate dynamics are added, the singer is forced to consider where, how much, and how rapidly a change in dynamics is to be accomplished.

## On Tempo

- Rehearsal tempi should be calculated to prohibit the singer from making a mistake. Errors should not be allowed to happen or they will accumulate and require un-learning.
- There are three tempos in every choral/orchestra piece: one in your inner hearing during score study, one when rehearsing the choir, and one that best suits the orchestra in the acoustics of your performance hall, which becomes the “real tempo” of the piece.

## On Text

- Stay away from text until notes and phrasing are right and ineradicable!
- Enjoy every sound of every word.

## On Warm-Ups

- Yawn before vocalizing and rub the sides of your jaw to create a relaxed atmosphere for the air to resonate.
- Always learn music at piano dynamic to hear the tonality.
- Sing quietly enough to maintain a good unison.
- Concentrate on pitch first and sonority second.
- Unifying the vowels will unify the pitch.
- The experience of singing unison is more instructive than warming up the voice, and warming up the brain is more important than warming up the voice.

## On Conducting

- Robert Shaw gestural language indicated proper breathing and phrasing. The ictus of the beat was clear and comparatively small; the energy of the inner pulse of the music generated by the “weak” beats was fuller and conducted horizontally with the elbows. This conducting style is related to the chironomy of Gregorian Chant. The vocal line is always in motion; there is always ebb and flow. As a result, there wasn’t a rehearsal or performance that didn’t leave me feeling vocally stronger afterwards.
- And finally, when asked to name the most important skill for a beginning conductor, Shaw replied: “You must like people. And if you don’t, then pay a professional to find out why you don’t!”

## THE YEAR OF ROBERT SHAW: LESSONS FROM

year and moved to Atlanta in August of 1980.

Shaw put me to work right away. One day he called me to his home and showed me his music library, which was stuffed with more scores than it could hold. He asked if I would build him more shelving and organize all his scores while he was out of town for a week; I said yes, and with some help from the local hardware store, I went to work. I knew that he was a stickler for detail, so I spent days constructing brick-and-board shelves and carefully centering

them according to the spot where he sat at the piano.

When he came home, he sat on his piano bench, looked around, and said to me, “You centered the library on the room, didn’t you?”

“Yes,” I said, pleased that he had noticed.

“I would prefer that it be centered on the light fixture,” he replied.

I measured the difference, which amounted to about one half inch; he saw the look of disbelief that I tried to hide. He went upstairs and returned in his traditional blue French farmer’s

uniform. Together we took the library apart, moved it to where he wanted it, and put it back together. This took most of the day, and that half inch turned out to be a blessing—it gave me the opportunity to ask him every musical question I could think of while we hauled shelves and scores together. His sense of space was matched only by his sense of time. One day I went for a walk with his wife, Caroline, in the area where she and Robert lived. “When I take this walk with Robert,” she said, “we stop at this exact spot on the street. He



# A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME APPRENTICESHIP

picks up a rock and throws it about fifteen yards at that hole in the pavement. I've never seen him miss the hole...oh, and when he wakes up in the middle of the night, he can tell you exactly what time it is without looking at a watch."

As his copyist, my job was to copy the edits from his choral score to twelve master copies so that the 240-voice chorus could have these edits in their score by the first or second rehearsal. I copied three scores per section. On the first one, I double-

checked every measure as I went. The second score was easier, and by the third I understood why he edited the parts the way that he did, and I no longer needed to double-check my work. It was a fantastic education and a true apprenticeship. That year I

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## THE YEAR OF ROBERT SHAW: LESSONS FROM



worked on scores ranging from Bach's *Mass in B minor* to Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* to Britten's *War Requiem*. Every choral rehearsal was a master class from one of the greatest musicians of our time. I could have stayed forever, but the time had come for me to put into practice what I had learned. I returned to USC to complete my graduate studies in choral music.

I turned forty in the middle of my fourth year as director of choral activities at Porterville College, and though I didn't have a full-blown mid-

life crisis, I did sense that I needed to "recharge my batteries." I phoned Robert Shaw's secretary, who suggested that I come to Atlanta; the choir needed more men to record Mahler's *Symphony No. 8*. (Shaw's supernatural sense of time played a part in this recording: Bob Woods, then-president of Telarc and the producer for the CD, reminded him of the importance of keeping the recording under 79 minutes and 42 seconds so that it would fit onto a single disc; Shaw's rendering clocked in at 79 minutes and 39 seconds.) My college president

allowed me to miss class for a week and a half to make the trip, and it was this opportunity that helped me to finally become comfortable in my own skin. I was in the midst of developing a repertoire of multicultural music that would represent my student population, the majority of whom came from non-western traditions. Rekindling my relationship with Robert Shaw reminded me that non-Western music demanded the same level of musicianship, score study, and performance practice as Western art music. Back home in Porterville, our


# A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME APPRENTICESHIP

program and our abilities grew. And me? For the first time, I was content to know that although I was not going to be exactly the same as Robert Shaw, I could take what he had taught me and grow where I was planted.

This year marks the centennial of Robert Shaw's birth. His legacy as a teacher remains as strong as his legacy as a conductor. He shared everything he knew, and I have spent my entire adult life as a conductor using what I learned from him. When I asked him why he accepted me as a student

(when thousands in our profession would line up for such a chance), he said, "Because you asked!" Robert Shaw was a self-taught man who spent a lifetime learning his craft. When I returned his orchestra score of Bach's *Mass in B minor* to his home after studying it for a month and copying the edits into my score, he gave me a funny look and said, "Well, what did you learn?" I talked about balance, articulation, form, phrasing, tempi, and bowings, and said, "But I don't really understand all of this."

He replied, "What makes you think I do?"

If Robert Shaw was still learning and growing, I figured there was hope for me too. 

**Ronald Kean** is emeritus professor of music at Bakersfield College. He is a past president of Western ACDA Division and the Music Association of California Community Colleges. [rkean@bak.rr.com](mailto:rkean@bak.rr.com)



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# Transformational Choral Singing

by Stephanie A. Henry

Upon arriving in Kansas City in 1999, one of my first concert experiences was with a male prison chorus: the Lansing East Hill Singers under the direction of founder, Elvera Voth. The program was transformative not only for me but for the singers as well. Vocal blend and balance aside, the amazing power of the *message* behind the music came through with passion and energy that reflected deep, personal acquaintance with the sentiments of the musical selections. Between musical numbers, participants prepared testimonials about singing in the chorus and described the challenges of prison life. As the concert progressed, I realized that choral singing had a major effect not only on the Lansing men but on the volunteer community singers as well.

## Arts in Prison

Founded in 1861 as the Kansas State Penitentiary, the Lansing Correctional Facility is the state's largest and oldest facility for detention and rehabilitation of male adult felons. Enter Elvera Voth, recently retired from a long and rewarding conducting career in Alaska. She returned to her home state of Kansas with a fire to engage in a different sort of choral work. She suggested to Lansing Correctional Facility's Warden (at the

time, David McKune) that a prison chorus be formed. He was doubtful, but he let her try. Voth started with a small group of enthusiastic singers that grew as word spread. With the help of a lot of prisoner input, Voth realized a broader vision for equipping the men with the armor they would need to reintegrate, and she drafted a plan for Arts in Prison.

In 1998 she spoke with colleague and dear friend Robert Shaw about ways to fund this plan. After hearing her describe the breadth of the project, Shaw paused for a moment before responding, "How can I help you, Mother Theresa [sic]?"<sup>1</sup> They developed a choral festival in 1998, held at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas, Robert Shaw conducting. Proceeds of over \$25,000 enabled the incorporation of Arts in Prison at LCF. Under this 501[c]3 umbrella organization, volunteers teach an impressive array of classes besides the chorus, including creative writing, visual arts, yoga, drama, debate, guitar, crocheting, book club, communication, and mentoring for success. Currently, LFC has an inmate population of 2,405 distributed among its three units: Maximum, 994; Medium, 783; and Minimum, 628. As of 2014, 28 percent of all eligible prisoners were enrolled in the Arts in Prison program at LCF.

## East Hill Singers

Today I serve as accompanist and assistant conductor to the sixty-voice East Hill Singers directed by Kirk Carson—a challenging, frustrating, and important experience. Prison rehearsals can be tough and time-consuming, as few of the twenty-five or so men have any singing experience,

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and even fewer read traditional notation. We slog through notes, vowels, text, and rhythms, yet these singers are the most patient, dedicated, and enormously grateful choristers I have ever encountered.

East Hill Singers come from the Minimum Security Unit situated on the east hillside of the complex and must qualify for, among other things, travel to off-site concerts. The rehearsal schedule for “outsiders” is alternate Monday nights in Kansas City; for “insiders,” weekly Tuesday nights at the Lansing East Hill facility. About five weeks before the concert date, the Lansing men add Saturdays to their schedule. Four or five volunteer singers attend the Lansing rehearsals on a regular basis, helping to enhance communication and social skills between both groups.

Every rehearsal—outside (volunteers) or inside (inmates)—concludes

with Elvera Voth’s uplifting arrangement of the Swedish hymn “May the Gift,” sung clustered around the piano. “May the joy of words and music linger as we now depart. In our thinking, speaking, living, give us grace to do our part.”

Resources are limited. The accompanist receives a modest stipend, and the director takes no remuneration. Prison guards and administrators volunteer their time to transport the inmates to concerts. Little money supports the purchase of choral octavos and other necessities. Four concerts a year make a lot of work for few hands.

## Preparing for Concerts

Prison rehearsals are hardly ideal. Upon arrival at the prison, we sign in then walk across the scenic hill to the chapel, greeting inmates as they head to dinner. Someone hails a security

guard to unlock the room; we enter and set up. Our utilitarian keyboard is plugged in and turned to “STUN” as the men arrive; there is no amplification. A music stand is brought out for director Kirk Carson, lights and fans go on, the call-out sheet is posted, and warm-ups commence.

The twice-daily Count (lock-down for attendance) is occasionally extended, causing late-start rehearsal or even cancellation. Singers come and go during rehearsal due to scheduled appointments. Often as the concert date draws near, one or more singers do not meet travel requirements and cannot sing the concert. Despite all of this, Carson focuses on the tasks at hand: teaching music fundamentals, rehearsing the notes, unifying the sound, maintaining a good sense of humor, and making everyone feel valued and welcome. The way the men view him as a mentor/father-figure is heartwarming. Mutual respect between singers and conductor is obvious and openly expressed.

On concert day, when inside singers join the outsiders for the first time, the effect is magical. Eyes open wider, stances become a little taller, and pride emanates from the risers. The full chorus has just two hours to rehearse together with an instrumental combo and often a vocal soloist. Carson keeps the lid on pre-concert jitters and anxiety. After a snack break, we move onstage. Miraculously (in the fullest sense of the word), the concerts come off beautifully.

Following the two-hour concert, the inside singers greet audience members—family, friends, public—who are effusive in their praise. In



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the lobby, inmate artwork and poetry is always displayed and for sale. After a meal prepared by the sponsoring church, the prisoners board the vans and return to the “prison on the hill,” allowing them to reflect and decompress.

You drive up over the hill on “the Road to Nowhere,” you see the peak of the first fence. You know, it can be hard at times to say “Ah gotta come back and redirect my energies to this...”; I think it helps us to come back with some positive things.<sup>2</sup>

Through the art of singing, the insiders develop (or rediscover) self-esteem and confidence; they learn how to communicate effectively and to trust authority. Perhaps most importantly, they learn to trust one another; and for the limited time they are involved in the chorus, their souls soar and begin to heal.

### The Power of Music

Why is there such a growing interest in this? When these men are released, will they be better prepared thanks to the power of music? Frank Dominguez, former EH Singer, put it this way:

Six months ago I was #34036 singing in this Lansing choir. And today I am Frank Dominguez singing with some of the finest voices around accompanied by my wife and my five children... Through

the furthering of this project [AiP], many men will benefit and what better way to help men re-enter society rehabilitated then [*sic*] to allow them to participate in a program that aids in the building of high self-esteem, confidence, and a hope that may carry men through the rest of their lives as productive citizens in our society.<sup>3</sup>

A growing body of research suggests that prisoner involvement in education and arts programs reduces recidivism. A 2013 study by the Rand

Corporation funded by the United States Department of Justice reported that “inmates who participated in educational programs were 43 percent less likely to return to prison within three years than those who didn’t participate.”<sup>4</sup> At Lansing, twenty years of statistics indicate that recidivism among their choral singers is only 18 percent. Such programs provide incarcerated individuals the opportunity to gain skills and perspectives they need for successful reentry into society. The United States imprisons more people than any other country, at taxpayer expense. With overcrowded conditions and hefty annual prison



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# Transformational Choral Singing

costs per inmate (\$35,000 at Lansing), why wouldn't we be interested in successful re-integration programs, decreasing recidivism, and prison prevention?

Where do these individuals go upon release? At Lansing, counselors work with inmates to prepare them for this transition, but they are only given one hundred dollars and a one-way bus ticket. What do they do for employment? Many employers will not hire people with criminal records. Many inmates have no family, and most have no assets. If all they know after leaving prison is what they

brought with them, how will they succeed? They don't. Most are back in prison within three years.

Today, we have congressional leaders pushing legislation to fully restore Pell Grant eligibility in federal and state prisons. This is a positive step in the right direction, and we look forward to its timely implementation. Meanwhile, thanks to the volunteers who see a way to make a positive social difference, music and similar Arts in Prison programs reach and transform a small percentage of the prison population.

In her 2013 documentary film

about East Hill Singers, "Conducting Hope," Margie Friedman made this observation:

The purpose of the choir is two-fold. First, it's about performing great music; secondly, it's about teaching the men how to turn their lives around by instilling hope. If they can succeed at this, they can transfer those skills to the real world—the discipline, being responsible to others, working toward a common goal, the feeling of accomplishment. For many of these men, it changes the way they think, and if they can think differently, they have a better chance of making it in the real world.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, from Elvera Voth herself: "No one without meaningful educational programming will be able to reenter society successfully after release from prison...<sup>6</sup> I'd rather see them released with hope in their eyes than hate in their hearts."

**Stephanie Henry** is interim director of music at Southminster Presbyterian Church in Prairie Village, Kansas. [shenry24@kc.rr.com](mailto:shenry24@kc.rr.com)

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The full and intriguing background to this story is contained in the following articles: Mary L. Cohen, "Mother Theresa, How Can I

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Help You?’ The Story of Elvera Voth, Robert Shaw, and the Bethel College Benefit Sing-Along for Arts in Prison, Inc.,” *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing* 3, no.1 (2008): 15; and Shelbi Thomas, “Freedom to Change,” *University of Iowa Alumni Magazine* (June 2013) [www.iowalum.com/magazine/](http://www.iowalum.com/magazine/)

digital/June13.cfm.

<sup>2</sup> Margie Friedman, *Conducting Hope: A film by Margie Friedman* (Westport Productions, Los Angeles) Inmates in the documentary (2013).

<sup>3</sup> Cohen, “Mother Theresa,” 15.

<sup>4</sup> Carla Rivera, “4 Prisons to Get College Programs,” *Los Angeles Times* (August 2, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Margie Friedman, “Conducting Hope, a film by Margie Friedman,” Press Release (2013): 4.

<sup>6</sup> Mary L. Cohen, “Risk Taker Extraordinaire: An Interview with Elvera Voth,” *International Journal of Community Music* 3, no. 1 (2010): 154. <doi: 10.1386/ijcm.3.1.151/7>

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### Finding My Compositional Voice

by Mark Hayes

Nearly forty years after my first choral piece was published, I'm still finding my compositional voice and learning my craft. I hope that never stops. I've had the honor to conduct several of my large works for chorus and orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Vatican. As thrilling as that has been, my heart's desire is to create music that works for the local church, community chorus, and school—where quality choral music is prized for its ability to inspire singers of all ages and abilities. As I travel to composer festivals throughout the world, I hear my music performed by choirs of all levels. What an education it is for me to hear singers master or struggle with something I've written. Since composing is a relatively solitary experience, hearing a new composition performed helps me learn what makes my music accessible and what is unnecessarily challenging.

I consider myself a commercial composer. By that I mean that most of my income is derived from royalties from the sale of my music. When I compose or arrange, I do it with the intention that it will be published

and I will profit from it. Self-employed since 1980, I do not have a job at any academic institution or church. I feel incredibly blessed to make a living writing music full-time.

My musical choices are informed by what I feel is the most beautiful expression of music at that moment and also by my target audience. Sometimes that results in a very complex, difficult work; and sometimes, in something simple yet profound. There is always tension between what I perceive to be my most artistic expression and what will sell. I don't know that I will ever resolve that dilemma. I never really know what will appeal to the market or be a great seller; most publishers don't know that either.

Someone has said, "All the music in the world is already complete in the mind of God." It is my job to be still long enough to hear it.

"Stillness is our most intense mode of action. It is in our moments of deep quiet that is born every idea, emotion, and drive which we eventually honor with the name of action."—Leonard Bernstein (1976).

### Text

When I receive a text for a choral piece, I read it through many times and feel the inherent poetic meter or lack of it. If I'm setting a prose text, then I know that I will probably write a through-composed piece instead of something that fits into a traditional form such as ABA, verse/chorus, or strophic setting. Many texts seem to have easily discernible sections that help determine the structure and the meter of the music. When I start a piece, I set an intention and often say a silent invocation to bless the creative process. Creating is such a spiritual process. Where do ideas come from? How does inspiration spring? It is so different for everyone. I respond to the urgency of a deadline. That gets my creative juices flowing. It is not constricting as much as it is motivating.

These elements shape my writing process.

1. What is the purpose of the piece? Is it to entertain, to evoke worship, to inspire the audience in a concert setting?



# Hallelujah!

2. Who will be singing it? Is the choir a volunteer choir? Are their voices trained? Are the voices young or old? Can they read music?
3. If the work is a commission, are there restrictions in range, rhythm, or style? What are the commissioning party's expectations?
4. If I'm writing for a publisher, are there limits from the editor in difficulty level, length, or subject matter?

## Lines and Form

I look for lines in the text that express the heart of the lyric—phrases that need to be illuminated musically. I am a melody-driven composer. I strive to create singable, tonal melodies that are memorable and stand on their own when sung without accompaniment. I love rich harmonies and can always harmonize a melody so it sounds better. However, I prefer not to “prop up” a melody through chords. Is it compelling on its own? Does it have a reasonable range and interesting arch to it? Does it serve the lyric?

Good, intuitive part-writing is

essential. I sing through each voice part separately to make sure there are no awkward intervals. When I write complicated rhythms, I often repeat the same rhythm in a similar musical section so singers have less to learn. In polyphonic sections I use identical motifs in different voice parts so they can hear the imitation. Because there are typically fewer tenors and basses in volunteer choirs, I use divisi sparingly in those parts.

In the mid-1980s I had occasion to work with John Rutter at a music conference hosted by a private university. Don Hinshaw of Hinshaw Music was a sponsoring publisher. John and I had some one-on-one time in the green room before a performance, and I asked him for advice about choral composition. He told me that one of the most important elements to a good choral composition was form. Up until this point in my compositional journey, the way I structured my music was not very intentional. At times, it flowed out of me much like a run-on sentence.

I took Rutter's advice to heart. Since then I have made an effort to craft my music in an organic, inspired way that leads the listener on a journey that makes sense to them. If there is a section that needs to be repeated, I repeat because it builds cohesiveness. If contrast is needed, I create something that cleanses the musical palate before repeating a theme. I liken the listening experience to being on a fun road trip where you sense where you are going but are open to new surprises around the next turn in the road. I want the listener in the concert hall or church



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pew to be delighted and moved by my music and also understand where it's going. To make my compositions and arrangements accessible, I'm mindful of vocal ranges. For the average adult volunteer choir, I use these range guidelines: Soprano: C<sup>4</sup> – G<sup>5</sup>/Alto: G<sup>3</sup> – D<sup>5</sup>/Tenor: C<sup>3</sup> – F<sup>4</sup>/Bass: F<sup>2</sup> – E<sup>b</sup><sup>4</sup>

When any voice parts are combined in a unison phrase, I may stretch the limits of these ranges a bit. There is strength in numbers.

### Accompaniment


Playing and writing for the piano is my first love. I remember as a young pianist how boring some of the accompaniments were as I played for my church choir. I vowed that I would write creative piano parts if I ever had the chance. Little did I know that would be part of my life's path. Keyboard accompaniments are just as important as the choral parts. The accompaniment should support the singers and not compete with them. Accompaniments must fit easily within the hand. Even though I have a large hand spread, I am aware that chords with large reaches are difficult to play for some pianists. I learned early in my writing career that "less is more." If I can write a lush chord with fewer notes and still achieve the sonority I desire, I will simplify.

Accompaniments should support the vocal line but not mask it. I rarely write the full melody line in the piano part because it can get in the way of a soloist's interpretation or conductor's ability to shape a line. Difficult vocal rhythms can be supported in

the accompaniment. If there is a lot of rhythmic or melodic activity in a choral phrase, I will write less in the accompaniment so the choral parts can be heard and breathe.

### Mission

From my earliest arrangements, I wanted my music to have something special in it, such as an unexpected modulation, a change in rhythm or melody, an inspirational climactic moment, or a musical phrase that truly illuminates the text. My mission statement is "to create beautiful music for the world."

The compositional process is filled with so many choices. Is this the best melody note in this phrase or is that one? Do I write for unison choir here or expand to open score? How do I know when a piece is complete? I had to learn to trust my choices. I had to decide what was beautiful and hope that my listeners resonated with my choices. This has been the journey to find my compositional voice. 

**Mark Hayes** is an internationally known composer and arranger. [mark@markhayes.com](mailto:mark@markhayes.com)



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## **Audition Guidelines For Performance At National Conferences**

Minneapolis, Minnesota

March 8-11, 2017

Invitations to choirs for ACDA National Conference performances are based solely on the quality of musical performances as demonstrated in audition recordings (uploaded mp3 submissions).

### **I. Preparation Of Mp3s**

ACDA will consider only mp3 files prepared in compliance with specifications listed below and accompanied by requested materials in pdf form:

1. proposed repertoire for the 2017 conference;
2. scanned copies of three representative programs sung by the auditioning group, one each from 2015-2016; 2014-2015; and 2013-2014. (For further information, see Section V. below.)

The uploaded mp3 files should contain only complete pieces. If a longer work is excerpted, several minutes should be included on the file, and the repertoire from all three years' examples should be essentially the same kind as that proposed for the conference performance.

### **II. Audition Procedures**

All mp3, pdf, and choir/conductor information will be submitted and uploaded through the link provided at [www.acda.org](http://www.acda.org) no later than April 30, 2016. Upon receipt, a National Office staff member will assign each submission a number to assure confidentiality until after the National Audition Committee has completed its consideration. At no time will the choir/conductor identity be known to any of the audition committee. Submissions must fit into the following Repertoire & Resource committee areas as clarified below:

- Children's and Community Youth

1. Children's choirs are defined as unchanged voices and may include school choirs, auditioned community choirs, boychoirs, and church choirs.

2. Youth choirs are defined as community groups including singers ages 12-18, pre-college level, and may include (a) treble voicing, (b) mixed voicing (including changed voices); (c) male voices (including changed voices). Note: School ensembles need to submit in the Junior High/Middle School or High School categories.

- Junior High/Middle School

- Senior High School

- Male Choirs

- Women's Choirs

- Two-year College: community college (2 year schools)

- College and University (4 or 4+ year schools)

- Vocal Jazz

- Show Choir (Show Choirs will need to submit both audio and video uploads.)

- Community Choirs: ages 18 and up, adult mixed groups or single gender choirs, in either category: (a) volunteer amateur groups with a maximum of one paid leader per section, or (b) semi-professional or professional ensembles with paid members.
- Music in Worship: ages 18 and up adult choirs (treble, mixed or men's), including gospel choirs, even those sponsored by a community or school organization. (Note: children's and youth church choirs can enter in the children's choir and youth categories).
- Ethnic and Multi-cultural Perspectives: groups that represent various ethnic backgrounds (excluding gospel choirs that will be considered under Music in Worship).

### III. Screening Process

There are two levels of screening: 1. an initial or first screening level at which finalists will be selected; and 2. a final screening level at which only those recommended from the first screening will be considered. All auditions are "blind," that is without no knowledge of the identity of the choir or conductor.

For level 1,

In consultation with the National R&R Chair, national chairs for each R&R area will appoint two additional people, representing different divisions, to screen the category. We recommend that auditors be chosen from among conductors who have performed at divisional or national conferences. Each national area chair will be responsible for correlating responses from the listeners in their respective committees and will prepare a list showing the collective top ten submissions, plus five alternates, for the National Audition Committee. In areas where there are fewer than 10 auditions, the National Committee will hear all submissions.

For level 2,

National Audition Committee members will hear only the top 10 in each category, unless fewer than ten are submitted in that area, as mentioned above. After scoring is complete, the results will be tabulated, and submissions ranked by area in order of excellence. At the end of the auditions, the National Audition Committee Chair will submit audition results to the National Conference Chair, who, together with the Steering Committee, will decide which eligible groups to invite, in consideration of planning the most effective conference. Every effort will be made to represent a broad range of excellent performing groups, and there is no quota in any area. Audition committee members will not know identity of groups until after final decisions are made so as to maintain the integrity of the blind audition process.

National Audition Committee members will be selected from the following:

- Division Presidents, past-presidents and/or past divisional and national officers
- National and/or division Repertoire & Resource Chairs in the area of audition
- Outstanding choral directors of groups in the Repertoire and Resource areas being auditioned that performed at previous national conferences
- The National Repertoire & Resource Chair and Conference Program Chair will be members of the National Audition Committee.

No person submitting audition materials for the forthcoming conference may serve on either the first screening or final audition committee.

The ACDA National Conference Chair will notify all choirs of their audition results no later than June 30, 2016.

#### **IV. Eligibility**

Conductors must be current members of ACDA and must have been employed in the same position with the same organization since the fall of 2013. No choral ensemble or conductor may appear on successive national conferences. It is understood that ACDA will not assume financial responsibility for travel, food, or lodging for performance groups. This application implies that the submitted ensemble is prepared to travel and perform at the conference if accepted.

#### **V. Items Required for Application Submission:**

1. Director's name, home address, phone, e-mail address, ACDA member number and expiration date.
2. Name of institution, address, name of choir, number of singers, voicing, and age level (See Section II above for clarification regarding Repertoire & Standards area clarification of choir categories.)
3. PDF #1 – Proposed Program for Performance at the national conference. Please include title, composer, and approximate performance time in minutes and seconds. The total program time may not exceed 25 minutes including entrance, exit, and applause. The use of photocopies or duplicated music at ACDA conferences is strictly prohibited. Accompaniment in the forms of mp3/tape/CD may not be used on the audition recordings or on ACDA conference programs. ACDA encourages conductors to program a variety of styles from various eras unless proposing a concert by a single composer or genre. Only one manuscript (unpublished) piece may be included.
4. PDF #2, #3, #4 – Programs – Applicants must upload one scanned program page as proof of conducting and programming for each year represented on the recordings, i.e. from 2015-2016; 2014-2015; and 2013-2014.
5. PDF #5 Title, Composer, Recording location (live, studio, rehearsal), Production (edited, unedited) for each of the submitted uploads.
6. Non-refundable application fee of \$50 submitted by credit card only.
7. Recordings in mp3 format based on the following specifications:

The total length of the three audition uploads should be 10 to 15 minutes, one selection each from 2015-2016; 2014-2015; and 2013-2014. The first upload mp3 must be from the current year, 2015-2016; the second upload mp3 from 2014-2015, and the third upload mp3 from 2013-2014.

All materials must be submitted in full no later than April 30, 2016 via [www.acda.org](http://www.acda.org). An incomplete upload of all audition materials will not be considered.

#### **VI. Schedule of Dates**

Auditions open January 1, 2016. Application available online at [www.acda.org](http://www.acda.org).

By April 30, 2016 Audition application, uploads, and payment completed by 11:59 pm CST

By June 20, 2016 National auditions completed

By June 30, 2016 Applicants notified of audition results



## 2017 ACDA National Honor Choirs

Minneapolis, Minnesota

March 8-11, 2017



**Joan Gregoryk**, Director of the Children's Chorus of Washington, will conduct the Children's Honor Choir. Children with unchanged treble voices in grades 5-10 are eligible to audition for this SSAA choir. All auditionees must be sponsored by an ACDA member.



**Lynnel Jenkins**, Director of the Princeton Girlchoir and choral teacher at the Timberlane Middle School, will conduct the Middle School/Junior High School Mixed Honor Choir. Changed, changing, and unchanged voices in grades 6-9 are eligible to audition for this SATB choir. All auditionees must be sponsored by an ACDA member.



**Eric Whitacre** will conduct the Senior High School Mixed Honor Choir. Singers in grades 10-12 are eligible to audition for this SSAATTBB choir. All auditionees must be sponsored by an ACDA member.



**Jeffery Ames**, Director of Choral Activities at Belmont University, will conduct the Intercollegiate Unity Honor Choir. All auditionees must be collegiate singers. All auditionees must be sponsored by an ACDA member.

**Why audition for an ACDA National Honor Choir?** Singing in an Honor Choir is life changing! There are many wonderful opportunities to connect with choral music lovers at all levels. ACDA is the premiere national choral organization, so singers come from all over the country to participate. We have fantastic clinicians who are experts in their craft. You will have the opportunity to rehearse with master conductors and perform choral music at the very highest levels with other fine musicians.

**When and where does the ACDA National Honor Choir take place?** The conference takes place in Minneapolis, MN. Rehearsals begin on Wednesday, March 8th, 2017. If you are accepted, you will be asked to arrive on Tuesday evening, March 7th. The Children's final performances will be on Friday, March 10th. All other final performances occur throughout the day and evening on Saturday, March 11th.

**What are my financial commitments?** There is a \$30 nonrefundable application fee. If you are selected to participate, you will be responsible for hotel lodging at the rehearsal site, travel to Minneapolis, meals, and a \$125 registration fee. This registration fee includes your music. Parent/chaperones/sponsors must be with you in your hotel and responsible for you at all times outside of rehearsals and performances.

**What is the timeline?** Complete information regarding the audition process will be available in next month's *Choral Journal*. You will have between September 1st and September 30th to complete your online audition. Auditions close on September 30th. Announcements will be emailed by Nov. 15th, along with all relevant information and singer forms. If you are accepted, you will then have until Dec. 10th to complete and return all forms and fees so that you can receive your music. Nothing more will be required of you except that you learn your music (part recordings will be provided online) and book your hotel only at the designated hotel for your Honor Choir. Accepted singers will be expected to arrive in Minneapolis on Tuesday evening, March 7th, and depart on Saturday morning (Children's Honor Choir) or Sunday morning (all other choirs).



The RAYMOND W.

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1998 Paul A. Aiken *Flanders Field*  
1999 Daniel Pinkston *Nunc Dimittis*  
2000 Aaron Garber *Stabat Mater*  
2001 Michael Conti *Choric Song*  
2002 Joshua Shank *Musica Anima Tangens*  
2003 Brian Schmidt *Lux Aeterna*  
2004 Kentaro Sato *Kyrie*  
2005 Dan Forrest *Selah*  
2006 Dominick DiOrio *The Soul's Passing*

2007 Kristen Walker *In Monte Oliveti*  
2008 Benjamin Paul May *Absalon, fili mi*  
2009 Derek Myler *Psalms 100*  
2010 Michael Mills *Crossing the Bar*  
2011 Joshua Fishbein *Oseh Shalom*  
2012 Julian Bryson *Redemption Mass*  
2013 Matthew Emery *Unto Young Eternity*  
2014 Andrew Steffen *Spells of Herrick*  
2015 Alex Berko *Forgiven Tears*

The application and contest guidelines are available at <[www.acda.org/brock](http://www.acda.org/brock)>. Application Deadline October 1, 2016.



# REPERTOIRE & RESOURCES

## Student Chapter Updates

### Georgia State University (Atlanta)

The Georgia State University ACDA student chapter has organized and sponsored two particularly interesting initiatives that combined service, musical collaboration, and community outreach. First, we had the pleasure of hosting the Nairobi Chamber Chorus of Kenya and their conductor, Ken Wakia, on a stop during their recent tour of the southeastern United States (pictured). This phenomenal choir was brought to the United States by Kevin Fenton and the Festival Singers of Florida, and we were happy to host them for their first concert of the tour. The GSU student ACDA chapter provided home stays for the choir and hosted a wonderful dinner prior to the concert at Georgia State's Kopleff Recital Hall. The concert was free and open to the public. A free-will offering was collected at the end of the performance to help further fund the choir's tour. Students and audience alike were moved by the performance of this fine group of singers.

Our second musical exchange was with the Atlanta Homeward Choir, a musical group committed to empowering the homeless through music. The Georgia State University



*The Georgia State University Student Chapter hosted the Nairobi Chamber Chorus of Kenya.*

Singers spent a rewarding afternoon singing with the Atlanta Homeward Choir, conducted by Donal Noonan; the choirs went back and forth singing for each other and even learned a few songs on the spot to sing together.

The exchange ended with a feast! Students from GSU and the GSU ACDA chapter brought food to share with the Homeward Choir members and others at the homeless shelter.

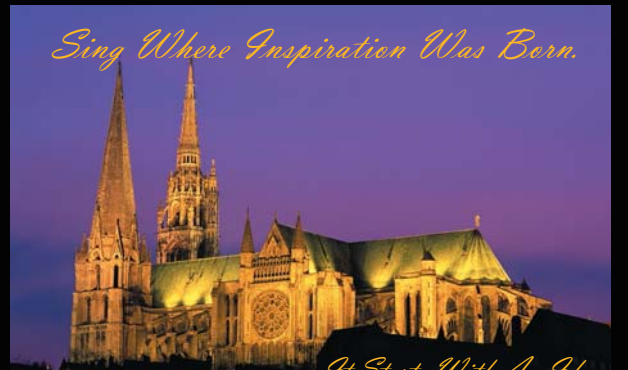
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# CHORAL MUSIC PEDAGOGY: A SURVEY OF HOW ACDA MEMBERS REHEARSE AND CONDUCT

BY ALAN GUMM

As a first large-scale initiative of ACDA's new Center for Conducting Pedagogy, members were invited in the fall of 2015 to participate in a twenty-five-year anniversary survey of choral director teaching style priorities. From September 15 to December 15, respondents rated their teaching and conducting in surveys of the same well-tested psychometric type as personality profiles that assess deep-rooted characteristics out of multiple corresponding surface traits. This report compares present rehearsal teaching priority results with 1) priorities discovered in a 1990 national sample of high school choral directors,<sup>1</sup> and 2) background experience and conducting priorities.

## The Average Choral Rehearsal Approach

A first essential question is how the average choral director teaches now compared to twenty-five years ago. As illustrated in Table 1, certain priorities appear to have stayed the same and others changed. In the roughly 5% of ACDA members who contributed,<sup>2</sup> the chief aim shown to have stayed the same is to control the breadth of ongoing rehearsal tasks. Remaining high in priority among these options are positive affirmation of learning

and nonverbal motivation of attention to task, the latter effected through eye contact, circulating, pacing, and bodily presence. Time efficiency grew from relatively low priority in 1990 to be among the highest priorities in 2015—by keeping task directions and verbal interruptions brief, pace of activities quick, and musicians busy and active most of the time. Also notable is a sizable decrease in

assertiveness—carried out through verbal task directions, close scrutiny of musician task completion, and specific corrective feedback.

On the depth of learning side, choral directors seem to have remained focused on performance artistry by their regular modeling, metaphors, imagery, rehearsal movement strategies, dynamic vocal technique, and other musically expressive

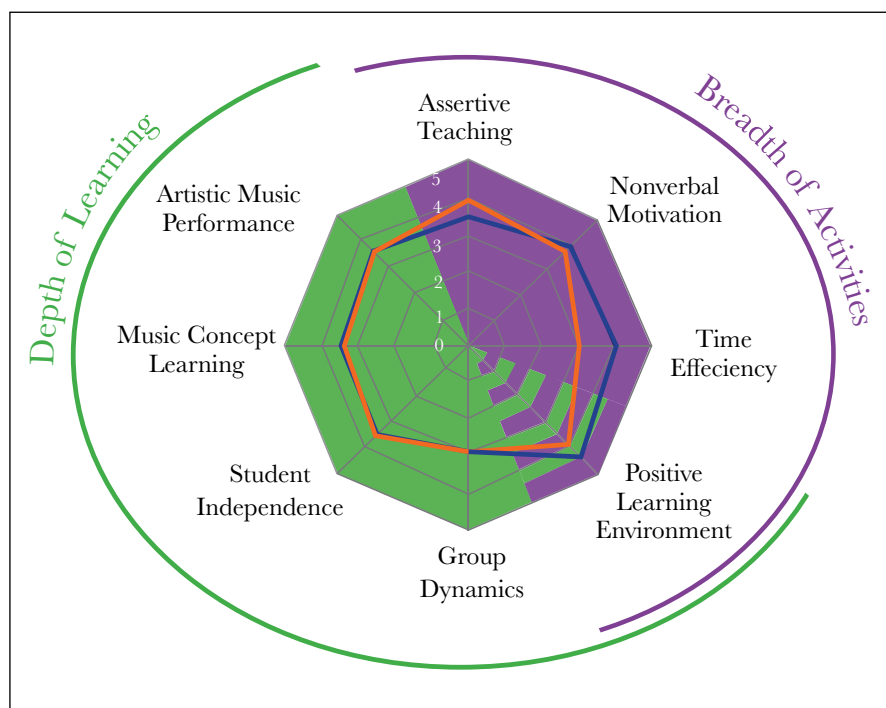


Table 1 Average breadth (purple shading) and depth (green shading) of rehearsal priorities in 1990 (orange line) and 2015 (blue line):  
1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always

# CHORAL MUSIC PEDAGOGY: A SURVEY OF HOW

methods. Further, collaborative group dynamics has remained of low priority across time, instead keeping choral directors in the lead of the whole ensemble with small-group sectional work on occasion.

## How Choral Rehearsing Differs

A key discovery with both 1990 and 2015 survey participants was how choral directors develop across years of experience in stages, starting out inefficiently self-reflective and becoming effectively engaging of a breadth of active learning, inclusive of musicians' interdependent influence, and

only after a decade on average developing an insight into deeper conceptual, artistic, and creative learning.

In comparing priorities one at a time with a fuller range of background experiences (Table 2),<sup>3</sup> present choral directors are shown to be: (1) less assertive in higher levels of choir and more assertive with the study of kinesics, or nonverbal communication skills; (2) more nonverbally motivating with advanced degrees, and for those who applied Kodály, mime, and kinesics to their teaching; and (3) more time efficient with advanced degrees and in applying mime and Kodály. In addition to the influence of years of experience

already reported, directors whose priorities tip toward deeper forms of learning were shown to be: (4) more attentive in affirming episodes of positive growth when female and, again, kinesics-trained; (5) more allowing of peer-group and peer-led learning when in ACDA divisions farther west, female, and trained in kinesics, yoga, Kodály, and dance; (6) more inquisitively concept-learning oriented at lower levels of choir, with higher degrees, and when trained in kinesics, yoga, Kodály, and Dalcroze; (7) more artistic-performance oriented with applications of kinesics, mime, Tai Chi, and dance; and (8) more nurturing of musicians' independent

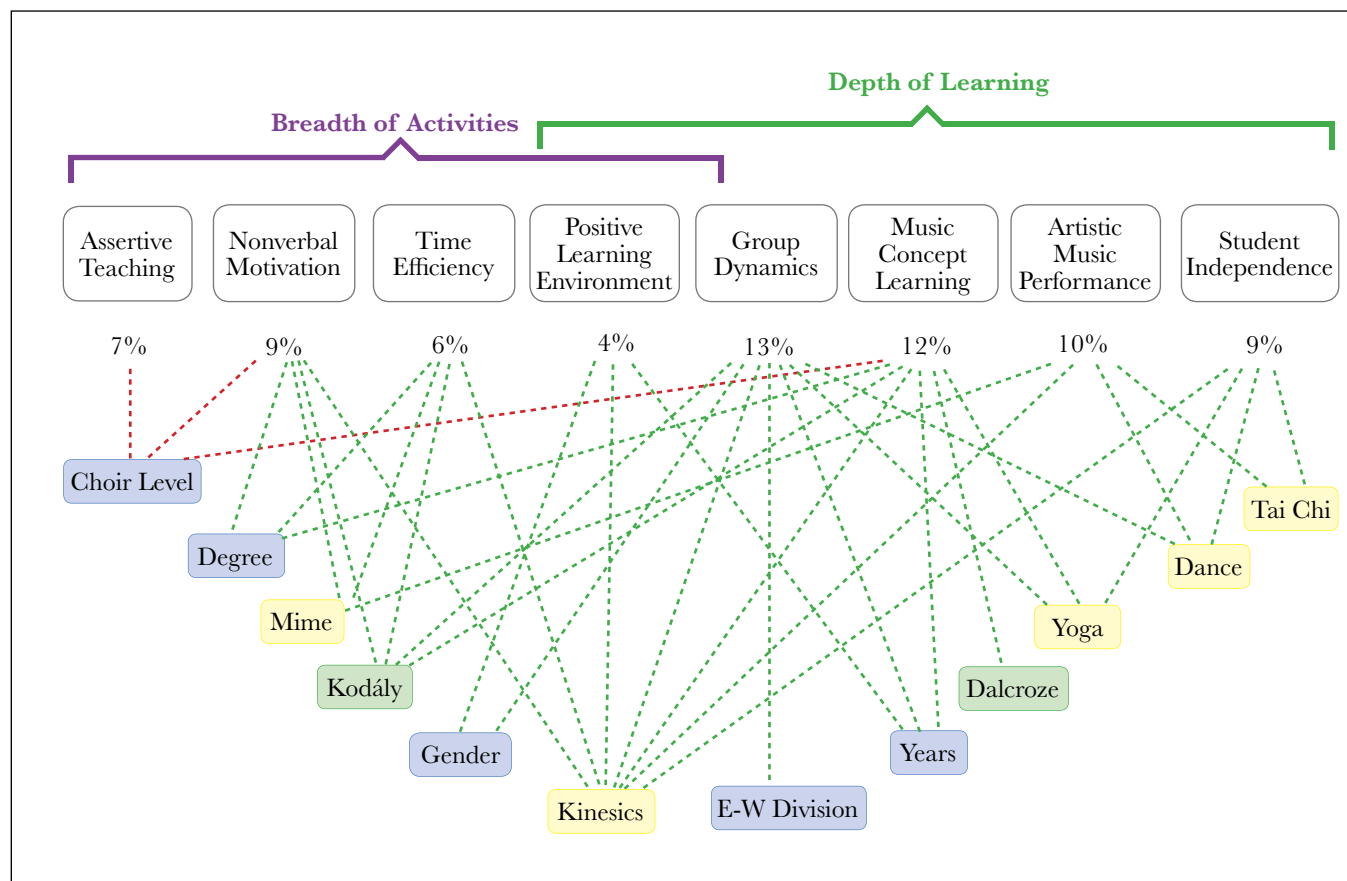


Table 2. Relationships between teaching and background experience in size (%) and direction (positive in green lines, inverse in red).

# ACDA MEMBERS REHEARSE AND CONDUCT

creative and affective points of view when trained in kinesics, dance, yoga, and Tai Chi. Outside the natural course of influences due to personal identity, geographic location, and

career status and position, the type and amount of training experiences seems to help route choral directors toward particular rehearsal teaching priorities. While not substantial, that

such a logical pattern of influences emerged at all suggests that choral directors can steer their course more consciously than by given circumstance.

Demonstrating how philosophical differences aim and sway our pedagogical choices in rehearsal, the 1990 survey uncovered a set of eleven music teaching style prototypes that fit common “schools of thought.”<sup>4</sup> As shown in Table 3, choral conductors differed in their focus on comprehensive musicianship—an equitable combination of music performance, conceptual analysis, and creativity—and distinct choices and combinations of these three key educational goals, including traditional concert performance as a chief aim. Foremost, Table 3 illustrates how scattered the state of choral pedagogy was in 1990.

The 2015 survey results reveal a less scattered state of choral pedagogy, yet still focused around recognizable philosophical and pedagogical issues of this day and age (Table 4). Note particularly in the list that well-rounded *comprehensive musicianship* is not done in such polar-opposite teacher versus student ways. One well-rounded group of choral directors taps into a full range of dependent-interdependent-independent learning in varying quick-to-careful approaches. A second group taps into group dynamics techniques that reflect educational pedagogies of social, cooperative, peer-centered, self-directed, and informal learning—the latter term used in British research for decades and brought to prominence in the United States in recent garage

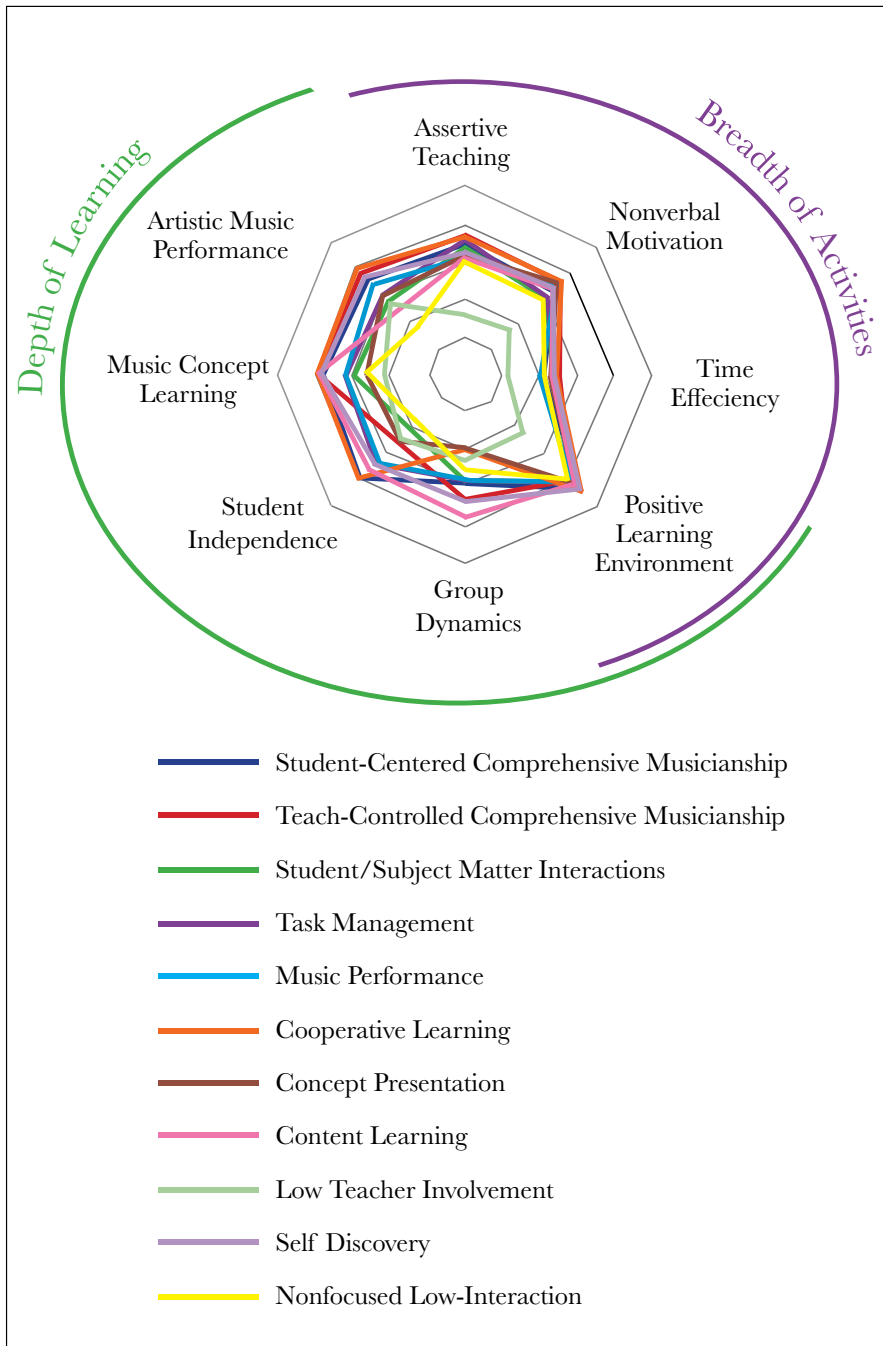


Table 3. 1990 choral music teaching style prototypes.

# CHORAL MUSIC PEDAGOGY: A SURVEY OF HOW

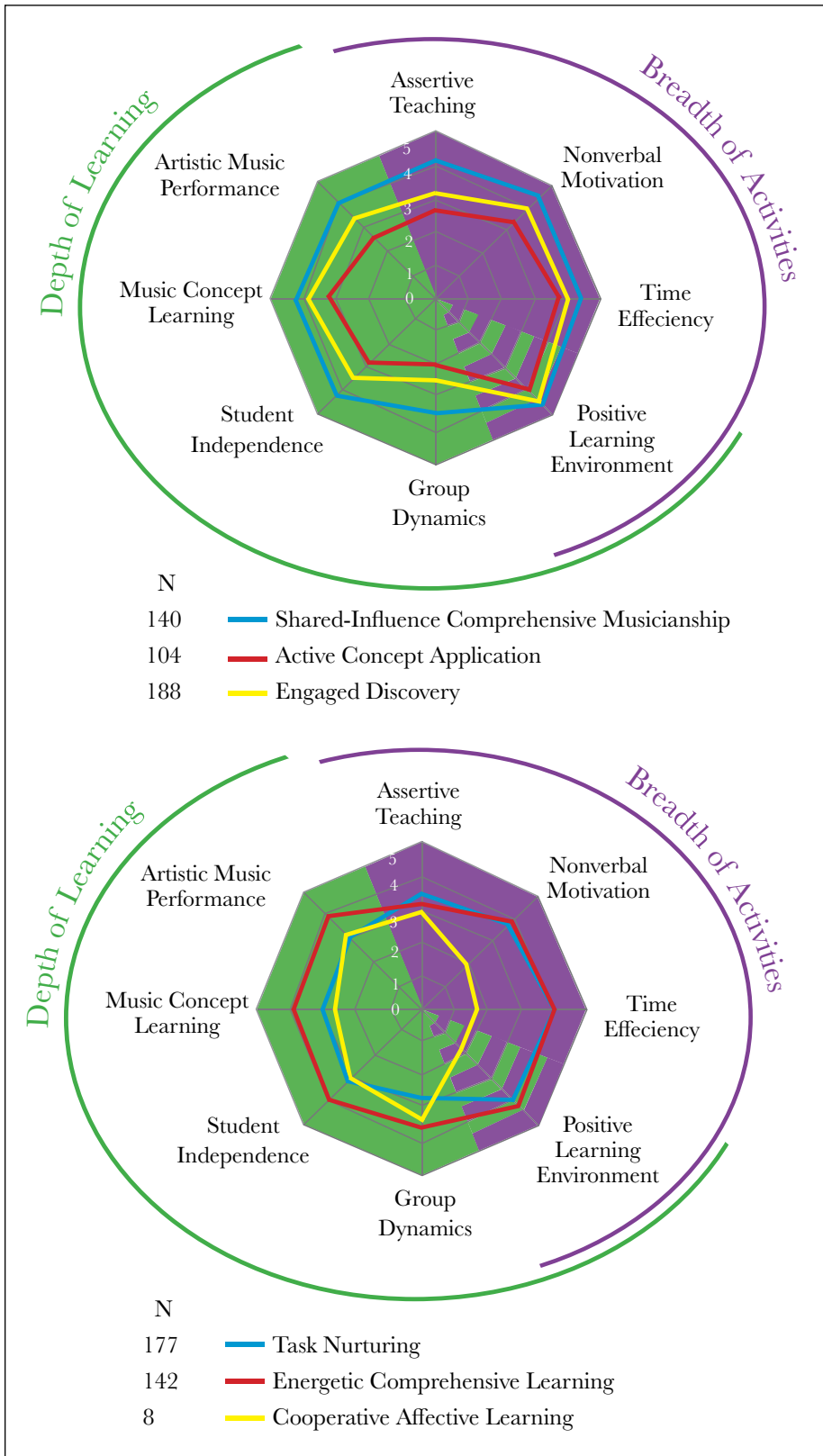


Table 4. 2015 choral music teaching style prototypes.

band-inspired pedagogy. These two prototypes reflect the workings of exemplary pedagogues of choral music and model music ensemble teaching practices written into the 2014 National Core Arts Standards.<sup>5</sup>

Add to these well-rounded approaches consistent tendencies toward *conceptual learning* and *self-discovery*, in the 2015 sample both rebalanced toward actively engaging nonverbal, positive, and efficient rehearsal management. Both fit long trends beginning in the 1970s to be more conceptually and creatively focused—to teach *about* the music and how to perform it.

The final two groups represent polar opposites between conductor-centric and musician-centric priorities of rehearsal teaching. A group of 177 choral directors is *task-oriented*, as one group was likewise found to be in 1990, yet leans closer toward the new norm of being less assertive and more nurturing to task. To the other extreme is a group of eight directors who continue to reflect the pedagogy of cooperative learning as identified in 1990, these same pedagogical tools now being promoted for teaching small, informal ensembles, or “emerging” ensembles as called in the 2014 National Core Music Standards.

In the mix of philosophically driven priorities reflected in both surveys, such distinctions as formality versus informality, dependence to independence, or conductor-directed versus self-directed seem to not be the point

# ACDA MEMBERS REHEARSE AND CONDUCT

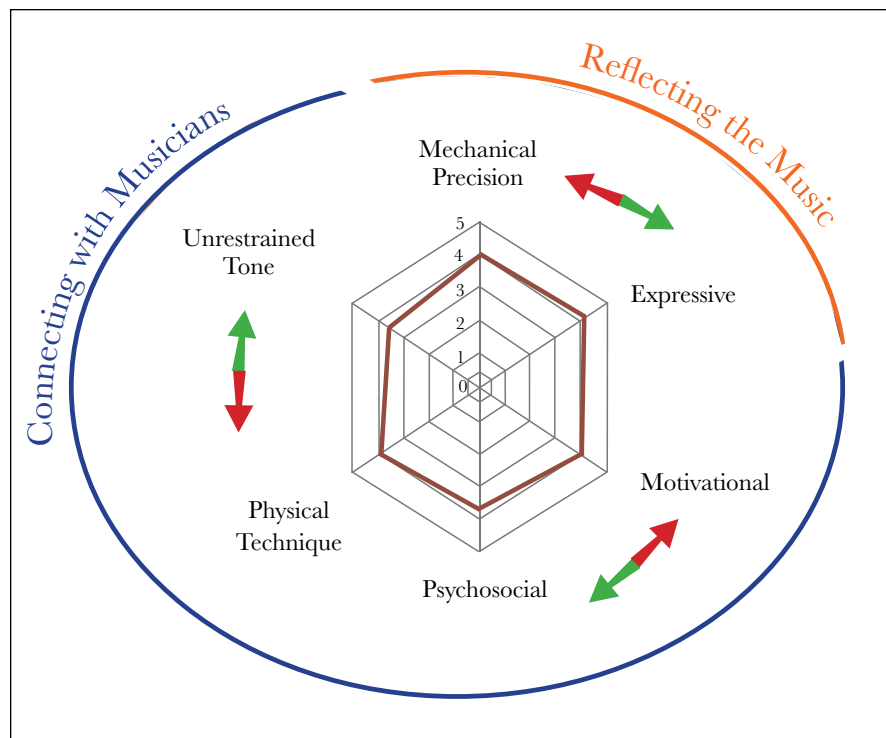


Table 5. Average music-oriented (encircled in orange) and musician-oriented (encircled in blue) conducting functions and how they divide into controlling (red arrows) and releasing (green arrows) aims and means: 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always

as much as the quality of learning intended by each mix of pedagogical strategies. What is most evident is that learning goals vary quite widely, and so too should the manner in which choral directors teach.

## How Choral Conducting Differs

In answering what happens as ensemble conductors shift from teaching to conducting, a more recent line of research has discovered the same distinctions of dependence, interdependence, and independence wholly by the function of conducting gestures (Table 5, red/green arrows).<sup>6</sup> In its own unique way, conducting also di-

vides into gestures that *reflect the music to musicians and connect with musicians' attention and efforts in making the music.*

Average conducting survey results show how choral directors reflect the music foremost, followed by connecting with musicians through eye contact, body stance, and other nonverbally motivating gestures fairly the same in priority as in rehearsal teaching. This is the same as would be expected given the traditions of conducting and is consistent with recent functional analyses of conductor, musician, and objective researcher observations of expert conductors.<sup>7</sup>

As shown with teaching, conducting priorities vary and develop with experience (Table 6). On one hand—

literally the right hand mostly—the repertoire of patterns and cues that form the basis of conducting develops to greater extents in the natural course of career experience, and by survey evidence are perhaps given quicker boost with advanced degree work and studies in mime. On the other hand—the left hand separately or coordinated with the right—gestures intent on displaying musical expression vary most as a matter of geographic, gender, and career experiences, and seems to be fostered above the norm by advanced degree work, yoga, and mime. Directors who applied Alexander Technique reported lower concern for time pre-

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# CHORAL MUSIC PEDAGOGY: A SURVEY OF HOW

cision and motivation of musician attention, though nothing of greater priority. Other methods strongly purported to heighten conductor expressiveness, Laban and Dalcroze to name but two, did not raise priorities above the norm.

Conductors' motivational control—through increased intensity of gestures not aimed to heighten music expressivity but to heighten musician attention and cohesion—seems to have developed above the norm with mime and acting. It was also a greater priority for those in lower choir levels and otherwise honed through advanced degree work and career experience.

Interest in the effects of conducting on singing technique has peaked in recent years, which in this line of

research was shown to divide into two priorities, first to guide and invigorate musicians' bodily tone production efforts and second to ease restrictive tension of tone production. The latter aim is met through relaxing, lifting, smoothing, circulating, minimizing, and stopping gestures to allow musicians to connect with each other and unite in tone and tempo—thereby developing ensemble interdependence. As illustrated in Table 6, both aims take years of experience and advanced degree work, with mime helping sensitize to strength of effort, acting to develop responsiveness to both, and dance, kinesics, and Dalcroze to foster an ease of tone production from musicians.

## How Conducting Aligns with Teaching

Finally, we look to answer fundamental questions in how to direct choirs in the dual sense of rehearsing and conducting, whether the two coordinate, if so in which ways, and why it may matter. In a display of dual survey results (Table 7), notice on the far left how assertive choral directors seem not to be so expressive in conducting and instead are more attentively motivating and strong-arm and restraining of singing technique in conducting. Further, choral conductors most faithful to the mechanics of beat patterns and cues are least open to strategies that would develop group dynamics, artistry, and independence in musicians.

Also note from the bottom left of

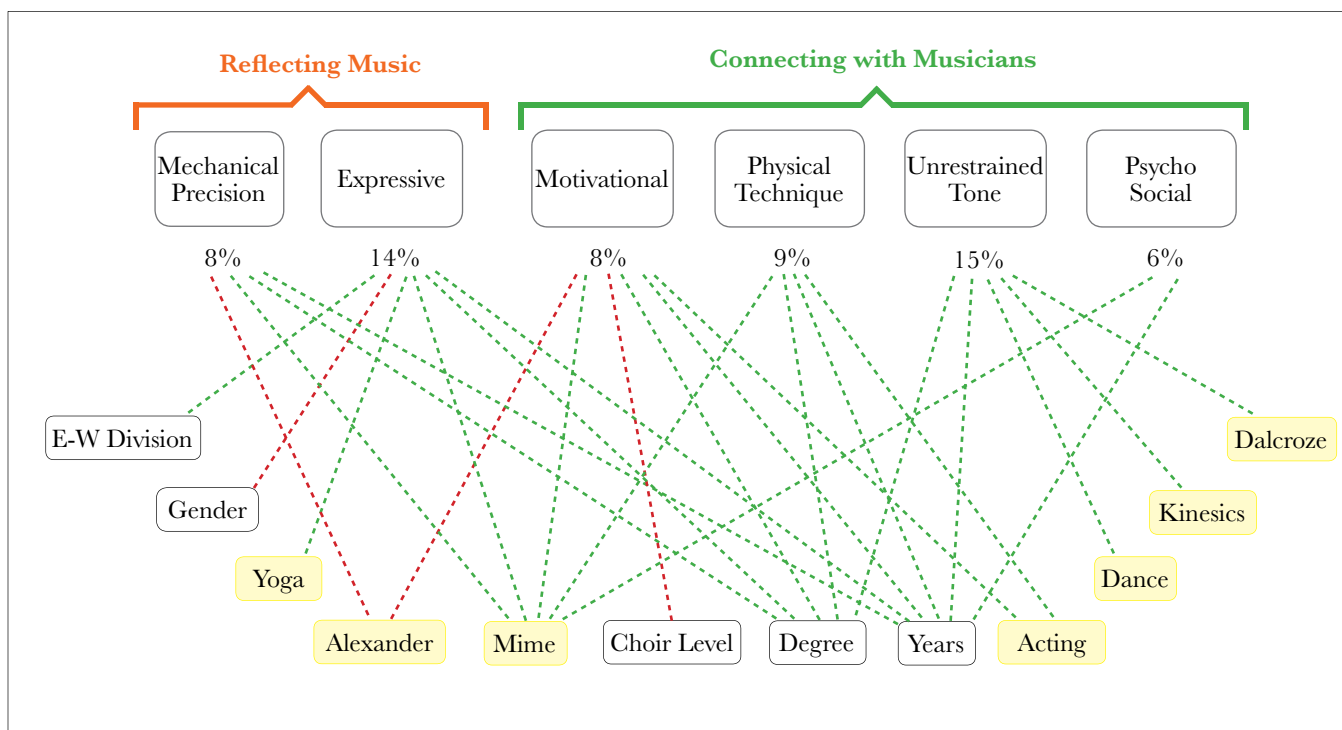


Table 6. Relationships between conducting priorities and background experience in size (%) and direction (positive in green lines, inverse in red).

# ACDA MEMBERS REHEARSE AND CONDUCT

Table 7 how expressive conducting draws on a motivating sharp eye and enthusiasm in rehearsals and fits within an active and efficient rehearsal. From the top left, choral directors who are more or less motivating in rehearsal remain the same in motivational conducting and in guiding strength and ease of physical technique. These results alone deserve much more attention than possible in this brief report.

Note particularly the farther reaching cross-priority findings. Emanating from top left is illustrated what would not be guessed yet is rather

profound in the face of arguments between opposing pedagogies—assertive and positive-learning interactions with musicians seem to have helped paved the way to assimilating socially learned gestures custom fit to musicians’ deeper needs and comprehension. More as would be expected, emanating from lower left is shown how expressive conducting draws from rehearsal strategies that foster artistry and originality. Remaining rehearsal priorities on the right are shown to enlighten conducting priorities on the right, as would fit choral conductors firmly embedded within

progressive pedagogical camps. However, the facts of the survey remain that choral teaching and conducting are not as cleanly polarized as philosophical debates in the profession would have it seem; choral director actions on the one hand seem instead to inform actions on the other hand.

## Conclusions

Though less philosophically scattered than a quarter century ago, choral music continues to be taught in diverse yet rationally explainable ways. Choir directors are neither ef-

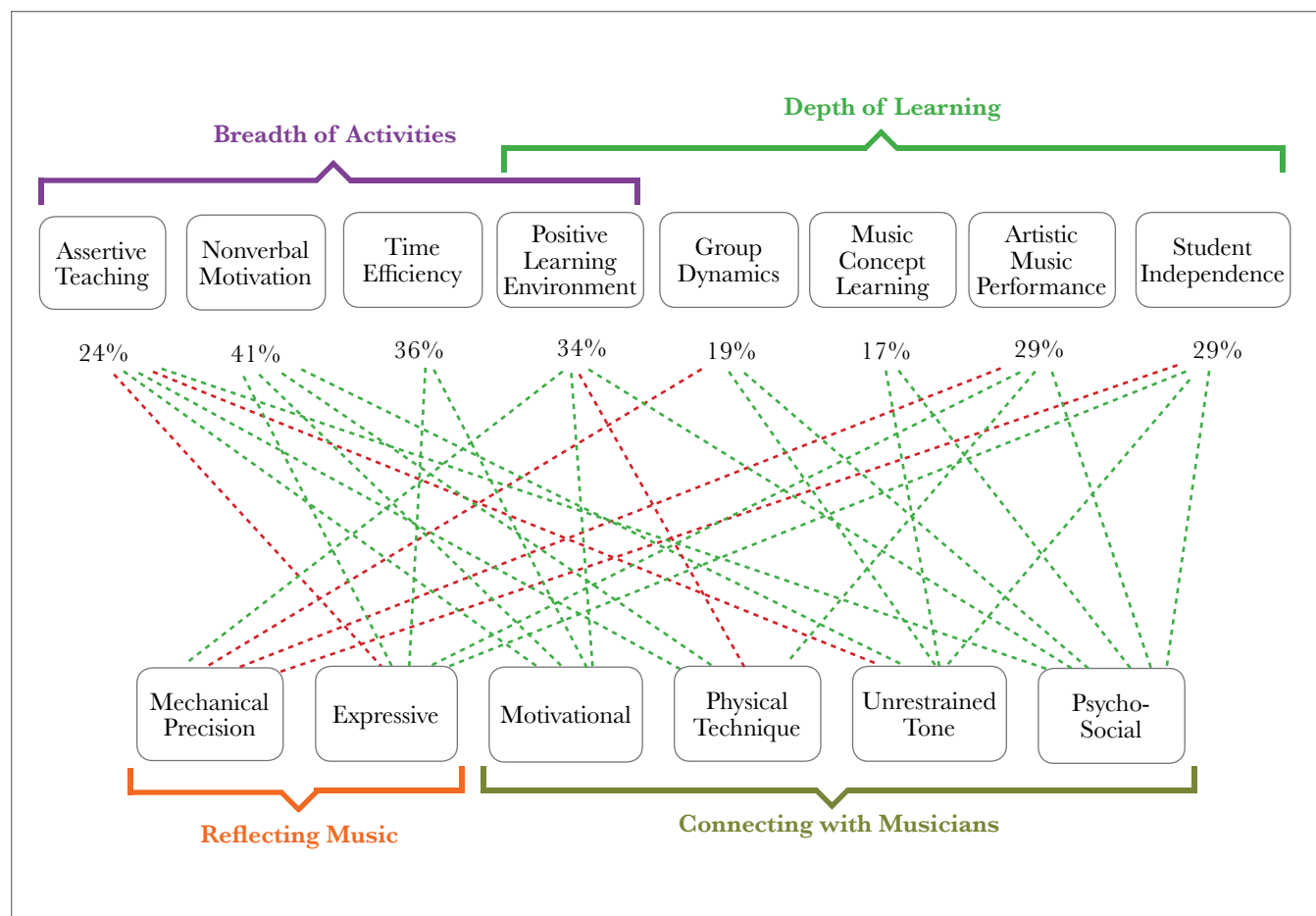



Table 7. Relationships between teaching and conducting priorities in size (%) and direction (positive in green lines, inverse in red).

# CHORAL MUSIC PEDAGOGY: A SURVEY OF HOW

fective or ineffective but instead seek to be effective in specialized ways in the rehearsal, as select priorities lead to unique effects. To those who tout a single approach above all, we can affirm that there is no such panacea. In our every choice in how to teach, we receive only the type and depth of results possible by our intended and unforeseen priorities.

Turning these results to ACDA as an organization, the inclusion of a Center for Conducting Research seems appropriate given the several avenues of pedagogy implied in this opening study. This study offers much for future inquiry both

philosophical and empirical and for choral directors to consider for themselves. Certainly these results require verification and clarification, especially given the low number of respondents. I would hope that this study may guide directions for future division and national conference offerings, and in the *Choral Journal*, with an eye to complementing the various schools of thought identified within the profession beyond the varied types and levels of choirs we teach and conduct. 

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Alan J. Gumm, "The Development of a Model and Assessment Instrument of Choral Music Teaching Styles," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 41, no. 3 (1993), 181-199; Alan J. Gumm, "The Effects of Choral Music Teacher Experience and Background on Music Teaching Style," *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 3 (2003), 6-22.
- <sup>2</sup> In the three-stage 1990 survey (standardization sample N=475 of 2,000 sampled; test-retest subsample N=53 of 100



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sampled; validation sample N=210 of 700) no significant or substantial difference was found for ACDA members compared with participants affiliated with other professional organizations, and though the sample was drawn randomly in 1990, participation was highly restricted by self volunteerism as experienced with the 2015 survey (N=763 of 16,322 in the membership email listserv), inferring that the two surveys provide a reasonably fair comparison though neither fully generalizable.

<sup>3</sup> The statistical procedure used was stepwise multiple regression to control for partial correlations between the many independent variables, which provides a cleaner picture of relationships than simple correlations.

<sup>4</sup> The statistical procedure used to sort out pedagogical differences was k-means cluster analysis with discriminant analysis to detect factors significantly distinguished between groups; k-means cluster analysis was again used with 2015 survey data.

<sup>5</sup> National Core Arts Standards, <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>, accessed January 31, 2016; National Core Music Standards, <http://www.nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/core-music-standards/>, accessed January 31, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Alan J. Gumm, et al., "The Identification of Conductor-Distinguished Functions of Conducting," *Research and Issues in Music Education* 9, no. 1 (September

2011), <http://www.stthomas.edu/rimeonline/vol9/index.htm>, accessed February 2, 2016; Gumm, Alan J., "Relationships of Background Experience and Music Teaching Style with Conducting Functions: Career Development and Pedagogical Implications," in Jennifer A. Bugos (ed.), *Contemporary Issues for Music Learning Across the Lifespan: Music Education and Human Development* (New York: Routledge, in press).

<sup>7</sup> Alan J. Gumm, "Measuring Music Conducting from Multiple

Perspectives: Mixed-Method Validity Analysis of a Six-Function Theory and Survey," paper presented at the Michigan Music Conference, Grand Rapids, MI (January 2015); Alan J. Gumm, & Frank Heuser, "Conducting as Shared Embodiment of Music: The Measurement of 'Negotiated' Musical Sound Through Ensemble 'Shadow Conductors' and Changing Functions of Conducting Motion," in progress (2016).



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# Choral Reviews

## *Stars I Shall Find*

Seth Houston (b. 1974: 2012)  
SA, piano (4:30)

awkward intervals or trite repetition.  
Singers should be cautious of the  
subtle changes, rhythms and niches.

## *Five Limericks*

Emma Lou Diemer (b. 1927: 2013)  
SSAA, piano, or two pianos and

## Call for *Choral Journal* Choral Reviews Column Editor

There is an opening on the *Choral Journal* staff for an editor for the regularly appearing choral reviews column. The Choral Reviews editor collects, evaluates, and distributes repertoire to R&R representatives and is also responsible for evaluating and selecting a team of qualified volunteer reviewers.

### Criteria

The column editor should have experience in or knowledge of repertoire in several R&R areas, have familiarity with writing and the *Choral Journal* style guide, have the ability to communicate well, and be responsive to deadlines. The Choral Reviews column editor will be recommended for a four-year term and may be reappointed once, for a maximum of eight years.

A letter of application, including a vision statement and resume, are due by **May 15** to Amanda Bumgarner, ACDA Publications Editor, [abumgarner@acda.org](mailto:abumgarner@acda.org). There will be a review of applicants by the Publications Editor and recommendations made to the Executive Committee for appointment.

alto voices. Conductors may also be interested in examining the SATB arrangement.

Lush, lyrical, and logical are perfect descriptors of the melody. The soprano line has a range of octave and a half, all the while avoiding

Thornton Oriana Choir  
< <http://www.sbmp.com/SR2.php?CatalogNumber=1065>>

Gary Packwood  
Starkville, Mississippi

included accompaniment for two pianos and percussion (available as a digital download from [halleonard.com/choral](http://halleonard.com/choral)), but the octavo includes an accompaniment for one piano that could be used for performance as well. While both the vocal and accompaniment parts can be chal-

# Book Reviews

## *The Essentials of Beautiful Singing: A Three-Step Kinesthetic Approach*

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steps of Bauer's approach, and the final part includes chapters on refinement building upon the three steps. In part one, Bauer acknowledges that fine singers and fine voice teachers are not always the same

person. In pedagogy, students need to understand the fine details of and terminology pertaining to anatomy,

occur when practicing these exercises and suggests ways to avoid them. The next chapter, "Open Throat and

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## Call for *Choral Journal* Book Reviews Column Editor

There is an opening on the *Choral Journal* staff for an editor for the regularly appearing book reviews column. The Book Reviews editor collects, evaluates, and distributes books for review to a team of qualified volunteer reviewers.

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The column editor should have familiarity with writing and the *Choral Journal* style guide, have the ability to communicate well, and be responsive to deadlines. The Book Reviews column editor will be recommended for a four-year term and may be reappointed once, for a maximum of eight years.

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describes what she sees as misconceptions regarding breath support and engaging the body. To address these issues, Bauer includes exercises for controlling breath and air flow. She includes a number of traps that can

sounds. Consonants are discussed and grouped based on their classification as semivowels, non-nasal consonants, and noise. After these descriptors, she provides examples of phonation exercises to reinforce and complement



## Mission Impossible?

### (How to Recruit and Retain Junior High Male Chorus Members)

by Suzanne Callahan

McArthur Junior High School, Jonesboro, Arkansas

(Used with permission of Arkansas' newsletter, Spring 2015)

*Editor's note: Following is one of the articles you will find in the latest issue of ChorTeach, ACDA's quarterly online publication filled with practical teaching ideas for conductors and educators at all levels, edited by Terry Barham. ChorTeach is available to ACDA members online at <<http://acda.org/page.asp?page=chorteach>>.*

Choral educators are forever battling to recruit and retain the elusive male chorus member. Although I would never assume to have all the answers, I do have suggestions and ideas that might help. I was lucky enough to have fifty-five junior high boys in class this year at my school, which was a little less than half of the female enrollment. As the mother of sons, both of whom had wonderful choral experiences in the Jonesboro school system, I ask that you consider the following:

#### **Does Your Program Have the "Cool" Factor?**

Let's be honest. You need to recruit a jock or two. Visit with the coach and ask for his help in promot-

ing your class! Stop bashing athletics. If you make your program an "us against them" situation, you will lose.

Many junior high boys have aspirations for making it to the NFL or the NBA. Do not laugh. Learn the language, talk the talk, actually attend their games, and cheer on their endeavors. Never underestimate the importance of a student athlete, coach, or parent seeing you at a game. You are building relationships and relevance in the school environment.

Go the extra mile to incorporate sports into your classroom. This year I created a music theory basketball game. I emailed my parent group and asked for an inexpensive over-the-door nerf goal. What I got was a \$50 Plexiglas goal and a ball. I sacrificed Friday rehearsals for a month as we played the game, and the boys loved it. I made a bracket, we had a tournament, and a good time (and lots of learning) was had by all. During the finals, after the winning answer and the winning goal, one boy ripped his shirt off and ran around the room as if he had scored a winning soccer goal. When is the last time your students were that pumped about the

definition of the word *tempo*?

My two male chorus classes also enjoy doing football pics each Friday during college football season. It takes a little research on my part each Thursday as I print the sheet with each game. I usually find everything I need in our local Thursday newspaper. All of my boys guess the scores of the Red Wolves, Razorbacks, and Ole Miss Rebel games. The boy with the closest guess to the actual score gets a candy bar on Monday. The boys love it so much that I have to post the winner and keep up with who has won the most times during the season.

My room is covered in college, high school, and junior high sports posters. Yes, I'm over the top. It works. Get the boys into your program, and the girls will follow.

#### **Have You Spent Time Presenting Videos of Professional Male Singers?**

Even if you hate pop and country music, you really must find a way to present positive examples of both genres to your class. If you think seventh-grade boys are going to be

excited about listening to opera, you are sadly mistaken. Ease your students into the performing world by expanding their horizons slowly! In my classroom, every Tuesday is “YouTube Tuesday.” Each week I search the internet for appropriate video clips. One of my favorite all-time performances features the unaccompanied group Home Free performing their version of *Ring of Fire*. The boys beg to listen to it over and over. They love the extreme ranges and the “manliness” of the song. We also love listening to Walk off the Earth and Pentatonix.

We listen, discuss, and talk about the performers and what we like about each of them. By the time CPA rolls around, the boys are ready to listen to choral clips of performances with a more discerning ear. Celebrate their high voices and make a huge competi-

tion out of who has the highest falsetto! Make certain they hear voices like that of Sam Smith or Bruno Mars, both of who have gorgeous upper ranges. But then there are some days I simply show a sports video or a funny clip that just makes us laugh.

### **Have You Highlighted Your Instrumental Groups?**

In my choir, I have several young men who are learning to play the guitar. I have a few percussionists and a couple of pianists. Fearless Friday is the day these guys get to show off their skills. No matter what may be said about their skill level, I strive to make them feel like rock stars, and they love it. I purposely incorporate instrumentalists in as many of our performances as possible.

### **Lighten Up**

Do you know the song “New York, New York”? I like to think the lyric applies to all middle and junior high choral educators: “If you can make it there, you’ll make it anywhere!”

This is a difficult age. The boys have left the safe confines of elementary school and are embarking on a brand-new pubescent adventure. They are often loud and smelly and goofy. Love them anyway. Wednesday is Wacky Joke Day. Every week we try to top one another with our corny jokes, and yes, it takes away rehearsal time. The camaraderie is worth it. Laugh with your boys and try your best to understand their jokes and goofy sense of humor.

## WHAT ELSE IS IN THIS ISSUE OF CHOR TEACH?



*ChorTeach* is available to ACDA members online at <<http://acda.org/page.asp?page=chorteach>>.

### **Adolescent Voice Change: Frustration or Celebration** by Sandra Stegman and Tracey Nycz

Adolescence is an important time of vocal exploration and accomplishment for young singers. This article offers methods grounded in research and a real-world classroom for accepting and celebrating the changing voice.

### **Creativity in Music and Worship Planning: Be Not Afraid** by James Seay

This article presents a creative idea for a new worship series that uses musical theater to highlight topics the pastor unpacks in worship. Even if this concept will not work for your congregation, it is an example of creativity and a willingness to try something new that might inspire your own work in your place of worship.

### **He’s Not Finished with Me Yet—The Importance of Moving Forward as a Music Educator** by Peri Goodman

It can be easy get stuck in the same old routine, but continually seeking new and better ways to bring musical experiences to our students will make us better music educators. This article provides inspiration for stepping outside our comfort zones and seeking out meaningful experiences that will positively impact our choral classrooms.

### **How to Handle Middle School Choir Students Who Talk Too Much** by Michael Murphy

Middle school choir students often talk too much, taking up valuable rehearsal time. What can you do? Consider learning to give non-verbal instructions using the tips provided in this article. You might find that when you talk less, your students will talk less, leaving you more time for what is really important: singing.

## Rewards

Donuts go a long way! Last year after all-region tryouts, I rewarded my young men with a pancake breakfast in the choir room. The moms did all the work. They brought griddles, batter, syrup, and gallons of chocolate milk. We were the envy of the school. The maintenance man, however, was not so thrilled, since we blew a breaker.

## Take Them Seriously

Know your students well. Be perceptive. Some of them have perfect moms and dads; lots of them don't. A young man needs a father or mother figure (in my case, a grandmother type) who can tell when something isn't quite right. Boys cry too. Let choir be that safe place where emotions are allowed and tough boys can spend a few minutes a day letting their guard down. Speak to their sensitive side.

Be aware of that young man who needs to have his creativity and uniqueness celebrated. You may be the only person who is providing him with encouragement or teaching him to tie his tie and wear black socks with black pants.

## Teach Them the "Do Right" Law

It's a tough world out there. We talk a lot these days about girls, empowerment, and self-image, but who is nurturing the boys? Who is teaching them that certain behavior is not acceptable? Who is expecting them to be respectful and telling them that gentlemanliness is attractive? If you

have the luxury of having a male chorus, use this precious time wisely. It's more important now than ever. Manners, etiquette, decorum, not farting in public—there's so much to learn at this age!

Invite a guest speaker/conductor to talk to your boys. This fall, a teacher/friend and I invited Clint Pianalto to work with our junior high guys. What a joy! Clint modeled for them great behavior, musicianship, and that goofy sense of humor (no offense, Clint). My boys loved every minute.

## Literature

There's more to life than sailors and pirates. Plan your program carefully. Don't assume your boys can't or won't sing with real feeling or emotion. My spring CPA music this year consisted of three love songs: 1) *Viva Tutti* (Text was about

how guys love women.); 2) *I Think My Love So Fair* (We sang about true love after we had discussed the love that our grandparents have for one another—not the Kim Kardashian kind. They got it and sang the piece with passion and purpose and with no embarrassment.); 3) *West Country Lover* (a "breaking up" song that was a hoot because they thought "breaking up" was funny.)

Be mindful that literature choices for male singers are of utmost importance. If they don't like it or understand it, they won't sing it! Aren't we lucky to be in this profession? We have an opportunity to mold young, impressionable young boys into beautiful young men. Could there possibly be a more important job than ours?

Best of luck in your recruiting for next year. Remember that in junior high, it has to be fun! Snag'm and drag'm into choir. Your high school director will thank you for it. ■



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